

SPEECH PRESENTED BY THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L (JABU) MAHLANGU, MPL, TO THE PARIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DURING THE MPUMALANGA TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION MISSION TO SPAIN, EUROPE.

Monday, 04 October 2010

Programme Director, Ms Pascale Caux;

The Paris Chamber of Commerce;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Bon après-midi!

There's an expression which says, "*In a scheduled war, no soldiers will die*. Simply put, if you prepare for the future now, your children and future generations will benefit.

We are therefore truly honoured and humbled by the opportunity you've afforded us, to stand before you this afternoon, as we seek your intervention to continue to prepare for the future. We are further appreciative of the warm welcome you've afforded us in your country. As a developing country and a deeply rural province in South Africa, we believe that it is through your intervention, that children in Khombaso in the rural Nkomazi municipality of our province, will never go to bed on an empty stomach.

It is through your intervention, that women in the rural Mkhondo municipality of Mpumalanga, will be able to put bread on the table to feed their hungry families.

Our objective for coming here, through this investment promotion mission, is therefore not to ask for hand-outs, but to strengthen our partnership given that we subscribe to the notion that **working together, we can do more** to speed up our province's economic growth.

Ladies and gentlemen, when addressing the G20 business leaders on partnering with Africa's dynamic markets in Canada on June 24, 2010, President Jacob Zuma said and I quote:

"Africa is open to meaningful partnerships and engagement towards ensuring sustainable development, to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.... Our markets are open for trade and investments. Africa must now not be viewed as only a destination for development aid."

Our visit to your country therefore, is to offer you joint venture opportunities in our province, for we are confident that you are significant role player on the world economic platform. Despite our under-developed status, we have shown the world that we were better prepared to counteract the global economic meltdown. This is thanks to good policies and regulations, business rescue programmes, job retention schemes and huge infrastructure programmes.

The participation of both our countries companies in each other's economic activities continues to be highly appreciated.

The Mpumalanga Province of the Republic of South African has a diverse economy, with the three (3) major sectors being manufacturing, mining and agriculture. The purpose of our visit therefore, is to form strategic alliance with between the business community of Paris and that of Mpumalanga.

We envisage this will be done through joint ventures, skills development and transfer, and technology transfer. Our intention is also to stimulate two-way trade between our respective areas from these sectors, which will result in market access, not only to South Africa, but to the greater SADEC region consisting of 18 countries and some 600 million people.

The areas of co-operation in developing the two-way trade is envisaged to be in the areas of fresh produce, minerals (coal) and raw materials such as steel and metal processing, and lastly, in the chemical and resin industry.

We hope that we will in the long term, develop a strong strategic alliance with yourselves through the Chamber movement.

On behalf of the Premier and the people of Mpumalanga, we once more, would like to thank you for affording us an ear, as we pave the way for joint ventures with yourselves. We believe that this will at the end benefit the people of both our countries.

Working together we do more to pave sustainable economic growth path for the people of both our countries.

Merci beaucoup!