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Mpumalanga Provincial Government

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Nkomazi community members queuing to raise their concerns with Premier DD Mabuza

## Mpumalanga Premier commits to resolve service delivery challenges in Nkomazi

By Dudu Shaba: Office of the Premier

**M**pumalanga Premier David Mabuza has committed to bring water to the people of Mangweni in the Nkomazi Local Municipality. The Premier has also committed that water tankers will be utilised in the meantime while the government is still working on resolving water reticulation challenges.

The Premier made the commitments recently during his engagement with the residents of Nkomazi where he was accompanied by members of the Executive Council, heads of departments and government officials.

He also committed to fix roads, houses and community halls that were damaged by storms, that there is much work that still needs to be done by government in the area.

Premier Mabuza said that his commitments follow some consultation meetings that he held with the people of Mangweni for three weeks, after they had protested due to inadequate service delivery. "I met with them, water was a big problem, I then decided that a community mass meeting should be held with the people so that we can directly listen to other challenges that are also affecting them on daily basis," he said.

Premier Mabuza also committed to build a new school and a clinic that will operate for twelve hours. "Building a school is very important, as we plan today, we must also think about the future of our children who will lead our country forward," he said.

"We are here to ensure that we fix the problems so that we can be able to focus on the issues affecting our people, not individuals," he said.

Other issues of concerns that were raised by the community include youth unemployment, provision of houses, drug abuse theft of cables and alleged corruption in municipalities.

Premier Mabuza delegated the MECs for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Human Settlements and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to work hard in ensuring that the challenges that were faced by the members of the community are resolved.



MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Ms Refilwe Mtsweni engaging community members on their issues

# Our heritage our pride



President Jacob Zuma with the Minister of Arts and Culture, Nathi Mthethwa together with Mpumalanga Premier David Mabuza, greeting the crowd during Heritage Day celebration at Kameelrivier Stadium, Ga-Morwe.

By Dudu Shaba: Office of the Premier

September is Heritage Month when South Africans of all ages celebrate their rich cultural diversity, local food, languages, dance, plays, music and many other forms of cultural expressions.

It is a day on which we express how proud we are as South Africans! This was said by President Jacob Zuma, who addressed thousands of people who attended the National Heritage event at Kameelrivier Stadium in Ga-Morwe outside Siyabuswa.

This year's Heritage Month was celebrated under the theme: "The year of OR Tambo: Celebrating our Liberation Heritage." President Jacob Zuma told the crowd that the celebration serves as a reminder for the

country to recall the rich history of the struggle that brought freedom and democracy for the citizens of South Africa.

He started out by giving credit to heroes and heroines who contributed to the liberation of South Africa:

One of them being Oliver Reginald Tambo, a stalwart who dedicated his entire adult life to the struggle for liberation.

President Zuma added that another significant central theme in the liberation heritage celebration is non-racialism. He also indicated that the quest for gender equality and the participation of women, the youth and faith-based communities in the political life is another powerful element in the liberation heritage of the

country.

The President also stated that this year marked the 40th anniversary of the brutal murder of the Black Consciousness Movement leader, Steven Bantu Biko who died in 1977. He told the crowd that Steve Biko encouraged black people to free their minds from apartheid victimhood and to reject psychological feelings of inferiority which was deliberately cultivated by the system.

He stated that Mpumalanga is a home to one of Africa's largest national parks, adding that the Kruger National Park, with a wide variety of animals including the famous big five; elephants, lions, rhinos, buffalos and leopards are part of the Province's rich heritage.

In celebrating South African music, languages, cultures and traditions, he acknowledged the remarkable contribution of Mama Esther Mahlangu and Mama Nothembi Mkhwebane to the IsiNdebele art.

Musical greats such as Rebecca Malope, Siphon Makhabane and the late Ray Phiri and all artists in the creative arts industry in the country were acknowledged for using music to promote freedom from apartheid repression.

