

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L (JABU) MAHLANGU, MPL DURING THE OFFICIAL HAND-OVER OF NEW HAWKERS' STALLS AT PILGRIMS REST, THABA CHWEU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Friday, 05 February 2010

Programme Director, Mr Alex Dibakoane;

Our host, the General Manager of the Transvaal Gold Mining Estates, Mr Danny Jacobs;

MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Dr Clifford Mkasi;

The representative of the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, Councillor Patience Chima;

Our beneficiaries;

Government officials present;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

There is a Chinese proverb which says, and I quote:

“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime!”

Programme Director, this statement is in support of our government's commitment to partner with all those who are interested in turning South Africa into a fully developmental state; a state where people are given the necessary infrastructure to improve their lives.

When delivering the ANC's January 8 Statement in Galeshewe in the Northern Cape last month, President Jacob Zuma called on the private sector to partner with government in order to realise a dream of building a developmental state, where people are self-reliant. This he said, we can be able to do by continuing to *"build a state that is democratic, people-driven and people-centred, and we must (also) pursue a sustained development based on an inclusive growth path."*

We are therefore humbled and appreciate the contribution made by the Transvaal Gold Mining Estates, who have seen it necessary to provide the infrastructure we are handing-over here this morning. We appreciate their realisation that they needed to plough back into the community they are operating from. This will enable our aspiring entrepreneurs, to do their business under dignified and habitable structures. They can now do their business without fear of being removed by the municipality because of some restraining by-laws. This is because their operations are now legally recognised, and like the Chinese proverb said, we have fed them for a lifetime. This is because these are permanent structures, legally recognised, where they will be able to operate, and in turn sustain their families.

Working together with the private sector like the Transvaal Gold Mining Estates, we can do more to *"build a people-driven and people-centred developmental state"*. **Working together**, we can contribute towards **speeding up growth, creating more jobs, decent work and sustainable livelihoods** for our people. Working together, we will succeed in realising our dream of entrenching the spirit of self-reliance and sustainable development. We therefore as government, further commit that we will continue to *"Work Together (with social partners), to Speed Up Effective Service to the People."*

This is the commitment we made in the *Freedom Charter* which was adopted at the Congress of the People in Kliptown on 26 June 1955, that *“All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.”* We will never in our life-time, renege on it.

Programme Director, the handing-over of these stalls this morning, came at the most appropriate time; when we are patiently waiting to welcome visitors to our country and province during the FIFA World Cup games. In 126 days from today, our country will be hosting the first ever FIFA World Cup games to be held on the African soil. In 131 days, our province will for the first time play host to Honduras and Chile for their group H match at the newly constructed Mbombela Stadium in Mbombela. We salute all those men and women who have worked tirelessly to ensure that we are ready to host the world during the forthcoming 2010 FIFA World Cup games, which kick-off on June 11.

Like President Zuma urged us, and I quote:

“Let us unite the country and ensure that this opportunity leaves a lasting legacy that will endure for generations to come, both for our country and our continent.We must emerge from the World Cup more united as a nation and as a continent, and having changed the opinions of the world about our capacity and our humanity”.

It is therefore our responsibility together, to ensure that we optimally benefit from the opportunities being presented by this soccer spectacular. It is your responsibility as aspiring entrepreneurs, to treat and welcome those visitors with open arms. Your stalls are strategically located to attract these visitors during their pleasure trips around our province.

However I should warn against being tempted to over-price your goods in an attempt to make quick money, and risk chasing your potential customers away. Let us show them we are honest people, who believe in fair trade irrespective of one's originality. When all these happen, you would have played a major role in assisting to improve the image of South Africa as a brand to the world, and its global competitiveness. The country relies on your positive actions to change *"the opinions of the world about our capacity and humanity."* Our continent depends on your positive actions to prove to the world that we are honest and united people. Let the spirit of *ubuntu* prevail!

Ladies and gentlemen, the location of your stalls in the prime area of this heritage site calls for this area to be always kept clean. We have been informed that tourists have lost interest in visiting the town because of the previous unhygienic hawker's stalls and the unbearable attitude of car washers to tourists. The ball is in your court now, to make sure that you restore the dignity and pride of this area. You do not have a choice, but to change if you want to benefit from our tourism industry and claim a share from the proceeds of the World Cup.

The restoration of our once booming economy depends on your correct and positive attitude, and understanding that the customer is king or queen; that the customer is always right. Our positive attitude to our surrounding and to tourists will encourage investment in the area, which will in turn rekindle the economy of this historic town. We therefore have equal responsibility to protect and preserve our environment for the benefit of generations to come. As a heritage site and a historical mining town which attracts many tourists, archaeologists and historians across the globe, Pilgrim's Rest should be protected against degradation at all cost.

Our mandate as the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, is to advocate for the preservation of our environment, and we therefore need your assistance and commitment to be able to carry-out this responsibility.

We appreciate the commitment of all interested stakeholders – the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality; the community of Pilgrim’s Rest and our sponsors, the Transvaal Gold Mining Estates (TGME) who have ensured the demolition of the dilapidated hawker’s structures, which paved the way for the construction of these newly built stalls. We hope that proper car wash bays would also be erected in down and up-town of Pilgrim’s Rest in the near future. Our appreciation goes to TGME for their financial contribution, which has restored the dignity of our people. This gesture poses a serious challenge to other business people in the area, to walk on the footsteps of TGME, and plough back to the community which is keeping them afloat.

As I close, American author, poet and philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson once said and I quote:

“We are all inventors, each sailing out on a voyage of discovery, guided each by a private chart, of which there is no duplicate. The world is all gates, all opportunities.”

A bright future depends on you going through the world’s gates.

On behalf of our inspiring entrepreneurs and the people of Pilgrim’s Rest, I am humbled and honoured to officially hand-over these stalls to their proud owners.

“Working together to speed up effective service to the people - for sustainable livelihoods, and a better life for all.”

I thank you!