

MEDIA STATEMENT

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ATTENTION: Assignment Editors / Economic Beat Writers

MPUMALANGA GOVERNMENT HANDS-OVER A GOVERNMENT-FUNDED STATE OF THE ART WATER BOTTLING PLANT TO A DONKERHOEK CO-OPERATIVE

Donkerhoek – The 22 Member Water Bottling Co-operative in Donkerhoek in the Mkhondo Local Municipality are the beneficiaries of a government-funded fully equipped state-of-the-art Plant to the tune of R9, 9 million. This follows the launch and official hand-over of the Donkerhoek Water Bottling Plant to the Co-operative by Mpumalanga MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism MEC, Mrs. Pinky Phosa, on behalf of Premier David Mabuza, on Thursday, 20 March 2014.

“As government, we have a good story to tell. The launch and hand-over of the Donkerhoek Water Bottling Plant today is just one example of the good story the ANC-led government has written over the past 20 years. This is one of the hills we have climbed, but after reaching the climax of this hill, we have realized that there are many more hills to climb, hence we implore on our people to give the ANC yet another chance to change their lives for the better,” said MEC Phosa.

The construction of the plant was funded by the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism to the tune of R6, 9 million, and machinery and equipment was funded by the National Development Agency (NDA) to the tune of R3 million.

The Plant has a capacity to bottle 20 bottles per minute (48 000 bottles per day). It will run on two (2) eight (8) hour shifts with at least fifteen (15) workers on the production line per shift. The water will be bottled at source and was tested and analysed by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in accordance with the South African National Bottled Water Association (SANBWA) requirements. The water to be bottled will be certified by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS).

The project is the brain-child of Premier Mabuza, and was conceptualized in 2009 as an economic intervention aimed at addressing high unemployment and poverty levels in Donkerhoek in the Mkhondo Local Municipality. Government’s objective through the project is to encourage community members to form co-operatives which have been identified by government as a crucial vehicle towards job creation and to propel economic development.

“Through this project, we are busy fighting the triple challenges facing the current administration, which are poverty, unemployment and inequality. We want people to be their own employers. We don’t want everybody to sit and wait for a job even though they can use their own hands to make things happen for themselves. I think we can all agree that South Africa is a better place today than it was before 1994. Together we move South Africa forward,” added Mrs Phosa.

The project will be mentored by the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) for an initial period of six months, which will impart both technical and business management skills to the members of the Donkerhoek Water Bottling Co-operative. The Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA) has also been mandated to operationalise and commercialise the Plant, and ensure its sustainability and profitability. MEGA is currently looking for a private investor to partner with the co-operative.

Government Departments involved in the projects are the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism; Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport; NDA; MEGA; SEDA; SABS; and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.

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