

SPEECH PRESENTED BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L (JABU) MAHLANGU, MPL DURING A BUSINESS NETWORKING BREAKFAST SESSION AT SASOL SECUNDA CLUB, GOVAN MBEKI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Friday, 22 January 2010

Programme Director;

Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District Municipality, His Worship Councillor
Andries Gamede;

Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki Local Municipality, His Worship Councillor
Sipho Nkosi;

Managing Director of Sasol Secunda Shared Services, Mr Oliver Naidu;

President of Nafcoc, Mr Joe Dlamini;

Secretary of Nafcoc, Mr Themba Dube;

Representatives from various Business Communities;

Government officials present;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

During the ANC's pre-98-years Anniversary Gala Dinner held in Galeshewe, Kimberley in the Northern Cape, President Jacob Zuma urged **"the business community to partner with us further, to ensure that together we create an environment that will attract investment to our shores, and enable us to create decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods"**. I am therefore honoured and humbled to address this networking session this morning, because your presence is a sign of your commitment to work and walk with us in our selfless journey towards a better life for all.

I am humbled because your presence is an indication that you continue to value our partnership for the benefit of our people. Your contribution and commitment towards this noble course of bettering the lives of our people, is therefore much appreciated. It is our responsibility together, to ensure that we improve the living conditions of our people. Our interaction this morning, should cement our collective commitment in support of the President's call for partnership. We must commit ourselves, both government and the business sector, that we will together with our people run the government to fulfil the commitments we made in the *Freedom Charter* in 1955. Our overall commitment was the **creation of a better life for all** irrespective of race, gender, political affiliation, and geographic location.

Programme Director, our first interaction takes place at the beginning of a historic and significant year in the history of our continent. In less than 140 days, our country will host the first ever FIFA Soccer World Cup on the African soil. As a country and one of the host provinces, we are more than ready to show the world that we are a force to be reckoned with. We salute all those men and women who have worked tirelessly to ensure that we are ready to host the world during the forthcoming 2010 FIFA World Cup games, which kick-off on June 11. This is an opportunity that we must all exploit in order to boost the image of our country as a brand.

If we successfully host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, we will in turn improve our country's competitiveness and further improve the rating of Brand South Africa internationally. The consequence thereof, will be the return on our investment in terms of billions of Rands spent on improving our infrastructure for the hosting of the world cup.

The confidence in our ability to deliver will be boosted thereby attracting more foreign investment into our country. Our tourism sector will also flourish as a result of the ripple effect emanating from our success story.

Ladies and gentlemen, like President Jacob Zuma said when delivering the ANC's January 8 Statement earlier this month, and I quote: *"We aim to work together with our people, and to ensure that our actions are not only people-centred, but also people-driven"*. Our presence and interaction with you this morning, symbolise our unwavering commitment as the ANC-led government, of ensuring that whatever we do to improve the living conditions of our people, is people-driven, hence we have always believed in partnership. Working together with social partners like yourselves, we have done more in the past to ensure that we plan together to mitigate the effects of the economic recession; Working together, we have ensured that skills required by our economy are sharpened and retained in the province.

The recession might have come and gone, but the challenge that still remains with us is to rebuild our once flourishing economy. We have acknowledged that we cannot do this all by ourselves as government – hence we appreciate your contribution as social partners, and further implore on you to continue to *"Work (with us) to speed up effective service delivery to the people."* Our major challenge collectively, is therefore to continue to strengthen the foundation for a developmental state by successfully implementing the five (5) priorities and commitments of our people-centred and people-driven government. To remind you, those priorities are **the creation of more jobs, decent work and sustainable livelihoods, improving quality education and health care for all, promoting rural development and combating crime and corruption.**

Our interaction here this morning, is not merely a coincidence, but a sign of a commitment to work together towards a common goal, that of *speed(ing) up effective service delivery to the people*. It is our collective responsibility; we cannot dodge nor abdicate it, for it is a commitment that we signed with our people, and we cannot therefore dare fail them. Like I said earlier on, our battered economy due to the recession needs specific skills which are scarce for it to bounce back, and we request your intervention in assisting the needy and deserving prospective students. We need skills in the engineering, construction and economic fields to mention but a few, and thus implore on you to provide financial assistance to those needy matriculants who passed with flying colours to pursue careers in the above-mentioned study disciplines.

Programme Director, our commitment towards job creation is supported by the creation of Industrial Development Zones (IDZs) which continue to be important vehicles to facilitate investment, create jobs and boost exports. We applaud the possible establishment of the Secunda IDZ, which will see the petro-chemical area of Secunda being the sixth official IDZ in the country. The other five being the ones at Coega in Port Elizabeth, East London, Richards Bay and at the O.R Tambo International Airport in Gauteng. The Secunda IDZ will realise the establishment of an Industrial or Supplier Park in this area.

The scope of the IDZ will accommodate a Petro-Chemical Cluster in a single facility where the production of liquid fuels, commodity organic chemicals and primary polymers will take place in an area that will cover 85 thousand and sixty square metres. This will be the first phase of the development with possible future expansions.

Ladies and gentlemen I am sure that many existing businesses currently operating on property zoned for mining will be attracted into the IDZ through incentives, anticipated cost savings and improved efficiency.

We are optimistic that over 3000 jobs will be created during the construction and operational phases of the IDZ, and will impact positively in our region's GDP.

Again as President Zuma said, "we have emerged from the recession because of the actions that we as a nation have taken under the leadership of the ANC government. Our history and our past legacy indicate that in difficult times, the ANC provides good leadership, stability and certainty. We believe we have been able to do that during this period, in partnership with business, labour and civil society".

As you can recall, the previous Provincial Economic Summit that was held in Nelspruit clearly indicated our bold steps to fight poverty, create employment and produce the skills necessary to boost our economy. We need frequent interactions of this nature to be able to brainstorm and come up with positive ideas and possible future interventions.

Programme Director, even when we engage in such developments, we must do that responsibly acknowledging that our environment is at risk of extinction. Global warming is fast becoming a permanent phenomenon, and we must act now. Just in December 2009 we had converged in Copenhagen, Denmark with other countries of the world to try and come up with a solution to the threatening global warming effect to our country, and the rest of the world. Though we are committed to the reduction of the greenhouse gases as South Africa, we were however disappointed with the outcome of the climate change conference.

Despite the intensive 2 year negotiations, no final conclusive and legally binding agreement was reached with the countries of the world. We therefore as government, implore on you to start doing your business responsibly considering the impact it has on our environment. Even though we did not reach a legally binding agreement on the reduction of carbon dioxide levels into our atmosphere, we must show our commitment towards this cause. This you can also do by awarding bursaries to prospective students who would like to pursue studies on climate change. By so doing, you will be investing in the future of this country and the preservation of our environment for future generations.

Borrowing the words of Mahatma Ghandi, you must *“be the change you want to see in the world;”* and like the Chinese Proverb says, it is *“Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.”*

As I close, Italian writer, Mario Andretti once said and I quote:

“Desire is the key to motivation, but it is determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal - a commitment to excellence - that will enable you to attain the success you seek.”

As the year starts, let us commit to *“Work Together to Speed Up Effective Service to the People.”*

I thank you, and wish you fruitful interaction.