

SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR M.N MOKOENA, MPL, DURING A PREPARATORY WORKSHOP FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE ECONOMY, INVESTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT IMPLEMENTATION FORUM AT EMALAHLENI, NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY.

Friday, 02 December 2011

Programme Facilitator;

Honourable MEC for Finance, Mrs Pinkie Phosa;

Honourable MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration,
Mrs Candith Mashego-Dlamini;

Honourable MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mrs Dikeledi Mahlangu;

HODs in the Cluster, Dr Vusanani Dlamini; Mr Kgopana Mohlasedi; Ms Nelisiwe Sithole; and Acting finance HOD, Mr Junior Mbatha;

DDG for Macro Policy in the Office of the Premier, Mr Thulani Mdakane;

Executive Director for Development Planning at the DBSA;

Representatives from business, labour and civil society;

Other members of the Cluster;

Ladies and gentlemen;

A warm Welcome and Good Morning!

POLITICAL INTRODUCTION BY JOHN SIKHOSANA

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Honourable MECs; Ladies and gentlemen;

During the recent *Lekgotla* of the Executive Council, we agreed that we must move with speed to finalise the Growth Path for the Province, that is, the *Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path (the MEGDP)*. This is because the proposed plan is very central to our priority of creating job opportunities and growing the economy of the province. The *MEGDP* is also critical towards achieving the *Millennium Development Goals* including halving unemployment, fighting poverty and addressing the challenge of inequality amongst our people.

The *MEGDP* is thus our strategic plan, derived from the National Growth Path framework, to focus on Mpumalanga's economic growth and development agenda for the next ten years, as a base for long term growth and development. Through the drafting of *the MEGDP*, we have identified challenges in the labour market, which are exacerbated by the low levels of skills and the high concentrations of unemployment amongst the youth and women, amongst others.

It however recognises the strides made by government towards the provision of basic services, but also identifies the growing income inequality and low infrastructure investment in rural areas.

To this end, the Province has set itself a target of reducing unemployment which is hovering at around 30% to 15% by 2020, translating to creating 719 000 new jobs over a ten-year period. For this to happen, the reality is that the provincial economy needs to grow at a rate of between 5 and 7 percent per annum.

This is a massive undertaking which will require the mobilisation of resources by all stakeholders, towards a common vision of a more equitable and inclusive economy. What is therefore critical, is for us to work together as the government, business, labour and the civil society. We acknowledge that our major role as government, is to create a climate conducive to economic growth, given that

almost all job opportunities are created by the private sector. This relationship should thus be nurtured and harnessed in order to produce the anticipated results.

Our workshop this morning, is therefore premised on the work that province and its partners have started – that of establishing the *Economy, Investment and Employment Implementation Forum (EIEIF)*. This proposed forum, whose members will be drawn from the four (4) provincial Departments who are members of the *EIE Cluster* and other stakeholders, will be mandated to drive the implementation of policies, strategies, plans and respective summits resolutions. Stakeholders will identify and agree on a set of projects that must be implemented together, in the short, medium and long term. All stakeholders will be required to mobilise resources to fund projects aimed at paving the way for economic growth.

The joint social partner structure will report to the Premier, and will be tasked:

- To negotiate a set of integrated Delivery Agreements, and to identify practical actions that will be taken by all stakeholders to exploit opportunities as reflected in *the MEGDP*;
- To foster an integrated approach by all key stakeholders towards the achievement of the objectives of *the MEGDP*;
- To establish output working groups;
- To ratify implementation plans and schedules; and
- To monitor and evaluate the implementation of Delivery Agreements and *the MEGDP*.

The second part of the workshop will focus on work-shopping social partners on the Delivery Agreements of the *EIE Cluster* Departments. Social partners will be expected to input and enrich these agreements, which will lead to the finalisation and signing of the agreements with the Honourable Premier.