Some of the dignitaries who attended the event were the Minister of Arts and Culture Nathi Mthethwa, Minister of Science and Technology Naledi Pandor, Minister of Public Service and Administration Faith Muthambi, Mama Esther Mahlangu, Mama Nothembi Mkhwebane.

Meanwhile, Mpumalanga Premier David Mabuza told the crowd that the people of Mpumalanga are tolerant and diverse in culture. "Let us not promote tribalism, but know that we are one in South Africa. We want our heritage places like Bethal and Piet Retief to be also uplifted by the National Department of Arts and Culture, they are places that played a crucial role in the struggle. By doing that, our people will be informed, know where they come from and where they are going," concluded the Premier.

## Bridging the poverty gap for a brighter future

By the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport

For years it was a struggle for the residents of Avontuur and Tjakastad to access social amenities due to the Nkomazi River that cuts across the two villages. The two villages are situated on the banks of the river and share everything from schools, clinics and graveyard among others. During rainy seasons, the situation was life-threatening not only for learners who have to access schools but to the community at large.

All that is now history after the construction of the 124 meters long foot bridge connecting the two villages. Construction of the foot bridge commenced in September 2016 and was completed in July 2017, thus bringing much relief to the rural community. The Mpumalanga Government has invested over R7 million on the project. During construction, the project created much needed job opportunities as 26 people were employed, majority of them being local people.

Mr Mduduzi Nkosi, a community member from Avontuur said the completion of the footbridge has made the lives of the learners and the community easier. "Children used to climb the nearby ridge to get to school, especially the learners from Mkolishi Secondary School. In summer, they would walk about 15 km to get to school when the river is full. The bridge will be very helpful to learners and the community as a whole," said Mr Nkosi.

A learner from Maqhawuzela Combined School, Mbuso Maseko, could not hide his excitement with the completion of the bridge. "The completion of the bridge will help us a lot because we use this path to school every day. In winter, the water is cold and in summer the water level rises and we cannot cross the river. As a result, we have to walk about 7 km to get to school. Now, with the completion of the bridge, we will travel a shorter distance to school. I believe even our performance at school will improve," Maseko said.

The construction of the foot bridge was implemented through the Integrated Rural Mobility and Accessibility (IRMA) programme. IRMA is aimed at addressing transport challenges, particularly in rural areas, that impact negatively on the mobility of local citizens. The programme employs innovative means to address the mobility challenges in accessing social amenities such as schools, health centres, grant facilities, graveyards and shops amongst others



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MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Sikhumbuzo Kholwane

The Oman delegation with the Director-General, Mr Thulani Mdakane (fourth from left) during the opening of the Business Meeting at Ingwenyama Lodge.

## Oman Sultanate explore investment opportunities in Mpumalanga

By Dudu Shaba: Office of the Premier

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government hosted a business meeting with the delegation from the Sultanate of Oman to explore agricultural business opportunities for the Province. The Mpumalanga Provincial Government has identified Oman, in the Middle East, as a potential strategic export market for its agricultural produce. Welcoming the Oman Delegation at the Ingwenyama Lodge, White River, the MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Sikhumbuzo Kholwane, said that the Province has a solid partnership with Oman. The MEC went on to say that they have held several progressive bilateral engagements. He also stated that the partnership offers excellent opportunities that respond to the economic challenges in the Province. Also addressing the meeting, the CEO of Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA), Mr. Xola Sithole, said that Mpumalanga is the third most visited Province in South Africa. Mr Sithole also said that the Province is also rich in mining and agriculture and that there are various opportunities that can be explored between the two countries.

