

FAREWELL MESSAGE BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM AND ALSO LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, MR J.L (JABU) MAHLANGU DURING AN OCCASION TO BID FAREWELL TO THE OUTGOING SPEAKER OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, MR JACKSON MTHEMBU AT THE MPUMALANGA LEGISLATURE CHAMBER, NELSPRUIT, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Friday, 30 October 2009

Outgoing Speaker, Mr Jackson Mthembu;
Deputy Speaker, Ms Violet Siwela;
Chief Whip of the Majority Party; Mr Siphosezwe Masango;
Colleagues in the Executive Council;
Honourable Members of the Legislature;
Distinguished guests;
Members of the media;
Comrades and friends;
Ladies and gentlemen;

In the words of U.S President Barack Obama, and I quote:

“If you're walking down the right path.....and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress.”

Indeed we continue to be on the right track, and willing to keep walking as the ruling African National Congress. Walking side-by-side with Comrade Mthembu, as dedicated cadres of the African National Congress in our journey towards **“a better life for all,”** we continued to make significant strides in improving the lives of our people.

We can pride ourselves that despite the challenges we continue to face, the lives of our people are better than yesterday, and we are quite certain that they will even be better than today, come tomorrow. This is a commitment that we will see to the grave, and nobody or anything will derail us from fulfilling that.

It is however unfortunate, that our gathering here this morning, is to bid farewell to you Comrade Mthembu, as the Member of this house, and also as the Speaker of the Legislature. Despite your short stint, we surely will miss you from within our ranks, but we take solace from the fact that your outstanding capabilities will be used at a national level for the benefit of our people. As a province, we are humbled and honoured by the confidence shown in us by the national leadership of the ruling African National Congress, by appointing “us” to become the movement’s nationwide voice.

I say “us” because Comrade Mthembu as a child of this province, will be representing the province while doing duty for the ANC. As a result, appointing one of our own to this strategic and challenging position, symbolise confidence in the capability of the ANC in the province; that of being able to nurture and produce dedicated cadres of note, such as comrade Jackson.

My experience of working with the outgoing Speaker, paints a picture of a person who was, and continues to be dedicated towards the noble course of our movement; that of ensuring that we continue to unshackle the poor from the bondages of poverty. It paints a picture of a selfless cadre who is at all times prepared to sacrifice his family’s time, to push the agenda of his political home. Though bidding one’s comrade and compatriot farewell is not a nice experience, we take solace from the fact that he is leaving the province to represent us at a national level.

We appreciate and cherish the fact that we have been chosen, through the appointment of comrade Mthembu, to become the national voice of our caring movement, the African National Congress. As one of the inaugural members of this house, Comrade Mthembu made significant contributions towards shaping our legislature and government back in 1994. We will forever cherish his contribution, and believe that his departure from the provincial political landscape, is not a loss but a gain to the province. He remains a loyal and committed member of our movement; and believe he will continue to devote this energy towards supporting our course of bettering the lives of the people of this province.

As I close, American poet and linguist, Henry Longfellow once said, and I quote:

“Perseverance is a great element of success. If you only knock long enough and loud enough at the gate, you are sure to wake up somebody.”

On behalf of the Premier, Mr David Mabuza and the people of Mpumalanga, I congratulate you on your appointment as the National Spokesperson of the African National Congress. We surely will miss your valuable contribution in the provincial administration and in this august house.

Working together we can do more to continue to realise the commitments we made in the *Freedom Charter*. We are the only hope for our people, especially those who cannot fend for themselves, and as President Jacob Zuma warns, **“we dare not fail them”**.

So long Comrade Jackson, so long!

Remember that the struggle for a better life for all, continues.