

MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L (JABU) MAHLANGU, MPL DURING THE OCASSION TO CELEBRATE CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN MTPA, SWAZILAND TOURISM AGENCY AND THE MOZAMBIQUE TOURISM AGENCY AT WHITE RIVER, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Wednesday, 16 September 2009

Programme Director, Ms Nothemba Madumo;

The proxy of the Executive Mayor of Mbombela Local Municipality, Councillor Siwela;

Chairperson of the MTPA Board, Mr Sabelo Mahlalela;

Chairperson of the Swaziland Tourism Agency Board, Mr Tim Zwane;

Chairperson of the National Tourism Institute of Mozambique (INATUR), Mr Jose' Tombo Psico;

Our World Renowned Jazz Musician, Bra Hugh Masekela;

CEO of MTPA, Mr Charles Ndabeni;

CEO of the Swaziland Tourism Agency, Mr Eric Maseko;

General Manager of INATUR, Mr Bernado Dramos;

Members of the media present;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen.

When delivering his maiden State of the Nation Address on the third of June this year, President Jacob Zuma said and I quote:

"We have committed ourselves over the years to contribute to building a better Africa, and a better world. (Our) main goal is to ensure that our foreign relations, contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth and

development. We will (therefore) continue to prioritise the African continent."

I am therefore humbled and honoured this evening, to be part of this history making occasion, to witness the partnership in relation to tourism between the three (3) countries of Africa. I am thrilled because as a province, we are continuing to heed the call of our leader, uComrade President Jacob Zuma to contribute towards building Africa. I believe that we can all agree that the partnership we are celebrating this evening, is a sign of our commitment towards contributing to building a better SADC region, a better Africa and a world for all who live in it. The people of Africa have pinned their hopes on us, and we dare not fail them.

Programme Director, your Worship the Executive Mayor, you will recall that when we pitched for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in 2004, we committed as a country, to make the forthcoming World Cup event, an African event. The commitment meant that we want Africa, and not South Africa alone, to share and benefit from the economic spin-offs that would be generated through the staging of the spectacular world cup event in our country. This promise therefore, was our commitment to realise the prosperity of Africa as the continent

The partnership between our Province represented by the MTPA; the Swaziland Tourism Agency and the National Tourism Institute of Mozambique is also a sign of our political commitment to see SADC and Africa prospering. Through this partnership, we will be able to collectively promote and advance tourism within our region for the benefit of the people of the three countries and beyond. And when our neighbours benefit from our windfall like the World Cup, their economies will grow and create more job opportunities for their people. SADC and Africa at large will therefore be able to take care of its people. We cannot therefore be selfish as a province, and not want to share with our brothers and sisters from Swaziland and Mozambique.

As we are one of the host cities for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, it is our responsibility collectively, to ensure that we give visitors to our continent, Africa's warm welcome. As Africans, we believe that visitors bring lots of luck hence we must treat them like kings and queens, when they decent on our doorstep. We must ensure that we make their stay memorable, if we want to convince them to stay longer or even come back.

As I conclude, may I also as the Leader of Government Business, indicate that we support the initiative and will do everything possible to ensure that it bears fruit, for the benefit of the people of Africa. We are also convinced that this partnership on tourism between the three (3) countries, signals our countries' unwavering support to this course. It further signals our commitment of *contributing to the creation of an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth and development* in Africa, as mandated by our President. Tourism is our gold-mine; we must therefore exploit it for the benefit of all our people.

As Thomas Edison, the world's famous bulb light inventor once said and I quote:

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

We have collectively seen an opportunity to be explored and exploited; we are not afraid to face it head-on despite it camouflaging in overalls – we will not miss it.

Working together as stakeholders in the tourism industry, **we can do more** for Africa and improve the socio-economic well-being of its people. Let's seize this opportunity being afforded to us by the world to prove that we are a force to be reckoned with.

Africa Ke Nako!

Nyalo Litfuba letfu!

Agora eahora!

Obrigado!