

ADDRESS BY MTPA BOARD MEMBER, MS CAROLE CHILOANE, ON BEHALF OF THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR NORMAN MOKOENA, MPL, DURING THE *BRAND-SOUTH AFRICA* ENGAGEMENT IN NELSPRUIT, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Friday, 13 July 2012

Programme Director;

Representatives of Brand South Africa;

Members of the Media;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

It is said in the Bible on the book of Genesis that God worked for six (6) days to create the heaven, the earth, the oceans, the mountains and all living creatures. On the seventh day, he rested. Given the breathtaking scenic beauty of our province; given that we have rock formations dating back over 3.5 billion years ago at the Makhonjwa Mountains in Barberton; given that we are the only province in South Africa which prides itself with '*God's Window*;' given that the sun is a sign of life – a new beginning and that it rises in our Province, I can say with certainty that God started his creation in Mpumalanga. Furthermore, we believe that when God rested on the seventh day, he decided to rest in Mpumalanga.

Yes, we are the province of pioneers – the province of the 'firsts!' "*Mpumalanga – A Pioneering Spirit!*"

Programme Director; Ladies and gentlemen;

On behalf of the Honourable Premier and the people of our province, we warmly welcome you to Mpumalanga – your world class tourism destination of choice.

Mpumalanga is undoubtedly a world class tourism destination endowed with a myriad of global attractions and experiences. Our main offerings continue to be wildlife, the scenic beauty, adventure, culture and heritage. Our people continue to be the most receptive, warm, loving and caring. They subscribe to the notion that a tourist is 'a king' – a person who brings along and leaves wealth in the province, hence we will forever cherish the contribution being made by tourists into our provincial economy.

We are delighted and privileged to welcome the delegation from *Brand South Africa* to our province in order to engage and share ideas on improving South Africa's image or brand. South Africa's brand or image is critical given that it ultimately contributes to the country's global competitiveness. And as individuals, our actions counts to the bigger picture – how we treat visitors to the province is thus critical given that when these people go back to their respective places, they would either 'sell' our destination because of their awesome experiences in our hands or not. And when they do, they will be become Ambassadors of our brand without us having to fork out money and market our *destination*.

As I already indicated, our country's global competitiveness is mainly influenced by the way we are perceived outside, that is, South Africa's brand or image. A positive identity or favourable reputation will promote and consolidate our global competitiveness.

In contributing further to our country's global competitiveness, we also need to create a favourable climate for investment, which includes amongst others, access to infrastructure such as the ICT, enabling legal environment, and skills required for economic growth.

According to the 2012 Brand Finance's Global Nations Brand League, a global sample of 138 nations including 36 African nations, South Africa is ranked as the ***Most Valuable African Nation Brand*** – with double the brand value of second placed Egypt. Likewise, The World Economic Forum's 2011/2012 Global Competitiveness Report ranks South Africa:

- 1st in strength of auditing and reporting standards;
- 1st in regulation of securities exchange;
- 2nd in soundness of banks;
- 2nd in efficacy of corporate boards;
- 3rd in protection of minority shareholders' interest;
- 3rd in availability of financial services;
- 4th in financing through the local equities market.

Therefore being globally competitive allows us to address our socio-economic challenges at home, while building our reputation to take our rightful place in the global community.

Ladies and gentlemen;

It is our collective responsibility to improve our country's global competitiveness continuing from the contribution made by our liberation stalwart, the former first President of the democratic South Africa, *tat' u*Nelson Mandela, who continues to be our international brand. He continues to be seen as a beacon of hope, reconciliation and nation building in South Africa. He is as much a global brand like Coca-Cola is.

May I therefore take this opportunity to wish him a happy birthday in advance, for his upcoming 94<sup>th</sup> birthday on Wednesday next week – July the 18<sup>th</sup>. We wish him good health and many more years of life.

On the same breadth, we believe the International Nelson Mandela Day, which has since become a world-wide campaign emanating from what he stood for – that is freedom, equality, humanity and justice for all, will go a long way to improve South Africa's image and thus global competitiveness.

In conclusion, I would like to thank *Brand-South Africa* for continuing to fly South Africa's flag very high. At the time, I would to encourage our people to continue to play their part in this regard. Like I indicated, South Africa's brand depends on our individual contribution – either positively or negatively. It is this spirit of collaboration that will give further impetus to South Africa's premier global status as both the leisure and business tourism destination of choice.

**Working together, we can do more** to improve South Africa's image and its global competitiveness for the benefit of all people.

As Mpumalanga, we commit to "*Inspire New Ways*" in doing things that will contribute to improve South Africa's image and global competitiveness.

Indeed, "*South Africa: (is) Inspiring New Ways*"

**I thank you!**