

Address by MEC T. Mohlala during the Waterberg District Forum Launch.

Date : Tuesday, 14 August 2012

Time : 10:00

Venue : Van Rensburg Hall, Mokopane

Executive Mayor

Mayors

Speakers

Chief Whips

Members of Mayoral Committees

Councillors

Traditional Leaders

Head of Department

Senior Management Members

Public Works staff members

Members of the media

Distinguished guests

Programme Director

Good Morning

Her Worship the Executive Mayor, His and Her Worship Mayors from all local municipalities in Waterberg district, it is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here, to launch our first EPWP District Forum. I would like to thank the opportunity afforded to me, to come talk to you on this day.

We are here today following the successful provincial EPWP summit held last month in Polokwane. The support and attendance by municipalities was overwhelming. I have however noted with concern, that from this district only the Mayor of Mookgopong attended the summit.

Her Worship Executive Mayor, the summit was very important as it has paved ways and has had municipalities committed to the implementation of EPWP from here henceforth. This will enable us as politicians to play the oversight role from a much informed position, and thus improving on providing services within our institutions, thereby responding to the adequate provision of services in our communities.

Without going too deep into the summit, I am convinced that all of us here today are now clearer in terms of what EPWP is, what its intentions are and what is expected from us. The one thing that stood out from the summit was that for this programme, EPWP, to succeed, there needs to be total political oversight.

It is the reason we are here today, to say as the political leadership, let us steer this programme in the right direction. The launching of District Forums is part of the implementation of the resolutions from the national EPWP summit which was held in November 2011. This conscious decision was taken to strengthen participation of municipalities and to ensure that Incentive Agreement Protocols signed between Mayors and the Minister are adequately implemented.

Colleagues, I am convinced that when all political leaders from municipalities are on board in terms of what EPWP is, and its intentions are, there would be nothing stopping us from making EPWP a success.

The provincial EPWP summit committed municipalities to plan in advance in order to access the Incentive Grant well in time and reporting accordingly. Honourable Mayors will on a quarterly basis receive communiqués informing them how their municipalities are performing. This will assist you to monitor whether reporting is done properly and whether there is improvement in job creation. Honourable Mayors, let it be our role and commitment to give direction to programme.

The launching of this District Forum comes at a significant time for us South Africans, and as citizens of Limpopo. We have just celebrated the life of the world's icon, one of our own, Tata Madiba. In the same month, one of our mothers, one of us, Mama Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma, is elected to head one of the most instrumental organisations in the African continent, the African Union (AU). All these come a month ahead of the celebration of struggles of our heroines on the South African calendar, August, the national Women's month.

Colleagues, let us take lessons from these hard working South Africans, and serve our people with dignity, respect and diligence, so that we can achieve a better life for all.

The first chapter of the 2007 African National Congress' Discussion document on Strategy and Tactics of the ANC: Building a National Democratic Society, says that, "South Africa has entered its Second Decade of Freedom with the strengthening of democracy and acceleration of the programme to improve the quality of life of all the people. Steadily, the dark night of white minority political domination is receding into a distant memory." This is an emphasis on what we need to do to improve the lives of our people.

The EPWP, which is aimed at alleviating poverty and addressing unemployment challenges, helps us as the leaders elected by our people to provide them with the decent life they deserve.

In the beginning of June this year, the national Portfolio Committee on Public Works was here in the province for its oversight mandate, and all municipalities in the province, with the exception of Bela-Bela and Mogalakwena, attended and made their presentations on the progress made in EPWP Phase-2 implementation and Asset Management. Waterberg District Municipality was present; I then take it the message has reached home.

Colleagues, I am still awaiting explanation and/or reasons that led to the two municipalities not being present during the committee's visit. Colleagues, it is our collective responsibility to serve our people, as we promised to do so during elections. The implementation of the EPWP Phase-2 started well and is gaining momentum, but I would like to emphasise on what we need to do in order to get it right in terms of our contribution towards the provincial work opportunities target

of four-hundred and forty-one thousand 993 (441, 993) and ultimately the national target of 4, 5 million by 2014/15.

We regard municipalities as essential in the implementation for the EPWP projects and in job creation, particularly our municipalities in this province since they are mainly rural and the EPWP agenda is focusing on that.

One of the resolutions that came out of the recently held provincial EPWP summit is that it is our duty and responsibility to maximise on opportunities available in all EPWP sectors to create the so much needed jobs, so that indeed poverty can be alleviated.

Honourable Mayors, Currently the Infrastructure Sector is leading in terms of creation of work opportunities, despite underreporting and under-utilisation of incentive grants by municipalities. This clearly indicates that the launching of district forums and the increased enthusiasm and commitment by municipalities will be taking Limpopo to the top nationally as far as EPWP is concerned.

Let us be innovative in all the other sectors in order to employ majority of the needy in our constituencies. The launching of this District Forum, which is going to happen in all other four districts of our province, is for us to find a common ground in terms of co-ordination, implementation and oversight of these EPWP projects.

It is our collective responsibility to do proper planning on job creation, provide jobs to the most needy and do adequate reporting on the work opportunities created

through these projects. We need municipalities since these projects are there, closer to the people.

We need municipalities fully on board since they have MIG grants and other capital projects budgets, where labour intensive methods can be used to create more jobs. Municipalities are also closer to the people and are the face of our government hence the prioritisation.

One of the tasks of this forum will be to liaise with Department of Public Works and get the resolutions of the provincial EPWP summit, so that all their plans and efforts can be towards implementing the resolutions while strengthening the EPWP.

I would therefore, call upon Her Worship Executive Mayor, all His and Her Worship Mayors to roll up your sleeves from this day forward in ensuring that we exceed our provincial target of one-hundred and two thousand, 763 (102 763)work opportunities for the Financial Year 2012/13.

As the province we managed to exceed the previous financial year target which was seventy-seven thousand and one (77 001), by forty-eight thousand, one-hundred and seven (48 107) to reach one-hundred and twenty-five thousand, six hundred and twelve (125 612) work opportunities created. This proves that we can, if we want to.

We saw in the presentation by Head of Department, Mr Chaamano earlier, on how many work opportunities have been created in this district municipality in the previous financial year.

In closing, I would like for each and every one of us present here today, to always remember that, every project is an EPWP project. Her Worship Executive Mayor, His and Her Worship Mayors, the current Local Government slogan is that “*Together We Can Build Better Communities*”, therefore the ball is in our court, let us rise to the occasion and make our communities better.

Thank you.