

**VOTE OF THANKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR M.N MOKOENA, MPL, AT THE LAUNCH
OF THE FIRST STATE MINING COMPANY AT VLAKFONTEIN, OGIES,
EMALAHLENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Saturday, 26 February 2011

Programme Director,;

Your Excellency, President Jacob Zuma;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

When delivering the State of the Nation Address on the 10th of this month, President Jacob Zuma said and I quote:

“The mineral wealth of our country is a national asset, and a common heritage that belongs to all South Africans, with the State as the custodian. By 2009, the mining industry contributed more than thirty percent to the country’s total export revenue, and employed 2.9% of the country’s economically active population.”

He continued to say that “one of government’s priorities this year is also to finalise and adopt the beneficiation strategy as the official policy of government, so that we can start reaping the full benefits of our commodities.”

Mr President, indeed the mining sector, as one of the potential sectors identified by the ruling party, has a potential to create jobs on a large scale. As a province, we will through our proposed New Growth Path, exploit this sector and others identified, such as infrastructure development, agriculture, tourism, green energy and knowledge-based sectors. We believe that the launch of the first ever State-owned mine will go a long way in contributing to job creation and economic growth of our province.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me at this stage to pass our humble appreciation to our selfless leader, President Zuma, for making time from his busy schedule, to come join us in witnessing history in the making – the launch of the first ever State Mining Company in our Province. He cherish that you continue to fight for the poor.

To Ministers Shabangu and Peters, our people appreciates this initiative which will see them benefitting from job opportunities being presented by the mine.

Appreciation also goes to our hosts, the Executive Mayors Mashilo and Nhlapo for their selfless efforts.

Our gratitude further goes to Mr Sizwe Madondo, the CEO of the State-owned African Exploration Mining and Finance Corporation (AEMFC).

We would also like to thank members of the media for having joined us to witness this event.

Once more, on behalf of the Premier and the people of Mpumalanga, we welcome with open arms, the launch of the first ever State Mining Company in our Province.

Working together, we can do more to ensure that 2011 becomes a year of job creation through meaningful economic transformation and inclusive growth.

I thank you!