

**MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L MAHLANGU, MPL, DURING THE
OPENING OF THE INAUGURAL LOWVELD MASTERS TOURNAMENT AT
THE WHITE RIVER COUNTRY CLUB, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.**

Monday, 25 October 2010

Tournament Director, Mr Kobus Meyer;
International Golf Professional, Mr Cobie Le Grange;
Professor Alfred Nevhutanda;
All sponsors of this event;
Distinguished guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

In the words of American Professional Golfer, Harvey Penick, and I quote:

*"All seasoned players know, or at least have felt
that when you are playing your best, you are much the same as
in a state of meditation. You're free of tension and chatter.
You are concentrating on one thing. It is the ideal condition for
good golf."*

Ladies and gentlemen, in my endeavour to understand the game of golf, I've learned that it is not only a sporting code, but a game to instil discipline and commitment towards reaching one's goals. If you want full concentration when pondering about the future, go for the game of golf.

I am therefore humbled and honoured, to have been invited to be part of the golfing history in the Lowveld of our province. I believe that the launch and opening of the Lowveld Masters Tournament, which is intended to become an annual event, will draw a huge number of passionate golfers from across our province and the rest of South Africa. This will in turn have a rippling effect to our tourism industry, thereby contributing towards growing our provincial economy.

From the tourism perspective, I am sure that you are all aware that sport and tourism are like the two sides of a coin - they remain inseparable. We believe that our aspiring SMMEs and communities will benefit from such sporting events, which have a potential to become international tournaments in future. And when that happens, our province will be put on the international radar screen, hence we believe that they should be supported and nurtured.

On behalf of the Premier of Mpumalanga and the government, we congratulate the organisers of this event, and wish them well going into the future. We are excited that the tournament will give our local amateur golfers, an opportunity to compete in the Mauritius 2011 Le Paradis Challenge.

And when we get an opportunity to play internationally, I urge you to become patriotic by becoming our tourism ambassadors. Tell the world what Mpumalanga can offer – the evidence is at their disposal. They are aware that we have just recently hosted the successful FIFA World Cup – the first ever on the African soil. Just like soccer and rugby have united our people, we believe that the game of golf has the same effect. It is our collective role to nurture it, in order to benefit from its proceeds.

As I close, in the words of American billionaire, Sir Richard Devos, *“The only thing that stands between a man and what he wants from life, is often merely the will to try it, and faith to believe it is possible.”*

In coming up with this tournament, you've proved that nothing will stand between you and your determination. You've shown the will to succeed, hence this gathering this morning. I commit that our government is right behind you all the way.

Once more, congratulations on the launch of the annual Lowveld Masters Tournament.

Happy tee-ing!

I thank you!