

REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MRS YN PHOSA, MPL ON THE OCCASION OF THE BRICS MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL ROADSHOW AT THE EHLANZENI DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE IN NELSPRUIT, EHLANZENI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY.

Monday, 18 March 2013

- Programme Director, The Executive Mayor of Mbombela Local Municipality Councillor C Dlamini;
- The Executive Mayor of the Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Councillor Letta Shongwe;
- Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms T Joemat-Pettersson
- MECs present;
- Members of the diplomatic corps;
- Councillors in our midst;
- The business community;
- Distinguished guests;
- Members of the media;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

We meet just ten days after we celebrated the International Women's Day – a day dedicated to the recognition and acknowledgement of women's active participation and contribution in ensuring peace, security and social progress throughout the world. On Thursday, 21 March, we will also celebrate yet another day earmarked to entrench equal human rights in South Africa.

According to the United Nations, women the world over still experience challenges of not being treated equally to their male counterparts.

They still do not have equal rights to men; the majority of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor people are women; and on average, women receive between 30 and 40 per cent less pay than men earn for the same work according to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of women.

However on the other hand, women continue to make significant strides around the world.

As South Africa, we have recognised women's extreme potential by nominating our former Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, as the first woman to head the African Union.

Africa has concurred with us and she has finally ascended to the position of Chairperson of the African Union. This further strengthens our argument that women are king-makers in world peace and stability. Dr Dlamini-Zuma continues to do a sterling job and representing the women of Africa and diaspora in such an important continental platform.

As South Africa celebrates Human Rights Day this week, let us remember all those women and children of the world who have suffered untold human injustices at the hands of those who are supposed to be protecting them.

Programme Director, Ladies and gentlemen;

As I indicated earlier, the theme for the 2013 International Women's Day is "***A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against Women.***" I am happy that this theme ties very nicely with what *BRICS* intends to do.

You will recall that the *BRICS* mechanism, amongst others, aims to promote **peace, security, development and co-operation**. It further aims to contribute significantly to the **development of humanity and establishing a more equitable and fair world**.

Working together, we can do more to protect Women and Children from violence, and all forms of abuse in our quest to build a caring and safe world for all.

1. Purpose of the Road-show

Ladies and gentlemen;

As you are all aware, South Africa will host the fifth *BRICS* Summit this month, from 26 to 27, in Durban, and this road-show is thus intended to raise public awareness around the importance of South Africa's membership of the *BRICS* and the benefits thereof. *BRICS* is an acronym for **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa** – which is a grouping of the world's five (5) leading emerging economies. South Africa only joined the bloc of what used to be *BRIC* in 2010, resulting in *BRICS*.

Coincidentally and interestingly, the acronym *BRICS* also refers to the building blocks of any structure – the bricks we use to build houses, clinics, hospitals and so forth. We can with certainty, say that the objective of this organisation is to build and strengthen the economies of the member countries through amongst other measures trade and investment.

Areas of work include political and entrepreneurial co-ordination, in which member countries have identified several business opportunities, economic complementarities and areas of cooperation in order to grow the economies of member countries.

Today's gathering thus provides a platform to inform the people of Mpumalanga about the significance of South Africa's membership of the *BRICS* bloc, and how this membership will benefit South Africa and her people.

This *BRICS* road-show therefore confirms the government's commitment to ensure that citizens participate in planning for a better tomorrow. Through collaborating with the four (4) *BRICS* member countries, South Africa will benefit significantly in relation to economic and investment opportunities.

On behalf of the Premier of Mpumalanga, the Executive Council and our people, we would like to express our outmost gratitude to President Jacob Zuma, for his sterling leadership, through which South Africa gained membership to *BRIC* thus turning it to *BRICS* – a symbol of hope that the livelihood of our people will improve when South Africa benefits from associating with these four (4) of the world’s leading emerging economies.

As BRICS focuses on rectifying the imbalance in the global economy and institutions of governance, we are optimistic that this association will enable us to deal with the triple challenges of **unemployment, poverty and inequality**, which continues to bedevil our emerging economy.

As Mpumalanga Province is part of a unitary state, we could not miss such a rare platform to showcase business opportunities we offer in the province, whilst at the same time, also sensitizing the public about this significant and strategic Summit taking place on the African soil, most importantly, in our country.

You are therefore hereby invited to participate and make meaningful contributions in this road-show, in support of the forthcoming Summit that will take place in Durban next week.

I also wish to take this opportunity, to wish you all, a **Happy Human Rights Day** on Thursday.

2. Introduction of the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms T Joemat-Pettersson

Programme Director; ladies and gentlemen;

I wish to introduce to you a servant of the people, who emerged from humble beginnings.

She was born and raised like any other child on the 16th December in a year I may not mention without her permission.

I may however mention that her profile is decorated with impeccable academic and struggle credentials.

Who is she?

- She is an able African woman by definition.

- A teacher by professional calling, who taught at various institutions as a High School teacher as well as a University Lecturer.

- A community worker by commitment, she has served in various professional bodies and governmental organisations such as:
 - Acting President of the Association of University English Teachers in South Africa;
 - Member of the Executive Council for Education;
 - Chairperson of the Land Reform Co-ordinating Committee;
 - Northern Cape HIV/AIDS Council;
 - Trustee of the Desmond Tutu Diversity Trust to mention but a few.

- A Revolutionary par excellence by political conviction and trade unionist who served in various structures of the tripartite alliance which includes, but is not limited to:
 - Former Chairperson of the ANC WL in the Northern Cape;
 - Former Member of the ANC Provincial Executive Committee;

- Former Chairperson of the ANC Economic Transformation Committee. This further confirms her sustainability and relevance as a guest speaker at this road show.

She is currently a member of the ANC National Executive Committee, a post which she has held since 2007.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson.

Over to you Minister.