

CLOSING REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR MN MOKOENA, MPL, DURING THE DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION HELD AT NOMBOLO MDHLULI CONFERENCE CENTRE AT SKUKUZA, KRUGER NATIONAL PARK.

Saturday, 02 February 2013

Programme Director, Mr Jabulani Mtsweni;

Our facilitator, Dr Chuks

Head of Department, Dr Vusanani Dlamini;

Board Members and CEOs of our Public Entities;

Senior Management and other managers present;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Good Morning!

Over the last three (3) days, we converged here in Skukuza in the Kruger National Park, to re-define our roles and responsibilities between us as a Department and our Public Entities. This we intended to do against the backdrop of the policy directives as outlined in the January 8 Statement of the ruling party, the African National Congress. Our role therefore, was to ensure that we align our operations with the political marching orders given by the country's Commander-in-Chief, President Jacob Zuma.

In my opening address on Thursday, I indicated that we are still mandated as government, and as a Department, to **fight poverty, reduce unemployment and inequality**. These three (3) challenges therefore remain the cornerstones of our work in order to complete the commitments of the current administration, whose mandate comes to an end next year.

Ladies and gentlemen:

We were privileged to receive presentations from the national Department of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) and the National Planning Commission in the Presidency. The presentation by Ms Phumla Ndala of Cogta on the proposed LED Framework came at the most appropriate time, given that we want to clarify the role we should play, against what the provincial Cogta Department should play.

We should remember that our Department has been mandated to holistically lead economic development in the province, hence this function will remain in the main, our responsibility. What we need to clarify going forward, is how we can co-operate with Cogta in carrying out this mandate. We have to be pioneers of economic development. We heard from Ms Ndala's presentation, that Local Economic Development, should not be viewed as just projects only, but requires an integrated socio-economic approach.

We also discussed the Provincial Investment Strategy, and from that presentation, we agreed that stakeholders such as *the dti* and municipalities should still be approached for comments and inputs in order to beef-up our document. We also realised that the strategy focused much on investment, especially foreign direct investment, and not on trade, which should be incorporated.

Overall, we agreed that the final strategy should take into consideration the following issues:

- It should be consistent with *the MEGDP*;
- It should incorporate trade initiatives;
- It should incorporate global economic trends since 1998 in the introduction;
- Do further research in determining countries to be targeted in luring trade and investment;
- Clarify the drivers of Foreign Direct Investment;
- Provide a motivation to potential traders and investors on why they should choose Mpumalanga over other provinces in the country – what are we competitive on? I refer here to our unique selling points.

These are some of the issues we raised during this session, and when we leave here today, we must go and ensure that they are addressed before the strategy is taken forward for consideration and approval by the Executive Council. I trust that we are more than willing and enthusiastic to go out and do things differently this year.

We also took a trip down memory lane, to review the work we have done as the democratic government, since we took over the administration in 1994. Working together with stakeholders, we are proud that we have done a lot by introducing a number of economic development strategies and policies which have impacted positively on the lives of our people.

Synopsis of the current Strategic Plan by Dr Chuks

We appreciate the detailed and honest analysis of our strategic plan document by Dr Chuks, who have pointed out areas which need re-working. In the main, he indicated the following observations:

- That there was no clear clarification of roles and responsibilities between the Department and its public agencies;
- That the Department is working against its mandate;
- That our mandate not aligned to the National Growth Path given that there is no reference of it in the document;
- That core issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality are not prominent in *the MEGDP*.

He was also of the view that our *Vision and Mission* were lacking in some areas, that is, they were adequately covering our work and responsibilities. Furthermore, they assert that our *Mission* in its current form, indicates that we are implementing everything, that is, there is no role clarification as to what we are implementing and what our public entities are implementing.

Following all these observations, he has committed to assist us in re-working our strategic plan in order to address all the indicated challenges or short-comings. As you are aware, our roles and responsibilities have now been clarified by the Executive Council. We are now responsible for economic policy and strategies formulation and co-ordination of economic development activities in the province. The implementation of the said policies and strategies will now squarely rest on the shoulders of our public entities, which were duly created and authorised to be implementers on our behalf.

I am happy that when we leave this venue this afternoon, we will be better aligned and will understand the roles and responsibilities of each party concerned.

We have now amended both our *Vision and Mission* to make them to be in line with our roles and responsibilities.

Resolutions of the Strategic Planning Session

As a collective and leadership of the Department, we have resolved as follows:

1. XXX
2. XXX
3. XXX

Closing

As I close, our convergence here over the last three (3) days could therefore be summed up as follows:

We met here in order to:

- Incorporate political policy imperatives as directed by the ruling party in its 2013 January 8 Statement;
- Re-define and re-align our roles and responsibilities as a Department and our implementing agents – our public entities;
- Ensure that there is no duplication of functions and responsibilities thus ensuring no duplication of resources provided to the Department and our agencies (in order to avoid double dipping)