Ms Neelina Vyas, Director-International from SOHAR, Oman, said that Oman is the gateway to the Middle East, and has a population of about 4.7 million people, with an ever-increasing demand for food. She said that the country receives fresh produce from Iran, Egypt, Philippines, India and South Africa. “South Africa is the strongest producing country where anything just grows. We believe that this will be a good platform for these two countries to make business of importing fresh food. We are very particular with the quality of the food and correct type of shipping for Halaal certified food,” she said. MEC Kholwane said that the Province would position itself to have a direct link with Oman, eliminating the middleman so that farmers who are doing all the hard work are able to make profit for themselves. The MEC said that the Department of Economic Development and Tourism will support the emerging farmers and ensure that they succeed. “Our investment agency, MEGA, will work closely with emerging farmers to ensure that their fresh produce is of export quality and ready for the international markets, including Oman. “We will also contribute to the sustainability of the

businesses, aided by the recently concluded agreement with the provincial government banker which has opened the credit line for enterprises in agriculture and fishery,” explained MEC Kholwane. Phakade Khanyile, CEO of African Farm, the youngest farming cooperative in the Province, said they have three farms and are farming with cattle, soya beans and sheep. He said that investing with the Omanese will be a success story for the Province. “When we started farming, we declared that we will expand if we have experimented, and we have all the expertise required. It is now working for us. We will go beyond the borders and it will be reality,” he said. The Oman delegation had an opportunity to directly network with farmers and also visited the Maseko Vegetable Farm, the Molatek Animal feed farm, the Komati Fruit Export, Joubert and Sons, and the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market which is under construction. “The Provincial government is committed to explore investments around the food hub, dairy and poultry farming as well as animal feed.” conclude MEC Kholwane.

## Third shift for provincial traffic officers will enhance road safety

By Moeti Mmusi: Community Safety, Security and Liason

The visibility of law enforcers has proven to have a positive impact on the behavior of road users when they see law enforcers. Increased traffic officers ‘visibility on weekends, will not only make the road safer but it will also assist taxi operators to make more money as tourists feel safer. This is according to Castigo Matola, who is a Metered Taxi Operator in Mbombela. The operator also added that the intended move will even reduce reckless driving such as dangerous overtaking and speeding which often leads to accidents. Matola was responding to the imminent introduction of a third shift for provincial traffic officers by the MEC for Community Safety Security and Liaison, Pat Ngomane. Mr Ngomane, announced the intended plan shortly after the commencement of Transport Month, saying that the long awaited move will be implemented before the end of the year. This, according to the MEC, is expected to contribute towards reduction of road crashes especially towards the Festive Season and beyond.

He explained that due to the magnitude of the project, all stakeholders had to be consulted, including labour unions, so that they buy-in into the project, and once consensus is reached, the roll out of the plan will be implemented. MEC Ngomane insisted that law enforcement will assist in curbing the high number of road accidents that continue to place many people’s lives in great danger, especially over the weekends, and during holiday periods when most people take to the roads. MEC has further implored on members of the public to participate in promotion of road safety by observing traffic rules, using the road considerately and also reporting those who deviate. He emphasised that road safety is everybody’s business and government alone will not win. MEC Ngomane also called for safe transportation of people and goods, saying the economic and social spinoffs derived from safe transport are massive. He said many people are employed by the transport sector and billions of rands are subsequently generated out of transport related activities. Transport Month was first launched in October 2005

and usually during this month, emphasis is placed on safe transportation of people and goods, hence road safety is also highlighted. The Department of Safety, Security and Liaison will conduct various programmes that will include roadblocks, road safety awareness programmes, rest stops and other general law enforcement operations.



Shuttle services will also benefit with the introduction of a third shift.



MEC Speed Mashilo leading a campaign of handing over houses to deserving beneficiaries across the Province

## Public engagement key for improved service delivery

By Nonhlanhla Masango: Department of Human Settlements

The Department of Human Settlements engaged on a public participation session at Govan Mbeki Local Municipality. The engagements gave the locals an opportunity to raise issues affecting them and a leeway for the Department to involve them on strategies to unlock challenges. MEC Speed Mashilo assured the gathering that the Department will deliver on its mandate.

