

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L (JABU) MAHLANGU, MPL DURING THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF THE MEGA INFORMATION CENTRE AT KMIA, PLASTON, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Monday, 02 November 2009

CEO of MEGA, Ms Nosizwe Nokwe, in absentia;

Managing Director of KMIA, Mr Marius Nel;

Secretary of NAFCOG Mpumalanga, Mr G.T Mokoena;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

When we tabled our Departmental Policy and Budget Speech in August this year, we committed that we will ensure the creation of a “super” economic growth agency before the end of the current financial year, as mandated by the Premier. The new entity will be born out of the merger of MEGA, MADCO (Mpumalanga Agricultural Development Corporation) and the MHFCo (Mpumalanga Housing Finance Company). I can report that the realisation of the “super” economic propelling entity is progressing well, and that the Executive Council has decided to retain the name MEGA, for the new entity. However the decision does not mean the old MEGA will take over the other merged two entities, hence the new entity will operate under a reviewed Act. To that effect, we have submitted the MEGA Bill of 2009 to the Provincial Legislature last Friday for consideration.

As the Premier mentioned when he announced the decision to merge the three (3) public entities, **“what we expect to see with this merger is an acceleration of enterprise development and delivery of massive infrastructure.”**

May I therefore, take this opportunity to allay fears that the merger will see some people losing their jobs. Our commitment towards creating decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods is unwavering, hence **working together** with labour unions representing the workers concerned, we will ensure that no one lose their jobs. However, as in any change, there might be some structural re-arrangements, and but even when that happens, employees will be properly consulted for inputs. This we do, bearing in mind the gloomy outcome of the recession, which saw thousands of our people losing their livelihood. It is reported that over 40 000 people have lost their jobs in the province due to the economic recession, and as the caring government, we cannot allow more families to go hungry.

Ladies and gentlemen, we hosted the Provincial Economic Summit from 15-16 October this year, in order to craft mechanisms and strategies to mitigate the impact of the economic recession in the province. Delegates at the summit, who included government, business, labour and civil society formations agreed to facilitate amongst others:

- The establishment of a University for Mpumalanga;
- The upgrading of major hospitals;
- The establishment of a tertiary hospital for the province;
- The maintenance and upgrading of the coal haulage road network;
- The construction of an International Convention Centre (ICC);
- The finalisation and implementation of the Provincial Co-operatives Development Strategy;
- The establishment of the Provincial Development Council (PDC) within two months.

We therefore believe our public entities like MEGA, would play a pivotal role in assisting us to fulfil the commitments we made during the Economic Summit.

I am therefore humbled and proud that MEGA is committed to fulfil its mandate by ensuring that potential investors coming to the province, are kept up to-date with regard to investment opportunities. The official launch the MEGA Information Centre at the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (KMIA) this morning, is a strategic and well-thought decision by the agency, and is applauded. This happens against the backdrop that out of the 300 000 people arriving at this airport on an annual basis, 60 per cent of them are international tourists.

It is further said that passengers spend on average, 40 minutes in the terminal building hence the information centre will come in handy. We also believe the Information Centre will provide the necessary information to international visitors who will descend on our doorstep for the 2010 FIFA World Cup and beyond.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate the CEO, Ms Nokwe in absentia and her team on this initiative, and encourage them to even look for other opportunities elsewhere. It is our collective responsibility to create a platform for economic recovery, for the benefit of our people. It is our collective responsibility, that we must realise the fulfilment of the five (5) priority areas of the ruling party.

Like President Zuma said, *“the dreams and hopes of all the people of our country must be fulfilled. There is no place for complacency, no place for cynicism, no place for excuses. Everything we do must contribute in a direct and meaningful way to the improvement of the lives of our people.”*

I leave you with an inspiring quote by British archaeological scholar, Thomas Edward Lawrence who once said, and I quote:

“All men dream but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds, wake in the day to find that it was vanity;

....but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men and (women), for they may act their dream with open eyes to make it possible."

Ladies and gentlemen, it is clear that the MEGA team dreams with its eyes wide open; it is clear that they are forever scavenging for opportunities to make a difference. They are dangerous dreamers, who will assist us to make it possible.

Working together we can do more to attract domestic and foreign investment to the province, and also mitigate the effects of the recession thereby propelling our economic growth for the benefit of our people.

It is my privilege and honour, to declare the Information Centre of MEGA at the KMIA, officially opened.

I thank you!