

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L (JABU) MAHLANGU, MPL, DURING THE ABSA PREMIER INVITATIONAL GOLF CLINIC AT THE NELSPRUIT GOLF CLUB IN MBOMBELA, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Thursday, 16 September 2010

Programme Director;

Our host, ABSA's Chief Marketing and Communication, Mr Happy Ntshingila;

Chief Executive of ABSA's Financial Services, Mr Willie Lategan;

Chief Executive of ABSA's Business Bank, Mr Bobby Malabie;

Managing Director of ABSA's Private Bank, Mr Mohale Ralebitso;

Other distinguished executives from ABSA;

WPGA Professional Golfers, Ms Mandy Adamson and Ms Leticia Moses-Roestoff;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

I am humbled to stand before you, on behalf of the Premier of Mpumalanga, Honourable Mr David Mabuza, to welcome you all to this, *the 2010 ABSA Premier's Invitational* golf clinic. We meet here *today, together, tomorrow* because of ABSA's commitment to partner with us, as government, to create a favourable networking platform for well established and aspirant business people. It is through this networking platform, that we can engage one another and come up with possible ways to assist government in fulfilling its Constitutional mandates.

It is through this session, that influential people across South Africa have an opportunity to visit our beautiful province, thus contribute to the growth of our tourism sector and economy of our province.

We appreciate that this event takes place during the tourism month, which is aimed at encouraging our people to visit and know their country. As we celebrate tourism month under the theme, *'South Africa - one of the most bio-diverse destinations in the world,'* let us continue to remember the enormous challenge we have as a country in preserving what is left off our endangered environment. Our own activities as human beings, continue to put enormous pressure on our bio-diversity, given the impact of global warming and climate change.

The challenge to all of us therefore, is to invest in green energy in order to contribute towards preserving what is left-off our environment. You may think that my talk is not relevant for the occasion, but given that your own existence and opportunity to play golf solely depends on the green pitch, you'll agree with me that it is indeed relevant.

As the sport of golf is taken to be the sport of the privileged few and well-off people, our call is for all of us to act in a manner that shows that we care for the environment, for the benefit of generations to come. I say this because indications are that golf courses use a lot of water to maintain, given that we are not a water rich country. Our country is facing a serious challenge of water shortage, and as golfers, we must consider coming up with alternative ways of watering our green fields, to contribute towards saving this precious scarce resource.

As American sports writer, Grantland Rice puts it, *"Golf gives you an insight into human nature, your own as well as your opponent's."* Indeed, it gives us an insight into understanding one another – how we feel about things happening around us. An as we enjoy this beautiful game and networking platform *today, tomorrow, together,* let us engage in talks that will come up with ways to assist government in fulfilling its mandates. Our believe is that we cannot do it alone, hence we subscribe to the notion that *Working together, we can do more* to continue to provide **a better life for all.**

We continue to appreciate ABSA's social investment initiatives, and encourage them to start considering funding green initiatives. We further applaud ABSA for having convened all of us here today, and wish you a fruitful golf clinic. Let us use this beautiful game to change the lives of our people. I believe that you want to be counted as people who engage in a game of golf, to strategise how you can make an imprint and touch lives of the less fortunate. It shouldn't be just a platform of recreation, but a platform towards change.

As I close, in the words of American Professional Golfer Peter Jacobsen, and I quote:

“One of the most fascinating things about golf is how it reflects the cycle of life. No matter what you shoot - the next day you have to go back to the first tee and begin all over again, and make yourself into something.”

Ladies and gentlemen, 'making yourself into something' means becoming the change you want to see around you.

Working together, we can do more and impact positively in the lives of those less fortunate around us.

Happy tee-ing!

I thank you!