“The Department’s mandate is to house people correctly, not everyone needs houses but others require land and rental units. Given that the area’s main challenges are land and illegal invaders, the Department will make an effort to negotiate with mines that own some of the land and purchase it for those who require it”, MEC Speed Mashilo committed.

The Department has noticed the mushrooming of informal settlements and attributed it to the high number of mineworkers and job seekers that are without proper housing. The MEC has promised that the Department will make sure that informal settlements are eradicated, and all those in need of rental units will be provided for through the Community Residential Units Programme. He further gave guarantee that 25 percent of the MEC’s budget will be used for other necessary infrastructure development in the municipality.

Apart from the public participation, the Department symbolically handed over two houses at Embalenhle Extension 22. The two houses are part of the more than R50 million projects of 500 housing units which were delivered through the Informal Settlements Upgrading

Programme which seeks to eradicate among others; dwellings in shacks and the occupation of derelict mud houses. Ms Nonkululelo Salusalu (59) is one of the beneficiaries who benefitted a house on the day. “The thought of living in a shack brings tears to me because I have lived in a shack for many years. A decent warm house brings comfort to my family,” said Ms. Salusalu during the handover.

The Department is prioritising title deeds in order for the rightful beneficiaries to legally own their properties. Part of the delays of issuing title deeds is that some of the areas in the municipality are not registered with the Deeds Office. In mitigating this challenge, the Department will henceforth apply for title deeds as soon as a project is enrolled, especially in proclaimed areas.

## Mpumalanga Oldies gear up for the 2017 National Golden Games

By the Department of Social Development

The Department of Social Development in collaboration with Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation and Health, hosted the 2017 Provincial Golden Games in Emalahleni in Nkangala District Municipality at Puma Stadium from 6 to 8 September 2017. Golden Games were first launched in September 2005 and are in line with priority No. 2 of the UN (United Nations) Obligation Madrid International Plan on Ageing which aims to enhance the quality of life of older persons and also improve their overall health. The games are further meant to create awareness of the abilities and capabilities of older persons in sport

and recreational activities, and to also support and increase the number of older persons participating in active ageing programmes. The programme targets persons aged above 60.

The Provincial Golden Games are a platform that prepares the elderly to participate at the National Golden Games which will be held from 22 to 28 October at Port Shepstone in KwaZulu Natal. One hundred and twenty (120) participants from each of the three districts will represent the province at this event.

The Provincial representatives at these games will take part in various sporting codes such as Duck walk, Dress up, Ball Passing, marathons, Ruby Ball Throw, Jukskei, Ring the stick and male and female soccer among others.



Training day for the elderly before the Golden Games.

# Mpumalanga Department of Health signs MOU with the Limpopo Department of Health



MEC Mr Gillion Mashego and Limpopo's MEC Dr Phophi Ramathuba.

By the Department of Health

The MECs for Health in Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces, Gillion Mashego and Dr Phophi Ramathuba, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which states that they will help and assist each other where it's possible, in terms of primary health care in both provinces.

The agreement will particularly assist in areas bordering the two provinces. Ehlanzeni and Nkangala regions in Mpumalanga will benefit from the agreement which was signed in Polokwane on 7 September 2017.

MEC Mashego said "Mpumalanga cannot compete with Limpopo in terms of health services and instead they should assist each other. "I'm very happy that I finally met with my colleague to finalise the agreement," Mashego added.

He emphasised that the main reason for signing the agreement is to make sure that accessibility of health care is available for the people of both Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

The MEC for Health in Limpopo Dr Phophi Ramathuba said "When we're measured in our country in terms of our life expectancy, they don't say Mpumalanga is doing well or Limpopo is doing well, they actually measure the whole country as one, they don't separate the provinces. As a country and as a nation, we are all being measured, and that is the indicator that the investors use to measure if whether they should come and invest in your country or not." she said.



Dispensing Optician, Ms Charmain Thandeka Lekhuleni.

