

SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR M.N MOKOENA, MPL, DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE SABC'S LOW POWER TRANSMITTER IN TJAKASTAD, NHLAZATSHE, GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT.

Thursday, 15 December 2011

- Programme Director;
- Honourable Minister of Communications, Ms Dina Pule;
- Colleagues in the Executive Council;
- Executive Mayor of Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality, Councillor Busisiwe Shiba;
- Chairperson of the SABC Board, Dr Ben Ngubane;
- Inkosi Khokhayi Malaza – Bayete!*
- Reverend B.V Zulu;
- Our beneficiaries, the community of Tjakastad;
- Distinguished guests;
- Members of the Media;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

POLITICAL INTRODUCTION BY JOHN SIKHOSANA

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Honourable Minister; Ladies and gentlemen;

The founding provisions in Chapter 1 of our country's progressive Constitution guarantees that, and I quote: ***"All citizens (of the Republic of South Africa) are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship."***

These rights amongst others, includes the right to access information through the mass media such as television and radio. We are therefore, as the Provincial Government of Mpumalanga, delighted and humbled by the SABC's commitment to ensure that all citizens of this country receives information and entertainment through television and radio.

We are humbled because this, the launch of the Low Power Transmitter in Tjakastad, will go a long way in ensuring that the local people becomes part of the greater South Africa; Africa and the Diaspora; and the entire world through interconnection. The people of Tjakastad will from henceforth, be able to receive with much clarity, the services of our Public Broadcaster – the SABC in order to improve their lives. There is no one who will disagree with the fact that knowledge is power – hence we appreciate the launch and switch-on of the Low Power Transmitter here this morning.

Ladies and gentlemen;

Just up to last week, South Africa had played host to the Conference of the United Nations 17th Congress of Parties, commonly known as COP17, on Climate Change. The conference provided a platform for world countries to commit on drastically reducing the levels of the greenhouse gas emissions. This conference had attracted quiet a huge number of international broadcasters, who disseminated information to world citizens on the proceedings at the talks, every minute.

However, without the necessary telecommunications infrastructure like the transmitter we are launching here this morning, they would have not been able to keep world citizens updated at all times.

If our country did not have such advanced telecommunication infrastructure for broadcasting purposes provided by *Sentech* and the *SABC*, we would have lost on the opportunity to host an event of such magnitude. The United Nations would have not entrusted us with hosting such an event, given that telecommunications infrastructure was a prerequisite in this regard. By hosting such an event, our country benefitted in terms of economic spin-offs and exposure to the international world.

You will remember that just last year, we hosted the biggest ever sporting event in the world – the *2010 FIFA World Cup*. During the same event, broadcasters from across the entire world converged in our country to cover and report on the event. One of the guarantees which *FIFA* wanted our country to commit on, was the issue of telecommunication for broadcasting purposes, amongst others. Had our country been unable to provide a guarantee on this requirement, we would have not been given an opportunity to host one of the successful ever sporting event. This did not only contribute to economic growth in our country, but continues to have rippling effects for the benefit of our people.

Our spectacular tourism destination was put on the world map, hence we continue to receive quite a huge number of tourists post the event. We cannot therefore downplay the power of telecommunications and the mass media, whose benefit are immeasurable. Through telecommunications, we are able to connect to the rest of the world at a split of a second - giving us the benefits of living in a global village. Just as much as the information highway is beneficial to our country, so is the transmitter we are launching today.

Our government has an obligation to communicate with its citizens on an ongoing basis, hence we believe this launch could have not come at the most appropriate time. As government, we have entered into a contract with our people by way of the election promises made by the ruling party – the African National Congress. Our people thus have the right to know, on a constant basis, how far are we in implementing those promises.

As mass media has been proven to be effective, and makes it easier for government to interact with the people, we believe that this launch is an answer to our problems. It is said that for effective Communication to take place between the sender, in this case the government, and the receiver, that is citizens, there should be a transmitter as a go between. However it should be noted that communication is a two (2) process involving feedback from both sides, that is, from the sender and the receiver.

By receiving radio and television services, the people of Tjakastad will now be able to participate in phone-in programmes in order to voice their views. They would be able to ask their public representatives questions to make them accountable.

On behalf of Premier Mabuza and the people of Tjakastad, I would like to appreciate and congratulate Minister Dina Pule – a daughter of our Province and her Department; *Sentech* and our Public Broadcaster – *the SABC*, on the launch of the Low Power Transmitter in this area.

Working together we can do more to ensure that government is in constant contact with the citizens.

I thank you!