

**SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR M.N MOKOENA, MPL, DURING AN OCASSION TO BID FAREWELL TO THE FORMER HOD, MR R.S TSHUKUDU, AND TO WELCOME THE NEW HOD, DR V.D DLAMINI AT INGWENYAMA LODGE, WHITE RIVER.**

**Thursday, 05 May 2011**

Programme Director, Mr .....

Outgoing Head of Department, Mr Rabeng Tshukudu;

Incoming Head of Department, Dr Vusanini Dlamini;

Other Heads of Departments;

CEO of MTPA, Mr Charles Ndabeni;

CEO of MGB, Mr Bheki Mlambo;

Acting CEO of MEGA, Mr Gijima Dladla;

Senior Management of the Department;

Middle Management of the Department;

Ladies and gentlemen;

*Good Evening!*

I am tempted to start by asking this question: **Why does it take a few seconds to say hello and how are you, but forever to say goodbye?**

The answer is very simple. It is because when you meet a person for the first time, you do not know and understand the person better. You do not know his likes and dislikes; what his strengths and weaknesses are; and what his aspirations in life are, amongst others.

However, once you get to know the person better and the person becomes part of your daily activities, it becomes very difficult to say good-bye. It will take you forever to bid farewell to the person – because you’ve already build a strong bond with the person. As they say, it is hard to say goodbye to yesterday. However we will agree that everything has the beginning and the end. Surely, all of us will retire at some point in our lives, bringing an end to our working careers.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here this evening to say good-bye to yesterday, and to say hello to tomorrow. We are here to pay homage to one of the longest serving Head of Department in our provincial administration, and to acknowledge and thank him for having served our government with zest, zoom and zeal. I believe that it is better and appropriate to acknowledge one’s selfless contribution when they are still alive, rather than wait until they cannot speak or see you no more.

The person we are honouring for his dedication, is our outgoing Head of Department, **Mr Rabeng Sophney Tshukudu**. *Kgabo!*

Mr Tshukudu joined the Mpumalanga Provincial Administration in May 2000 as Chief Director for Support Services in the Department of Health. Given his experience and expertise in the finance and economic sectors, he was promoted to Head of the then Department of Finance and Economic Affairs two (2) years later – that is in June 2002.

When the Department was split following the re-configuration of the Provincial Administration in June 2004, he became the HOD of the Department of Economic Development and Planning. From September 2005, he was appointed HOD of the Department of Finance until he returned home to *the dedet* in January 2010.

Like I indicated, he was the longest serving Head of Department having served for almost nine (9) years. As a man of integrity, through those years, he provided leadership and strategic management to the mentioned Departments, and ensured prudent financial management, accountability, and effective service delivery.

During his tenure as HOD, he had an opportunity to work with various MECs such as Mr J.I Mabena (former MEC for Finance and Economic Affairs); Mr C.N.M Padayachee (former MEC for Economic Development and Planning); Mrs E.M Coleman (former MEC for Finance); Mr J.L Mahlangu (former MEC for Finance and former MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism); and until recently, under myself.

We've not worked together long enough, but I can testify here this evening, that you are one energetic, capable, determined, efficient, and patriotic public servant of our time. *Ka Sesotho ra re, re ho rolela katiba!* – We take our hats off for you for a job well done over the years.

May I also take this time to wish you all the best in your future endeavours, given that I believe that you are still keen to serve in whatever capacity, for as long as our people will benefit.

Ladies and gentlemen, on a lighter note, one other talent of the outgoing HOD is that he is a comedian in the making. I wonder whether he will now consider joining the likes of *bo*-David Kau on stage? I can picture him making us laugh our lungs out. To give you a taste of his old time classics, and I quote:

*“Once the tail wags the dog violently, it means the dog is not in control.”*

We also thank him and appreciate that he has agreed to stay on for a while, to assist during the transition period to ensure that the new HOD is settling in very well. I am told that when he introduced Dr Dlamini to the senior management of the Department on Tuesday, he told them that he had agreed to stay on for a while, to ensure that the new HOD does not run in the wrong direction, since he hit the ground running.

I must admit that this is a rare occurrence, and a sign of selflessness which is displayed by Mr Tshukudu. Anybody else would have refused, given that their term of office had come to an end. This is a calibre of patriotic cadres we need in our civil service – people who care much about serving their people.

*Kgabo, re a leboha!* We salute you!

On behalf of the Premier and the Executive Council of the Province, I take this opportunity to thank Mr Tshukudu for his invaluable contribution. The length of your stay in the leadership shows how much of an asset you've been to us. We are indeed indebted to you for having agreed to lead of Departments over the last 9 years. I believe that as you take a bow, you will not be lost to the administration forever. I believe that for as long as we live, we shall surely meet again.

To Mr Tshukudu, please know that:

*“Goodbyes are not forever. Goodbyes are not the end. They simply mean I'll miss you from within our ranks.”*

On the same breath, I take this opportunity to welcome and say “hello” to the incoming Head of Department, **Dr Vusanani Daniel Dlamini**. Remember the question I asked at the beginning: **Why does it take a few seconds to say hello and how are you, but forever to say goodbye?**

I will not say much about you, since we've just met. All I can say is to tell you that you are most welcomed. I believe that you are bringing a lot of expertise required to steer our provincial economy in the right direction.

I believe that by the time you also take a bow, you'd have contributed significantly towards our government realising its vision – A vision to continue to provide a better life for all.

Dr Dlamini holds a master's degree in applied economics and a doctorate in agricultural economics. Prior to this appointment, he previously worked as the Executive Manager and Provincial Head (at chief director level) for Statistics South Africa in our Province.

Ladies and gentlemen, as each day passes-by, we continue to write a story of our life. I strongly believe that the incoming HOD will continue to write the story of this Department, continuing from where the outgoing HOD has left off.

To the new HOD, *uamkelekile!* Pick up the spear and take us to even greater heights.

In the inspiring words of American inspirational and motivational speaker, Mark Victor Hansen, and I quote:

*"Don't wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions. So what! Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more and more self-confident and more and more successful."*

So long Mr Tshukudu, and welcome to *the dedet* family Dr Dlamini.

*I thank you!*