

## **MESSAGE OF SUPPORT FROM THE HONOURABLE PREMIER TSP MAKWETLA AT THE 2005 MORAL REGENERATION YEAR-END FESTIVAL**

**31 DECEMBER 2005, NELSPRUIT RUGBY STADIUM**

Tonight's event allows us to recommit ourselves to building a caring and people-centred society. We do so bound together and spurred on by our love for Mpumalanga and our concern for the well-being and prosperity of each citizen of this beautiful province.

Over the years we have jointly laid the foundation for the creation of a better life for our people. We have united the overwhelming majority of South Africans to work together practically to construct a society that cares. Today more people are able to utilise opportunities that have come with freedom. We continue to reduce the levels of unemployment and poverty.

But we are aware that while we have seen improvement in the lives of the people of Mpumalanga, too many of our people remain jobless, lack sustainable livelihoods and access to economic opportunities. Too many of our people still remain trapped in poverty. Because of these challenges, we met at Badplaas and adopted a provincial Growth and Development Strategy. The PGDS is a practical, action-oriented framework for integrated and sustainable growth and development in our province.

The implementation of this framework will enable the continued restructuring of our economy and guide the actions and programmes of government and our social partners in achieving our growth and development objectives. Our strategy places a particular emphasis on economic growth and development as this is a necessity if we are to address underdevelopment and achieve our broader development objectives and in particular, contribute to meeting the national objective of halving unemployment and poverty by 2014.

As government we have made a firm commitment to the implementation of this Growth and Development Strategy. However, its success depends on the active participation of all sectors,

We have scored major success in dealing with crime, corruption, murder and vehicle hijackings. With the improvement in visible policing, it is becoming clearer to criminals and their syndicates - including those responsible for the recent robberies at Emnotweni and the Ridge Casinos in the province - that there is no place to hide,

As we celebrate another year gone by, let us spare a thought for those amongst us who suffered pain and irreplaceable loss as a result of crime, disease or numerous industrial and road accidents that visited our province over the past year. Our hearts go out to them and we want to assure them that we will always share their pain and grief.

T ogether we have waged a sustained onslaught against all those things that continue to deny our people the better life we all strive for. But more needs to be done. It is your responsibility to build on our successes as we extricate everyone from poverty, ignorance and want.

A few weeks ago we concluded the 16 Days of Activism on Violence against Women and Children Campaign. We did so as we celebrated International Human Rights Day. That we observed the 16 Days is an acknowledgement that many women and children in our country and province continue to fall prey to various kinds of criminal offences.

Violence against women and children takes place within the household, in dark corners or narrow alleys, in places that for the most part are not in full view of the public. We must stop because as long there is a dictatorship within the four walls of the home, our democracy will be incomplete. Women and children have the right to be free, to walk the streets, to live their lives without fear or favour and without being stopped in their tracks.

Today's gathering must send the strongest message possible that there is no place in our midst for people who act in an anti-social and criminal manner. Our motto must be **ZERO TOLERANCE** to all things immoral, especially crime, corruption and bribery. Zero tolerance must be offered to the parasites of our land who have scorned the public interest and sought their own self enrichment at state expense. It is against this evil culture they seek to perpetrate that we must continually rebel. Let us exercise a fresh resolve and make Mpumalanga a leading province. We must seize the moment so that this generation of people of this province, and those following on, can prosper in peace.

We are encouraged by the levels of commitment demonstrated by the majority of our people in the province . They have stood up to be counted among those rejecting all forms of crime and immorality. We will always admire and appreciate the good example set by many of our people who encourage good morals and clean living, especially among the youth. We urge all the young men and women of Mpumalanga to please follow the example of those among your peers who refuse to succumb to drugs, alcohol abuse, irresponsible sexual behaviour, buying stolen goods, crime and greed.

You will be doing a great service to all those who sacrificed for us to be the free nation that we call ourselves today, if you act responsibly and with restraint knowing that you are tomorrow's leaders. Say **NO!** to acts of immorality such as corruption, disregard for human life, abuse of women, children and the elderly.

We salute those in both the public and private sector who refuse to bow to the pressures of corruption and theft. Through their example they are saying to us that individually and collectively, we hold the key to the elimination of the scourge of crime and corruption while continuing to build a new morality.

We strongly believe that crime prevention, character and generation building, and correcting of the offending behaviour, is a societal responsibility. And that this societal responsibility starts in the primary unit of a society - the family. Parents, communities, churches, government departments, businesses and others should focus on this unit as the most critical base of building a new morality and a new society.

The signs and prospects to rise to even greater heights are there. The world has shown its confidence in Mpumalanga by asking us to host the highly successful World Gold Panning championships. And that sturdy nod of approval may soon extend to us hosting some of the 2010 World Cup games. We want to assure all those who place their trust in us that we will not disappoint.

Let me take this opportunity to wish all of you a bright and prosperous New Year.