

OPENING REMARKS BY MPUMALANGA'S PROVINCIAL MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L MAHLANGU, MPL DURING A TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION MISSION IN MADRID, SPAIN.

Friday, 08 October 2010

Programme Director, Ms Pinkie Nqeto;

South Africa's Ambassador to Spain, Mr Bruce Koloane;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

I'm indeed honoured and humbled, to be given this rare occasion to stand before you to address this gathering this morning. As a delegation from South Africa's Province of Mpumalanga, we stand before you to seek partnership with you, as we believe that both the people of our respective countries, can benefit from such a relationship.

Ladies and gentlemen, South Africa's economic, political and social partnership with Europe is old as our new (16 year old) democracy - Whilst our economic outlook is not similar, our challenges for growth, development and sustainability are common.

The SA-EU Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement which we hold in high regard, should remain the basis of our business inter-linkages and our dealing.

Through this agreement, our respective governments have committed to work together, by utilising the energy our private sectors and society have to create conditions suitable for realising the Millennium Development Goals.

The business delegation that you will engage with today, is constituted by dedicated, enthusiastic, hard working, seasoned, and explorative men and women. Today, we have come to invite you to maximize on the opportunity of life after the 21st century's worst economic recession, and to seek partnership with you. We are dictated by our interdependency as the developing South and the developed North – sharing a common vision for sustainable development , and a better world still possible , to continue to talk and make business together.

In understanding our development context, we need to note that, unlike Europe, we are not in a dynamic region. Ours is a less-developed neighbourhood, whose economic decline has reduced regional demand, and made infrastructure development really far-fetched. The crisis which manifests also points out to sustained limits on demands from Europe and America.

Under these conditions, we need to say that this trade and investment promotion mission is not about anything else, but about business and seeking partnership. Our quest as the people of Mpumalanga, is to increase our role in the global economic space. We believe we are a force to be reckoned with, since we offer diverse economic opportunities.

Our country's favourable economic and political environments, pave the way for long term and sustainable partnerships between our two countries. This will also be made possible, by our progressive economic policies and incentive schemes.

Ladies and gentlemen, we continue to value you as a critical economic role player, hence we've come to knock on your door. We believe you will open your door to us, and welcome us as your preferred partner for growth and development. Remember that as our partnership strengthens and grows, South Africa and Africa will become a better place. And when that happens, the world will become a better place for all of us, including for the generations to come.

As one of South Africa's liberation stalwarts, Mahatma Gandhi puts it, **'be the change that you want to see in the world.'** That change, is both in our hands.

Working together, we can do more to realise the Millennium Development goals which are geared at bettering the lives of our people.

I wish you fruitful interaction!

Gracias!