## Mpumalanga launched its first optical lab

By the Department of Health

On the 24 of August 2017, the Mpumalanga Department of Health launched its first Optical Laboratory. The Laboratory is situated at the Mpumalanga Government Complex, in Building 8 in Mbombela. The Optical Lab is a place where prescription spectacles are manufactured; lenses are cut, polished and grinded for prescription glasses. Standing in for the MEC for Health Gillion Mashego, Director of Non-Communicable Diseases, Ms Sara Gumede said the objective is to reduce the occurrence of avoidable visual impairment and blindness caused by refractive errors by increasing access to spectacles that are new, affordable and good quality.

This facility will benefit members of the public, patients will be screened at their nearest health facilities, and only prescriptions will be forwarded to the laboratory for the production of the spectacles. It's very exciting that the facility will be managed by our own Government bursary holder, the Dispensing Optician, Ms Charmain Thandeka Lekhuleni. Mr France Nxumalo from the National Health Department responsible for Eye Health congratulated Mpumalanga for the realisation of this important facility, saying it is a breakthrough in the fight against the occurrence of avoidable blindness.

## Provincial Treasuries share best experiences on term contracts

By the Mpumalanga Provincial Treasury

If you want to start a successful journey, you must first ask those who have travelled it to avoid the challenges that they went through. This was said by the MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Sikhumbuzo Kholwane.

The MEC was addressing a two day meeting of Treasury officials from Mpumalanga and Free State Province on Monday, 04 September 2017, where he emphasised the importance of learning from each other's experience to expedite the implementation of the procurement reforms in the public sector.

"Our Province is preparing to implement transversal term contracts as part of the procurement reforms. It is important, as we undertake this important policy assignment, to arm ourselves with the necessary knowledge and experience to perfect the implementation process of transversal contracts, said MEC Kholwane.

He said the Provincial Treasury took a decision to stop-over in the Free State because it is one of the provinces that started implementing the term contracts a few years ago.

"We have noted that the Free State Province has walked this path before us. We are here to learn how you have done it, which items you started with, the challenges that you went through, and importantly, to exchange ideas on how best to respond to the dynamics of implementing the current transversal term contracts in the country, said MEC Kholwane.

Both the MECs for Finance in Mpumalanga and Free State agreed that the transversal term contracts must respond to the socio-economic development agenda in their respective provinces. "We share the same sentiment that transversal term contracts must respond to the provinces' dynamics and the decision on the localisation of procurement opportunities, said Free State MEC,

Ms Elzabe Rockman.

The Head Official of the Provincial Treasury, Ms Bede Nkamba committed to ensure that the lessons learnt are incorporated in the current processes to speed up the implementation of the term contracts in the Province.

In his Policy and Budget speech earlier this year, MEC Kholwane said the transversal term contracts will improve efficiency, secure value for money, and ensure that the Province benefits from economies of scale.

The Provincial Treasury has so far concluded the analysis of existing contracts on the identified commodities such as cleaning material, stationery, toiletries, furniture as well as events management, to give effect to this policy injunction that Premier DD Mabuza announced in his State of the Province Address in March 2017.



Mpumalanga and Free State Treasury MECs, Mr Sikhumbuzo Eric Kholwane and Ms Elzabe Rockman.

# Best built stakeholders receive recognition



Ms Dion Mhlongo holding an accolade and posing for a picture with MEC Speed Mashilo (left), the Head of Human Settlements, Mr Kebone Masange (far left) and the newly appointed Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality, Executive Mayor, Cllr. Thulare Madileng.

By Nombuso Ntsele: Department of Human Settlements

There is a new trajectory in the realisation of integrated and structured development in Mpumalanga. Over the years, the country has been subjected to skewed planning patterns and inept service delivery designed along racial lines. The advent of democracy in 1994 ushered in a people inclined legislations and government's developmental programmes aimed at ensuring that the welfare of communities is improved – and in the process – deal with the three social ills of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The annual Govan Mbeki Awards (GMA) that took place at the eMalahleni City Hall celebrates and honour the tremendous work by stakeholders in the built sector. Opening the ceremony, Human Settlements Head, Mr Kebone Masange bare it open that the Department was not in any way primed to fail or compromise its services; hence there is so much concerted effort to ensure that houses of good quality are built.

