

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR J.L (JABU) MAHLANGU, MPL, DURING THE CHILEAN POST-MATCH BREAKFAST SESSION AT THE EMNOTWENI SUN HOTEL IN RIVERSIDE, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.**

**Thursday, 17 June 2010**

Programme Director;

His Excellency, the Ambassador of Chile to South Africa, Mr Francisco Marambio;

Honourable MEC for Human Settlement, Mr Madala Masuku;

Executive Mayor of Emalahleni Municipality, Councillor Linah Malatjie;

Acting CEO of MEGA, Mr Gijima Dladla;

Representatives from municipalities;

Representative from the *dti*;

Representatives of organised business;

Representatives from the 2010 Local Office;

Business people in our midst;

Distinguished guests;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Your Excellency, *Buenos días e' bien-venidos a Mpumalanga!*

It is indeed a great pleasure and honour, to welcome you and your delegation to our green breath-taking scenic Province – a Province which gives life to South Africa, since the sun rises in Mpumalanga. We are indeed humbled by your gesture, for taking time-off your busy schedule, to meet with us, with the sole aim of coming to inform us “how you can help our people.” This is because if your people decide to invest in our province, they will create job opportunities and transfer skills to our people. And when that happens, they would have contributed towards us realising our dream and commitment of ensuring **a better life for all.**

One of the five top priorities of our current administration, is to **speed up growth, create more jobs, decent work and sustainable livelihood** for all our people, irrespective of their political affiliation. This we continue to do, because we are a government of all people. Therefore, facilitating the creation of more job opportunities has become more urgent given the impact of the recently ended global economic meltdown. Around 82 000 people lost their jobs in our province, as a result of the recession.

We are a youthful province, with 65% of the total population of 3.6 million people being the youth up to the age of 30 years. This age group of our population, who should be economically active, remains largely unemployed. We therefore have to pull all stops to attract more investment into our province, in order to facilitate the creation of more jobs in order to ensure sustainable livelihood.

We are therefore sincerely appreciative of this engagement, for we believe that **“Working together, we can do more”** to revive our economy for the benefit of all our people.

Our province offer investment opportunities in various sectors such as mining, agriculture, forestry, petro-chemicals, tourism, ICT, renewable energy, to mention but a few. We are the third largest coal exporter in the world, accounting for 30 per cent of the coal being exported. We also account for around 80 percent of coal production in the country, and produce the bulk of electricity generation in the country. We also account for a lion’s share of the wood and timber production in the country. New areas of opportunities lie in the sectors of ICT, cultural industries as well as environmental rehabilitation and alternative energies. We are the second largest citrus producer in the country, and also account for one third of South Africa’s citrus export.

The activities of mining in the province contribute about 28 per cent to Mpumalanga's GDP. Our world class road infrastructure, the N4, which connects us with the neighbouring Mozambique has facilitated the smooth transportation of goods and people across the two countries, making investment along the Maputo Development Corridor viable.

With regards to the tourism sector, we are home to the world renowned Kruger National Park which boasts the big – five; we are home to the third largest canyon in the world and one of South Africa's scenic wonders, the Blyde River Canyon; we are home to South Africa's unique geological features found at Bourke's Luck Potholes; the three *Rondavels* and we also offer a rare opportunity to view the world through God's Window, amongst others. In our quest to promote tourism within the SADEC region, we will soon launch the **Three-Countries-in-One-Day** Strategy, which will offer visitors an opportunity to have breakfast in Swaziland; lunch in Mozambique and dinner in Mpumalanga, including a night drive at the Kruger National Park.

Like the rest of the world, as a country and a province, we are experiencing the harsh reality of climate change. We have started to take corrective actions, and believe that through co-operations in the fields of renewal energy and waste recycling, we can together play a significant role in saving our world. We share common characteristics in relation to investing in renewable energy, and in other sectors such as agro-processing, tourism and mining, to name but a few sectors.

Both South Africa and Chile are developing countries, who are proponents of the concept of stronger South-South co-operation; who share common experiences and problems and as such, can learn from each other and exchange expertise in related and relevant fields.

You will recall that our country and Chile signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning consultations on issues of common interest during November of 1998, and the first of such consultative policy meetings took place in Santiago during August of 2000.

Your Excellency, during negotiations with the Chilean Football Federation to attract the Chilean Football team to be based in our province during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, it was agreed that Mpumalanga and Chile would explore and sign a Memorandum of Understanding to focus on establishing trade, tourism, economic and sporting ties between us. It is therefore against this backdrop, that we will later this year, undertake Trade and Investment Promotion missions to Latin American countries of **Brazil, Chile, Mexico and India**.

May I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to your football federation, for having chosen our province as their base camp, for the ongoing 2010 FIFA World Cup games. We are indeed humbled by this gesture, which is a sign that you believed that we are capable of being good hosts. We believe that we have so far lived up to that expectation, hence you have decided to meet with us this morning, to further relations between our province and your country.

We are looking forward to the possible historical signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between our province and a province in your country, as this would be our first MOU with a South American country. The South Africa-Chile bilateral trade is concentrating in the primary and semi-processed metal, chemical and agricultural sectors. We are by far, Chile's largest African trading partner. South Africa's exports to Chile are more diversified than those from Chile. Our mission to your country, would therefore be exploratory and fact-finding in nature, in order to strengthen the ties that have been established during the stay of your national football team in our province, and to also identify a suitable Province with which we can forge links in trade, investments, tourism and sports.

Our major focus would be to attract investment in the green energy; mining; agriculture; electro-mechanical; ICT; machinery; chemicals and crafts sectors.

As you have already experienced, we are a friendly and welcoming nation. We wish you and your people, a life-time African experience in our beautiful province, with the hope that this, will lay a firm foundation for future engagements and partnerships.

May I also congratulate your national team, for beating Honduras one-nil in their first Group H match encounter at the Mbombela Stadium yesterday. We wish the Chilean football team all the best in their upcoming matches with Switzerland on June 21 and Spain on June 25 - and I believe they will win the two (2) games.

Your Excellency, we believe that this morning's interaction, signals the beginning of sustainable investment to flow our way.

**“Working together, we can do more” to speed up growth, create more jobs, decent work and sustainable livelihood for all our people.**

Enjoy your stay in Mpumalanga.

*I thank you!*