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**Author:** Buhle Matsoele



The MEC for economic development and tourism, Makhosazane Masilela.

## Premier talks public-private partnerships

**Buhle Matsoele**

EMALAHLENI - The premier, Mandla Ndllovu, delivered an address at the Mpumalanga Business Connect, a session aimed at strengthening public-private partnerships between the provincial government and the business sector.

The event, led by the premier and the MEC for economic development and tourism, Makhosazane Masilela, was held at The Ridge on Friday.

According to Ndllovu, it formed part of the engagements that are in pursuit of the key priorities of the seventh administration.

These include the banking sector, telecommunication companies and recently, the South African Sugar Association.

During his address, Ndllovu said the

medium-term development plan of the seventh administration emphasises the three key priorities of driving inclusive growth and job creation, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

"While these three strategic priorities are interrelated, driving inclusive growth and job creation to reduce the unemployment rate are viewed as top priorities. The unemployment rate is currently at 34.7% and the poverty rate is above 50%."

Despite the current economic uncertainties, the province is on a quest to create more job opportunities.

"The Mpumalanga Business Connect will afford me and the business sector the opportunity to share information on building the economy by developing interventions aimed at increasing prosperity for the province," he said.

Ndllovu also highlighted the mining industry's impressive labour productivity, the highest among all sectors in the province, alongside its achievement of employment equity targets, with 43.8% representation in core skills.

Several MECs and business representatives were among the attendees, as well as leaders from the mining sector, Eskom's Kusile Power Station and the Mineral Council of South Africa. Notable businesses outlined investment opportunities and the challenges impacting their operations.

The MEC for public works, roads and infrastructure, Thulasizwe Thomo, said: "This was a strategic platform to foster stronger public-private partnerships between the provincial government and the mining and energy sectors, with a shared goal of stimulating the province's economy and creating sustainable employment opportunities."

"This dialogue is a critical part of the provincial government's efforts to drive private sector investment. It signifies optimism for economic growth prospects."



The MEC for public works, roads and transport, Thulasizwe Thomo.



Premier Mandla Ndllovu. Photos: Sourced/Facebook