“This sector is one of the most complex anyone could ever know. There is so much that comes with it

and everything of it must be done in the right way,” explained Masange. Despite appraising much of the good work that has been done, Masange also took a swipe at underperforming contractors saying that the Department would not give anyone any blanket approach, in case they failed to deliver on time, but send them straight out to the cold. He said, “It is proper for us to appreciate the good service, however, that does not mean we should not point out any sloppy work done and such would not be left unpunished.” Ms Dion Mhlongo is a woman contractor who has been constructing houses for 17 years. Her company, DR Bongane recently won an Award as an Established Woman Contractor for the year. She expressed her delight and acknowledged the Department for recognising her hard work, “It's exciting to be among the best winners but more importantly, the recognition to honour the hard work we put in every day, together with my team,” she said. The Govan Mbeki Awards have created a viable competitive environment and an improvement in the quality of service delivery since inception.

Meanwhile Human Settlements MEC, Speedy

Mashilo said housing provision is biased towards needy beneficiaries. He said RDP houses were meant for the elderly, child-headed families and people living with disabilities. “We must go back to basics. Young men shouldn't expect government to build houses for them; instead they should work hard and build houses for their families,” said Mashilo. The contractors were urged to work with speed and accelerate the pace in the provision of basic quality services. The awards encourage contractors who make government proud by producing good quality services across the Province.

The GMA were initiated in 2006 to encourage and showcase excellence, best practices and recognise exceptional performance in the human settlements delivery value chain. The overall winners in all the ten Competing Categories were:

<b>Baphi Investment</b>	Best Informal Upgrading Project
<b>Shirdo Trading</b>	Best Integrated Residential Development Programme
<b>KD Madonsela Trading and Projects</b>	Best Rural Housing Project
<b>LLG Projects</b>	Best Non-Subsidy Market
<b>DR Bongani Investment</b>	Best Established Women Contractor
<b>Asishiyelene Supply</b>	Best Youth Emerging Contractor
<b>Prince of Tides</b>	Best Community Residential Units
<b>Umziwethu Holdings</b>	Best Finance Linked Individual Subsidy (CRU)
<b>Govan Mbeki Local Municipality</b>	Best Accredited Municipality Level 1
<b>Steve Tshwete Local Municipality</b>	Best Accredited Municipality Level 2

Successful overall winners from provinces will compete with their counterparts at the National GMA ceremony scheduled for later this year in Gauteng. Once again, congratulations to all the participants and winners of the GMA 2017.



## Road towards historic village undergoes major upgrade

By the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport

A road is not just a path, but is considered a critical input to a number of socio-economic outcomes. Better roads reduce travelling time thus enabling those who commute daily to spend time with their families. Without roads infrastructure lives would be slower, unproductive and time consuming. Road D2951 between R571 and Mbuzini is one of the roads which are undergoing major face lift as part of Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport's

commitment to develop enabling road infrastructure both in rural and urban areas.

This project, which is designed for 20 years life span, entails the construction of three pavement layers and surfacing of the road. The key elements includes expansion of the lanes width, surface shoulder and gravel shoulder. The project commenced in February 2016 and is scheduled to be completed by February 2018 at a cost of more than R228 million.

The total length of the road is 24.5 km and has

already created 159 job opportunities for the locals, and a lot more opportunities going to local business through sub-contracts. More than R28 million has already been spent on over 20 local enterprises for provision of a number of services such as; tipper trucks hire, TLB's hire, mobile toilets hire, water tanker hire, installation of guardrails and kerbs, construction of concrete edge beams headwalls, wing walls and Apron Slabs for Culverts Installing.

