

INAUGURATION SPEECH BY THE PREMIER OF MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, MR. PADNEY MANDLA NDLOVU 18 JUNE 2024

Judge President of the High Court of Mpumalanga, Justice Mphahlele

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga Legislature

The Chief Whip

Honourable members of the Legislature

Leaders of the governing party, the African National Congress, led by the Provincial Secretary, Cde Muzi Chirwa

Leaders from the Alliance partners, SACP, COSATU and SANCO

Chairperson of the Mpumalanga Provincial House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders, Kgoši Mokoena

Acting Director General, Mr. Peter Nyoni

Religious leaders kanye nabaholi bezinkolo zesintu nezendabuko

Members of the fourth estate, the Media

Avuxeni, Sanibonani, Lotshani, Dumelanga, Good Morning, Goeie môre

I would like to take this opportunity and thank Judge President Mphahlele for presiding over my taking the Oath of Office.

What you have just witnessed is the completion of the process that started on Friday, 14 June 2024, when members of various political parties were sworn in as members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, including the election of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and of course, the election of the Premier of the Province.

That process has culminated in my acceptance of the responsibilities of the Premier of Mpumalanga Province, as you have all witnessed the taking of the Oath of office, just minutes ago.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to my predecessor, the former Premier of Mpumalanga Province, Hon Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, for the sterling work she did during difficult periods when the world was affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, and what President Ramaphosa declared as the second pandemic, that is, Gender

Based Violence and Femicide. We congratulate her on being elected as the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).

Let me start by congratulating His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa on his election as the President of the Republic of South Africa for the second term of office.

As the Premier of Mpumalanga Province, my Executive and the entire government, including the people of Mpumalanga, we pledge our full support to President Ramaphosa and the National Government.

In accordance with Chapter 6 of the Constitution of South Africa, Section 132, read with 133, the Premier shall appoint no fewer than 5 and no more than 10 members of the executive council and assign them responsibilities.

I am pleased to present to you capable Members of the Executive Council who will be assisting me in carrying out the responsibilities of running government. These members are:

Portfolio/Department	Member of the Executive Council
Health	Ms. Sasekani Janet Manzini
Education	Ms. Landulile Chathrine Dlamini
Public Works, Roads and Transport	Mr. Thulasizwe Simon Thomo
Social Development	Ms. Brenda Khethiwe Moeketsi
Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs	Ms. Nompumelelo Evidence Hlophe
Provincial Treasury	Mr. Bonakele Amos Majuba
Economic Development and Tourism	Ms. Makhosazane Christine Masilela
Culture, Sports and Recreation	Mr. Fana Vincent Mlombo
Community Safety, Security and Liaison	Mr. Khesani Jackie Macie
Human Settlements, Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs	Mr. Speed Katishi Mashilo

Honourable members congratulations on your new responsibilities, but I want to ask you some few questions, please respond to these questions:

- Can you pass through the eye of the needle?
- Is there anything that makes you ineligible to hold the position of the MEC?

- Do you know the priorities of the ANC manifesto?
- Do you know the core values of the ANC cadre?
- Do you know that when a cadre is appointed in a new position s/he is incapacitated?

Please respond to these questions, tell no lies and claim no easy victories. Don't bite your tongue respond!

The transition from the 6th administration to the 7th administration has now been completed with the appointment of the executive.

It is an honour and a privilege to have been sworn in as the Premier of this beautiful province, Mpumalanga, ***The Place of the Rising Sun.***

It is an honour crafted by the hands of the people when they went to the voting stations on the 29th of May 2024, braving the chilly winter weather as they patiently stood in long queues to cast their vote. Some amongst them, casting their votes for the first time, encouraged by the hope of a better tomorrow.

It is an honour that has reignited the dream of our nation's founders for a reinvigorated government that **puts its people first**, following the ***Batho Pele*** principles.

The people's passionate love shown by the voters of our country at large reminded me about our emergence from the womb of the great struggle that birthed our Freedom in 1994, carrying a dream, not merely of being freed from oppression, but of making the lives of our people better.

The vision this Government has of making the lives of our people better continues to those deployed and the administration to work tirelessly until it is achieved. The father of our democracy, Oliver Reginald Tambo urged us when he said: "The fight for freedom must go on until it is won; until our country is **free** and **happy** and **peaceful** as part of the community of man, **we cannot rest.**"

When we get tired, we will be failing the youth of 1976 who marched against apartheid Education system on the 16th June. Their dream for a better Education system was to ensure that all get skilled to face the future. With our provincial unemployment rate standing so high, we surely cannot rest nor spare ourselves.

What will bind us together is equal sharing of our wealth, as enshrined in the Freedom Charter, prosperity and economic emancipation.

Our people have spoken, and we got the message that they yearn for sustainable quality services. They yearn for portable water, improved sanitation facilities, improved road infrastructure, a safe environment, good health services, to name a few.

These services will never be brought by mere speeches. We need to go beyond our comfort zones and deliver these services to our people together. The District Development Model being the approach to assist us to consult our main stakeholders, the voters, and big businesses. All the MECs will be assigned various Districts where they will champion DDM.

