

## **REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING, MR CRAIG PADAYACHEE DURING THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ROADSHOW IN NKOMAZI**

**16 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Programme director  
Mayor of Nkomazi Local Municipality  
Councillors present  
Traditional leadership  
Managers in various institutions that supports our democracy  
The people of Nkomazi  
Representatives of different economic sectors  
Ladies and gentlemen

Few months ago we made an undertaking to visit this area. We said then that we shall bring all the economic development agencies and financial institutions to share information on economic opportunities with the residents of Nkomazi. We said that because we knew then, same way as we know now, that as the democratic government we must make good of our promise to the people.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here to address this first economic opportunities roadshow in Nkomazi.

Programme director, Mayor, our crusade of expanding access to information on opportunities which started in February this year is gaining momentum across the province.

We make this remark because in our statement at the launch of the provincial SMME business week last month, we emphatically said there are business opportunities in the province. While many of our people are taking advantage of these opportunities we made an observation that there are many other people who, because of lack of information and access to relevant services, are unable to reap the fruits of this democracy.

We indicated then that it is important that we should increase the frequency and depth of interaction with the communities on economic opportunities in the province. This, we said, will go a long way in ensuring that we increase the number of entrepreneurs and new entrants into the economy and that in no time we will realize that the future of our economy is in the hands of many of our people, whom when given a helping hand, will initiate projects that will make a difference in communities in which they choose to start their businesses.

This economic opportunities roadshow will be an answer to the challenge of access to information and services in many parts of our province.

The department is currently in the process of popularizing the co-operatives strategy. This strategy provides a framework that guides us to build a robust, vibrant and sustainable co-operatives movement that will assist us to overcome the socio economic challenges in our province.

We would like to encourage our people to take part in this co-operative movement that is fast gaining ground within the country.

Programme director, we need to make this day a memorable one by ensuring that we give people information that can be used to uplift their social and economic standing. The presentations that are prepared for this event must therefore reflect those economic opportunities, business opportunities in different sectors of our economy. These presentations must therefore stimulate interests among the people who are here to want to enter into businesses that best suits their

abilities and passion.

Let this indeed be a platform to learn and an opportunity to grow local businesses.

Programme director, we have finalized the process of identifying 10 products in our quest to ensure that the SMMEs access business opportunities from government. The real work that must be done now is to ensure that all government departments assist us with implementation of this national imperative.

We reiterate this point again because it is important that local businesses must benefit from the business opportunities that our provincial and local government makes available from time to time.

The rollout of the offices of Small Enterprise Development Agency, Umsombovu Youth Fund, and those of many other institutions that are here with us, increase our confidence in our capacity to ensure greater impact of our programme. With these we know that we are in good position to contribute to creation of new enterprises that will help emancipate our people from the shackles of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment.

Programme director, we have committed ourselves to facilitate support and development of business enterprises. We have committed ourselves to continue to support SMMEs to participate in the export market through various development programmes that have been put in place, such as the exporter awareness campaigns and EXPOs.

Last week the department took about 10 SMMEs to Eskom SMME expo in Gauteng. We know that this effort will be rewarded in good time. The exposure that the SMMEs receive will help them to be noticed and result in more opportunities for them and for the provincial economy.

In this financial year we undertake to ensure that:

More SMMEs access business development support from the department and SEDA in the province;

More retail financial intermediaries are supported in the province;

We facilitate the establishment of more cooperatives and provide support to them.

As we indicated in our policy and budget speech earlier this year, we have entered interesting times in our economy, the times in which we need to collectively come together to overcome the challenges that we face as a nation of the world.

Ladies and gentlemen this government has ensured that “today is better than yesterday and that tomorrow will be better than today”.

I thank you