# Mpumalanga joins in celebrating World Food Day

By the Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs



MEC VR Shongwe with HoD Ms SP Xulu at the Phezukomkhono Mlimi launch in KwaMhlanga.

The MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, Mr VR Shongwe is calling on all communities in Mpumalanga to take advantage of any available piece of land to establish vegetable gardens, and fight hunger. He was speaking at the Matibidi sports field, in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, during the launch of the Ehlanzeni North District Phezukomkhono Mlimi Ploughing Season, on 22 September 2017. MEC Shongwe led a series of District launches of Phezukomkhono Mlimi Ploughing Season, to serve as a build-up towards the launch of the Provincial Ploughing Season, to coincide with the commemoration of World Food Day on 13 October 2017 at eButsini Cultural Village. Shongwe has already held similar District launches in KwaMhlanga in Nkangala on 28th September, and Numbi at Ehlanzeni South District on 10 October 2017. In response to the challenges facing small-scale and emerging farmers, MEC Shongwe is prioritising the Massification of Crop Production, through the

revitalised Phezukomkhono Mlimi Programme. “The reinforcement of the programme is an intervention strategy aimed at mobilising and supporting rural households to return to utilising agricultural land for own food production as livelihood. We strive to ensure food security at household level”, said MEC Shongwe.

Hundred households per District have been receiving food garden starter packs, as the MEC encourages household food production as a means to fight hunger. Beneficiaries include the youth, women, child-headed households, people living with disabilities and schools, who are encouraged to have their own gardens, including backyard gardens.

The Department introduced the food security programme through increased mechanisation using the Masibuyele Emasimini Programme. Since his deployment to DARDLEA just over a year ago, MEC Shongwe has since revived the programme, now calling it Phezukomkhono Mlimi, with the aim to encourage, not just farmers alone, but individuals to utilise both existing and fallow fields for food production.



Deputy Minister Bapela introduced the Royal Highness Award at the indaba in White River and Traditional leaders commended the announcement for the Award.

# Traditional leaders in Mpumalanga line up for top Award

By the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs

Traditional leaders in Mpumalanga are gearing themselves up for the Inaugural Royal Highness Award next year. The Award was announced by the Deputy Minister of Traditional Affairs, Obed Bapela at the Indaba for traditional leaders that was held in White River recently.

The Award will be launched in November this year, and it is meant to recognise traditional leaders whose initiatives contribute to the improvement of the lives of communities in their jurisdiction.

Deputy Minister Bapela said a nomination process will be conducted to determine the nominees, and the criteria will include innovative means such as the use of technology as a solution to socio-economic challenges confronting communities.

“Communities are plagued by deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS and crime. Through the advancement of

technology, Amakhosi can lead the pack by warning communities about diseases through dissemination of information by using social media platforms.

Cases of stock theft are high in rural areas. Through the use of drones, traditional leaders can identify the thieves without alerting them (thieves) and inform the police to apprehend them before the livestock disappear,” the Deputy Minister hinted.

The Chairperson of the Provincial House, Inkhosi Sandile Ngomane and King Makhosoke II are tipped to win the Award. “Inkhosi Ngomane has modernised the Hhoyi Traditional Council by creating a website for access to information about the history of the traditional leadership, and useful information about cultural values and traditions,” said the Deputy Chairperson, Ikosi Cecil Mahlangu. King Makhosoke’s contribution, according to Ikosi Mahlangu, in the development of the Ndebele language is also a case in

point.

“He worked hard for the introduction of isiNdebele at the University of Venda. Since then the language has been pitched at Master’s degree level,” Ikosi Mahlangu added.

Bapela’s also hinted that the National House of Traditional Leaders is considering establishing an educational programme to fund the studies of traditional leaders. He also added that partnerships with traditional leadership in countries like Ghana and United Arab Emirates and a research programme, will be looked into.

