

**REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR SIKHUMBUZO KHOLWANE, MPL, DURING THE 2016 INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVES DAY CELEBRATION HELD AT MBOMBELA STADIUM, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

**Friday, 01 July 2016**

- Programme Director, the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Ms Dumisile Nhlengethwa;
- The Minister of Small Business Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu;
- The Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises Development in Zimbabwe, Ms Sithembiso Nyoni;
- The Minister of Small Business Development, Co-operatives and Marketing in the Kingdom of Lesotho, Mr Thabiso Ditsiba;
- The Deputy Minister of Small Business Development, Ms Elisabeth Thabethe;
- The MEC for Finance, Economy and Enterprise Development in the North West Province, Ms Wendy Nelson;

- The Member of the eHlanzeni District Municipality Mayoral Committee for Local Economic Development, Councillor Michael Ncongwane;
- The Member of the Mbombela Local Municipality Mayoral Committee for Local Economic Development, Councillor Bheki Zulu;
- Other Councillors present;
- The President of SANACO (South African National Apex Co-operative), Mr Lawrence Bale;
- The President of the South African Women Business Council of Co-operatives (SAWBCC), Ms Ann Ngutshane, who is representing NCAF;
- Government officials across all spheres;
- Members of Co-operatives present;
- Distinguished guests;
- Members of the media;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

**Good Morning/San'bonani!**

Programme Director;

1. We meet on the first day of the month which has been dedicated to pay homage to the selfless contribution made by the founding father of our democracy, the first President of the democratic South Africa, *tat' u*Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.
2. Madiba has sacrificed and spent most of his life in pursuit of freedom and justice for all.
3. In recognition of this selfless contribution, what better way to keep his legacy alive, by continuing on his footsteps and make an indelible imprint in the lives of those less fortunate than us.
4. He has thought us that, and I quote: ***“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others, that will determine the significance of the life we lead”*** – unquote.
5. We must therefore, collectively walk or even better, run on his footsteps and emulate him.

6. Let us make sure that we are counted as part of the brigade determined to make a difference in the lives of others, in order to live a significant and fulfilling life.
7. **Make every day a Nelson Mandela Day!**
8. ***Siyaqhuba! Sishodangawe Nje Kuphela!***

Programme Director;

9. On the 3rd of August this year, our people will go to the polls yet again, to confirm that they still have the power, by electing the political party that will continue to represent their wishes in the local sphere of government.
10. I can confirm without any doubt, that since we took over government democratically in 1994, the ANC-led government has implemented various policies which were, and continue to be geared towards **strengthening local economies by providing support to small businesses and co-operatives**, amongst others.

11. All our progressive policies are geared towards supporting and nurturing the small business sector, which has proven to be a significant contributor towards economic growth and development.
12. This we do to fulfil the commitment we have made through the *Freedom Charter*, and subsequently in the National Development, to ensure that co-operatives and small businesses alike benefit from the country's economic opportunities.
13. We believe this will assist us to deal with the **triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality** bedeviling our communities.
14. The governing African National Congress has re-affirmed its commitment to restore the people's power, in order to move the country towards total economic freedom.
15. I have no doubt that our people still have confidence in the ANC-led government, as it has a proven track-record of delivering services to the people.

Programme Director;

16. As Mpumalanga, we continue to acknowledge the significance of co-operatives and small businesses in economic growth, hence we have strengthened our support to them.
17. This is evidenced by the substantial increase we have made in the funding available to them. We have in this regard, allocated an amount of **R80 million to MEGA** – our Provincial Economic Growth Agency, in the current financial year, to fund co-operatives and small businesses.
18. I however believe that co-operatives deserve much better, hence I have asked **MEGA to review their policies to become biased towards small businesses and co-operatives.**
19. I would like to see a situation whereby **MEGA provides start-up grants** to small businesses and co-operatives, and NOT loans.

20. We are also working with government development-finance Agencies such as **SEDA (Small Enterprise Development Agency)** and **SEFA (Small Enterprise Finance Agency)** to strengthen the non-financial and financial support we continue to provide to co-operatives and small businesses.

**21. *Siyaqhuba! Sishodangawe Nje Kuphela!***

Programme Director;

22. In building up to this main event, we have hosted 3 events in the 3 Districts of our Province to recognise the work and contribution of co-operatives in economic growth and development.

23. In the process, we have recognised and provided financial incentives totaling **100-thousand Rands to ten (10) co-operatives** in order to encourage them, including those who did not make it, to do even better.

Ladies and gentlemen;

24. I am not providing a keynote address, but just thought I should share with you some of the things we have done in preparing for this all significant day in the history of Co-operatives.
25. It is therefore my pleasure, to introduce the person who will do the **Keynote Address**.
26. She is the former International Relations Special Advisor to President Jacob Zuma.
27. She previously also served as the Head of Communication for the Pan African Women's Organisation in Angola in 1988.
28. In 1989 she moved to Lusaka, Zambia where she held the position of Head of Communication in the ANC's Department of Religious Affairs, amongst others.
29. She returned to South Africa in 1991 and became the Head of Communication of the ANC Women's League
30. In 2004, she became South Africa's Ambassador to Brazil.



31. She became a Member of the ANC's National Executive Committee in 2007, and is currently also the Member of Parliament. If I can talk about her credentials, we will be here even on Sunday.

32. Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you the **Minister of Small Business Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu.**

33. ***Together we move Co-operatives in South Africa and Africa forward.***

34. Over to you Minister.

**I Thank You/ Ngiyabonga!**