

SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR TREASURY MR SEAPARO SEKOATI ON BEHALF OF PREMIER CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF A GALA DINNER FOR THE JOINT PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BETWEEN LIMPOPO AND MATABELELAND PROVINCES OF ZIMBABWE HELD AT ZEBULA LODGE.

30 August 2019

Programme Facilitator;

Honourable Minister Judith Ncube;

Honourable Richard Moyo, Minister of State Provincial Affairs in Matabeleland North;

Honourable Abedinigo Ncube, Minister of State Provincial Affairs in Matabeleland South;

The entire delegation from our sister Republic of Zimbabwe;

My colleagues in the Provincial Executive Council of the Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa;

Senior Government Officials from our two countries;

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen:

Good evening!

Let me start by commending all of you for looking the part for this Gala-Dinner.

This glittering ceremony closes a curtain on what has been a very fruitful and productive two days of presentations and engagements.

I do not doubt that after all the hard-work and mind-exhausting activities of the day, we all deserve unwind in a more relaxed environment.

But perhaps before I could go any further, I should take this opportunity to thank our technical teams and our leaders for a job well-done.

I think that the work that preceded this Gala Dinner has exposed one reality to all of us. That reality is that we may be coming from different divides of the great Limpopo River, but in truth we are one people.

I think our Premier, Honourable Chupu Mathabatha did highlight this point during his remarks earlier in the day.

We come from one origin and from same ancestors – most importantly we share the same destiny.

It is for this reason that we should continue to perfect the art of harmonising relations, living together, side-by-side, as brothers and sisters.

It was very apparent during our interactions that whether we are in South Africa or we are in Zimbabwe our challenges remain the same.

We also share similar historical experiences which have become a permanent birthmark on the body of our two nations.

This is the birthmark imprinted by our inherited colonial past.

The socio-economic challenges imposed on South Africa by the reality of the underperforming economy of the world are the same challenges that face our colleagues in Zimbabwe.

No one is better than the other.

We are all the children of the same ancestor warriors who refused to succumb to exploitation, domination and oppression.

Those who came before us took a conscious decision to undermine the artificial borders that exist between our countries and embrace each other as fellow brothers and sisters.

They embraced each other as fellow members of the human race.

It was through this spirit of cooperation that the Ian Smith regime was liquidated in Zimbabwe and apartheid was collapsed in South Africa.

Today, through the work we were conducting during the day, we were reaffirming our historical bonds and the significance partnerships and collaborations.

Today we have learnt not to be like the Siamese crocodiles which despite sharing the same stomach continue to fight for food.

Premier Mathabatha emphasised this point during the day when he said the benefits which are expected to accrue from our SEZ initiative should be shared amongst the people of our two countries.

We do not have to live in abundance in order for us to be able to share.

We need to share the little resources we have, because that is what humanity is about.

The Book of Proverbs says do not say to your neighbor, "Come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you"-- when you already have it with you.

I can tell you that my experience of relations in this Province is that ordinary men and women are far much ahead of us. I can say it without any fear of being contradicted by ordinary Zimbabweans and residents of this Province relate very well.

They live side-by-side and share the little they have.

Colleagues;

I would have failed as MEC responsible for economic development and tourism if I do not remind you that this dinner is taking place in one of our country's most loved tourist attraction destination.

The Waterberg district is our tourism district.

Limpopo itself is endowed with plentiful natural resources, including 54 provincial reserves and countless private game reserves.

In this region of Waterberg, you will be spoiled to breathtaking mountain range, which supports a thriving farming and game ranching, nature reserves and resorts.

What makes this region to be particularly attractive is the very fact that it is literally minutes away from the nation's capital, Pretoria and the country's economic hub, which is Gauteng province.

A few minutes' drive into the north of our Province is the City of Polokwane - the capital of our Province. Polokwane boasts excellent growing infrastructure, a modern international airport and offering a wealth of diverse cultural experiences. Our capital city is nestled in the Capricorn Region, named after the tropic of Capricorn.

A further few minutes drive to the East of the capital will take you to the majestic Mopani region. The Mopani region is the home of the world renowned Kruger National Park, the home of the big five.

As we conclude the work of this Joint Provincial Council, I am confident that we would soon welcome you back to Limpopo.

Programme Director;

I understand that the day has been long and taxing on all of us. This event is not meant for long political speeches and I do not intend to abuse this platform with a long political speech.

I want to conclude my few remarks by once again appreciating your presence and commend you for a job well done.

I am confident that the work that needed to be done was done.

I also, in conclusion, wish to thank heartily you for having accepted our invitation to host you in this special gala dinner.

I thank you.