



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, HONOURABLE CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE LIMPOPO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP, HELD AT THE RANCH HOTEL, POLOKWANE.

25 July 2019

Programme Director;
MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Mr Thabo Mokone;
Our Director General, Mr Nape Nchabeleng;
Esteemed representatives from various development, research and academic institutions;
Members of the media;
Ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning!

The MEC has already done a wonderful job of welcoming all of you to this important economic development workshop. But please accept my additional words of welcome and appreciations for your overwhelming response to our invitation.

I must from the onset state that we value your presence in this meeting and we appreciate your continued partnership and support.

I am convinced beyond any doubt that the key to our development objectives is partnerships.

The struggle to develop and grow the economy; create jobs; fight unemployment and poverty, is a struggle that requires our collective energies and our combined intellectual resources.

No one or institution acting alone can win the national war against the inherited yet stubborn legacy of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

I guess that it is with this understanding that you have accepted our invitation to participate in this workshop.

The task of this meeting is great and so are our people's expectations from this meeting.

Programme Director;

It is a known secret that the economy of the country and the economy of our Province are not performing in line with our expectations. Instead of creating new and sustainable jobs, our economy is shedding jobs.

This reality comes with increasing levels of unemployment and poverty. It is in this context that the people look up to us for durable solutions from the challenges they are confronted with. We simply cannot afford to fail the expectations of our people.

The success of the South African revolution is to a greater extent dependent on our ability to address the socio-economic challenges facing our people. Our democracy will mean nothing to the majority of our citizens if they remain trapped in conditions of squalor, poverty and joblessness. As I said during the State of the Province Address a few weeks ago, we have to make a deliberate and a concerted effort to drive our people out of the dehumanising web of abject poverty.

It is in this context, that a sustained economic growth is crucial to enable government to defeat the persisting legacy of inequality, poverty and unemployment.

We have to introduce new and innovative measures to stimulate the growth of our Provincial economy.

Programme Director;

We believe that in the past five years we have laid down a solid foundation to place Limpopo at a higher development trajectory. Our challenge is to build on the foundation which has been laid.

You would know that one of our flagship projects in this regard is our SEZ initiative.

As we have said during SOPA, the Musina-Makhado SEZ project is nearing implementation stage. Our collective challenge is to ensure that we design measures to ensure that a significant value chain to be produced in this SEZ remains in the Province.

The project is actually bigger than we have initially estimated, as I speak, the Musina-Makhado SEZ project has been able to attract an investment commitment of over R150 billion. This will certainly, go a long way in creating much-needed jobs and other economic opportunities for the people of this Province.

We have also announced that our application for the Tubatse SEZ is already at an advanced stage. In this regard, we envisage that our business proposal will be lodged with the Minister for the DTI by the end of August this year.

Madam Speaker;

The other reality is that our provincial economy is to a greater extent still dependent on mining activities. The role that mining plays in the economy of our Province is unequalled.

We envisage that for a future to come, mining will continue to play a central role in the economy of our Province. Currently, mining contributes almost 25% to the Provincial Gross Domestic Product.

The historic challenge for this Province and for our economy is that our mineral resources are not being beneficiated in this Province. In simple terms, we continue to export valued minerals extracted from our soil to other Provinces and counties.

This situation has to be arrested if we are to maximise returns from mining activities taking place on our soil.

The other challenge for us is to find ways of sustaining opportunities beyond the life span of mining activities.

We also believe that we can maximise much returns from the agricultural sector. Agriculture remains one of the economic competitive advantages of our Province. I believe that we can do more in order to leverage on the potential of this sector to put the Province on a higher trajectory of economic growth and development.

The other area which carries more potential is our tourism sector. I believe that through targeted support to this sector, we can unlock its massive economic stimulation power, which in turn would create the much-needed jobs.

Programme Director;

I am alive to the fact that the day ahead of us is still too long. We still have very important presentations and discussions ahead of us.

This is a very rich two-day program and I am confident that it will produce even richer outcomes.

I want to take this opportunity to once again thank you for agreeing to be part of this epoch defining workshop.

I wish you a fruitful and successful workshop.

I thank you!