We will strengthen the capacity of the infrastructure department to invest in the people. I know that there is a temptation by departments to implement their infrastructure projects. I will advise you not to. The Department of infrastructure should be empowered to implement all our projects in the province. The department can allocate certain projects to other implementing agents.

There is no proper explanation why the province forfeited certain amounts of money in the last two financial years because of non-spending by IDT and DBSA which is a bank of course, it has its own mandate. We must also allow departments to procure their own services and allow the department of Public Works, Roads and Transport to concentrate infrastructure development.

In South Africa, we have a cooperative government which is a partnership among the three spheres of government requiring each government to fulfil a specific role. They complement each other, and I would like to request all our MEC's to promote and facilitate cooperative decision making and to ensure that policies and activities across all spheres encourage service delivery and meet the needs of the citizens in an effective way.

I accept the responsibility of ensuring that the people are better serviced. Together with the capable women and men that I have appointed, we will reach out and build a government that represents the very best ethos of my party the African National Congress. A better life will only be achieved when we do more, together.

During this time, we draw our strength from the wisdom of Tata Nelson Rholihlala Mandela when he guided that: *“Difficulties break some men but make **others**.”* He continued and said: *“Of course, any project comes with inherent difficulties beyond our own disagreements. But if we can be those “others”—those who are made by the difficulties rather than discouraged by them—we can push past them and work together to reach a solution.”*

We promise to create a future of this province that is worthy of the sacrifices of our leaders, especially those who hail from our province, **Gert Sibande, Nokuthula Simelane, Portia Shabangu, Phillip Radebe, Jackson Mthembu, Che Masilela, Ruth First, Henry Nxumalo** among others.

I must say that I am no stranger to poverty and hunger as a person. I was raised in a poor village. I come from the background that understands what it means to go hungry, and what it means to have no water and electricity or a waterborne toilet. Some of our people still experience these challenges. We need to work with speed and turn things around.

Crime and gender based violence and femicide remains a serious concern for our people. MEC Macie, there are some few questions that I always ask myself:

- where does my help come from?
- Who killed Cllr Muzi Manyathi, Cllr Thabo Ngwenya and Cllr Lot Bazooka Nkuna?
- Who abducted the municipal Manager of Nkangala District Municipality?
- Who broke into the house of MEC Sasekani?
- Who hijacked MEC Mashilo?

Working with the National Government, we will call for an increase in police visibility and the strengthening of crime intelligence. We are further encouraging our courts to tighten bail applications requirements for repeating offenders.

Our pledge is to govern Mpumalanga well, for the benefit of all its people, regardless of their race, colour or creed. Mpumalanga is a beautiful province endowed with flora and fauna, a diverse multicultural rainbow nation living peaceful side by side.

In the few weeks to come, I will deliver my state of the province address (SOPA) where I will share with you the government’s priorities which will include among others:

- Building a capable state that functions optimally delivering quality basic services to the people of this province.
- For the first 100 days in office I will visit all municipalities, get a better understanding of their challenges and assist them without interfering. However, I will not hesitate to intervene within the prescripts of the law should it become clear that our people are not getting the services they deserve.
- I will launch a multimillion rand fund driven largely by public private sector partnership that includes financial institutions, mining companies, the corporate world and the SETAs. This fund will focus on supporting SMMEs and also deal with skills development for the out of school youth, youth that is out of tertiary institutions and is unemployed.
- We will review all programmes and projects that are geared towards youth development including the Premier's Youth Development Fund, and many others, appraise them and see if they have the desired outcomes and impact on the ground.
- Government driven infrastructure projects will have to scale up the absorption of unemployed graduates. Working with SETAs, we will also give the private sector incentives to absorb unemployed graduates through learner-ship programmes.
- We will build and renovate more schools, clinics and attend to the maintenance of road infrastructure within the budgetary constraints.

Let me pause and thank all the people of South Africa for coming out in numbers to vote for our Government. This is a sign of a maturing democracy. You must all know that Mpumalanga is your home and you are free to share whatever frustrations you have. We have capable Executive Authorities and Heads of Departments that will respond to any issue raised by communities.

My humble request to all the people of Mpumalanga is to give me and my Executive a chance to earn your trust and make this task mutually beneficial for all of us.

I urge all of us by borrowing from the young revolutionary Leader, Thomas Sankara that: *“(We) cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness.”*

Before I conclude I want to ask you again, do you know that when a cadre is assigned new responsibilities, s/he is incapacitated? it is your duty to capacitate yourself. Accept that you don't know and make effort to capacitate yourself. There are already annual performance plans, audit outcomes with clearly developed audit action plans and other important acts and regulations that can make you a better MEC. Please capacitate yourself.

The people of Mpumalanga expect all of us to work tirelessly to guide them towards a better tomorrow. I hope you enjoy your portfolios and work hard to nip any form of corruption from the bud!

Here in Mpumalanga province, when we wake up, we work hard to deliver!

I thank you.