

**REMARKS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, HON CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE JOINT PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF THE TRANS-LIMPOPO SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE, HELD AT ZEBULA LODGE, BELA-BELA.**

**30 August 2019**

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:

Mangwanani shamwari yangu

I am truly honoured for the privilege to facilitate this important meeting between our Province of Limpopo and our sister Provinces of Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province.

I know that an interaction of this nature, at this level is actually long overdue. However, we should be delighted that we have finally managed to converge in this fashion, to get some work done.

But before we could go any further with the business of our meeting, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my most- heartfelt words of welcome to everyone in this meeting. I particularly want to say a warm Limpopo welcome to our counterparts from Zimbabwe.

I know that you don't necessarily need a special welcome in Limpopo or in South Africa because this is much your home, just as we always feel at home whenever we are in Zimbabwe.

However, I still want to thank you very much for putting everything aside and prioritising this meeting. I know that there are equally demanding responsibilities in your respective provinces but you have taken a decision to prioritise the work of this Joint Provincial Council.

For this reasons, we truly value and place a high premium on your presence in this meeting.

All of us in this meeting share an inherent obligation to make this meeting a resounding success. So much effort has been put in ensuring that this meeting takes place.

Colleagues would remember that the Trans-Limpopo Spatial Development Initiative was first proposed in 1998 as part of the effort to forge regional integration. Also part of the rationale behind this initiative was to find lasting ways to grow and develop the economies of our respective provinces.

We believed then, and we still believe that using our strategic location as neighbours and as people who share strong social ties, we could use our collective resources to integrate our economies and advance together, towards a destination of a better life for our people.

This meeting is therefore amongst other things expected to breathe life into the MOUs signed between the four provinces in 2001. We all should admit that since the signing of these MOUs in 2001 nothing much has happened.

This means that the potential which can be unlocked by merely implementing these agreements remain suffocating and unrealised. This is a grave injustice to those who rely on us to have their socio-economic fortunes changing for the better.

## **Colleagues;**

We need to move with speed to remove whatever obstacles that previously hampered the implementations of the MOUs we had signed. Great opportunities for mutual benefit exist for us to embrace.

For an example, in Limpopo the implementation of the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone project in Limpopo should benefit our counterparts in Zimbabwe.

The Musina-Makhado SEZ project is a special energy and metallurgical zone.

I know that we will soon receive a presentation on this project, but I want to indicate that this is a massive project. Thus far, we have already managed to attract over R150 billion investments commitment to this project.

Working together, we can ensure that the full benefits of this project are shared by our provinces and amongst our people.

## **Colleagues;**

I am directed by the program in front of us to introduce my colleagues who are accompanying me to this meeting.

These are Members of the Provincial Executive Council, what in other parts of the world is referred to as Provincial Ministers. We call them MECs, which is short for Members of the Executive Council. or a Provincial Cabinet .

Let me start with the woman who is tasked with the responsibility to ensure a long and healthy life for all the residents of Limpopo. This is a woman who has been mandate to improve the health status of our people through the prevention of illnesses and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Part of the work of her Department is to improve the healthcare delivery system by focusing on access, equity, efficiency, quality and sustainability. **I am please to introduce our MEC for Health, Honourable Phophi Ramathuba.**

The second member of our delegation is a woman whose Department is tasked with the responsibility to promote economic growth and food security through sustainable agricultural and Entrepreneurship Development.

She is particularly mandated to ensure a sustainable agricultural natural resource base; improved agricultural production; safe and tradable animal and vegetable animal products.

She is also mandated to lead efforts to ensure a competitive agricultural sector; and a skilled and empowered farming community.

**It is my pleasure to introduce to this meeting, MEC Nandi Ndalani.**

The third Member of my team is another woman who is tasked to champion the development of sport, arts, culture and heritage development in our Province.

Her Department is mandated to enhance the unity of our diverse people through the provision of sport, arts, and culture.

**It is my pleasure to introduce to this meeting, MEC Thandi Moraka.**

The fourth and last member of my delegation is a man who is responsible to promote the growth and development of our provincial economy. This is a man whose Department is responsible for driving the implementation of our SEZ project.

**Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce MEC Thabo Mokone.**

I will now handover to Minister Judith Ncube for her remarks and to conduct the rituals of introducing the Matabeleland delegation.

Yatenda

Ngiyabonga