During the Indaba, MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land Administration and Environmental Affairs, Vusi Shongwe and Mpumalanga Police Commissioner, Lt-General Zuma presented plans to deal with socio-economic challenges faced by rural communities.



Provincial Maths, Science and Technology Academy.

## Mpumalanga learners to benefit from the state of the art Maths, Science and Technology Academy

By the Department of Education

**M**pumalanga is one of the provinces that are successfully implementing the 1+4 to improve learner performance in Grade 8 and 9 Mathematics. During the launch of the Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy on 03 October 2017 in Emalahleni, Premier DD Mabuza thanked all teachers and schools which have embraced this progressive initiative. The MSTA was established through a partnership between the Mpumalanga Provincial Government and mining company South 32, formally known as PHP Billiton. The MSTA functions as a hub for 101 schools spread throughout the four districts of the Province, to access broadcast teaching and learning lessons. The Academy also functions as a training facility for teacher development in Mathematics, Science and Technology. South 32 President and Chief Operating Officer for Africa Region, Mike Fraser said, “We know that advances in these areas will provide opportunities to better the lives of millions of people and we are proud that our collaborative approach with government and the community has resulted in this important facility.” The MSTA is one of the tools that will elevate the participation and pass rate of the science subjects in the Province. This will place more emphasis

on the ability to bridge the scarce skills gap with a science revolution. In addition to the launch, the Mpumalanga Department of Education has undertaken to increase the uptake of Mathematics and Physical Science at Grade 10 to 60 000 and 50 000 respectively by 2020. This will help to improve the percentage of grade 12 learners achieving 50% and more in Mathematics and Physical Science, from 21.1% to 60% and from 20.2% to 60% by 2020. The Department will equally train 5000 teachers on pedagogical content knowledge and facilitation skills in Mathematics and Science, and ensure that 100% of learners have access to the required resource material in all grades and subjects by 2020. The Mpumalanga Provincial Government is deeply indebted to South 32 who has invested millions into the establishment of the state of the art facility and world-class technology. This is another investment that speaks volumes about government’s intention to improve the lives of the people of South Africa and Mpumalanga in particular. This could not be summed up better than liberation icon OR Tambo when he said, “The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does value its youth and children does not deserve its future.”



## Drie stokkies players win big at Indigenous Games Festival

By the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation

**T**eam Mpumalanga’s dominance by Drie Stokkies at the National Indigenous Games continued at this year’s tournament, which was held in Seshego, Limpopo during Heritage Month.

Banele Shabangu and Wendy Msizane won gold and bronze, respectively in Drie Stokkies Women’s final to ensure that the Province had players on the podium for the second year running, following a clean sweep in the men’s final in 2016 when three players from the Province finished on the podium (first place, Sibusiso Ngwenya, second place, Alpha Nyathi and third place, Derrick Masina). This year, it was a turn of the female players to shine at the tournament and they did not disappoint when Shabangu and Msizane qualified for the finals and the rest is history.

“The Province is extremely proud of the effort of the team, and we are encouraged that the men and women played well and their stellar performances improved the team’s medal count from four to five,” said the Department’s Sibongile Nkosi. The other medalists were jukskei team (silver), Errol Nxabane (bronze) and Baxolile Mtsweni (bronze) both in intonga.

The final standings were as follows: 1. KwaZulu Natal, 2. Limpopo, 3. Western Cape, 4. North West, 5. Gauteng, 6. Mpumalanga, 7. Eastern Cape, 8. Free State and 9. Northern Cape.

“Indigenous Games are used in promoting cultural activities that have a particular appeal to vast sectors of the South African community – young and old, black and white,” adds Nkosi.

It goes without saying that they are more than a recreational sport, as they play a pivotal role in promoting national unity and social cohesion in the following codes: diketo (coordination game), dibeke (running game), khokho (running game), morabaraba (board game), incuva (board game), jukskei (target game), kgati (rope-jumping), intonga (stick fighting) and drie stokie.



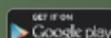
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