

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR MEC FOR COGTA, HON. R.M MTSHWENI DURING THE GALA DINNER AHEAD OF THE OPENING OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE MPUMALANGA HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS AT THE MBOMBELA STADIUM.**

**DATE: THURSDAY, 13 MARCH 2015**

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CHAIRPERSON OF THE MPUMALANGA HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS,  
KGOSI MOKOENA

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS,  
INKHOSI S.G NGOMANE

ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LOCAL HOUSES IN THE THREE DISTRICTS

AMAKHOSI/ MAKGOSHI IN OUR MIDST

CHAIRPERSON OF THE MPUMALANGA COMMITTEE OF TRADITIONAL  
LEADERSHIP ON CLAIMS AND DISPUTES

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE,  
HON. D DUBE

CHAIRPERSON OF SALGA IN MPUMALANGA AND THE LEADERSHIP OF OUR  
MUNICIPALITIES

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LOTSHANI

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- 1 Honourable Chairperson, allow me first to congratulate the Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders in its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary since its establishment in 1995. Our province pioneered the establishment of the house, and became a model through which similar houses were subsequently established in the five other provinces.
- 2 It is no coincidence Hon. Chairperson that the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the house takes place at the same time that the country is celebrating 20<sup>th</sup> of its democracy, in light of the role that Amakhosi have played in the democratic South Africa we live in today.

- 3 The anniversary of the house and that of the country serves as a constant reminder about the road we have travelled thus far, working together with Amakhosi in a quest to improve the lives of our people. Furthermore, it serves as a source of reference to the commitment the ANC-led government has made in restoring the dignity of the institution of traditional leadership to its rightful position.
- 4 We salute the first Chairperson of the House, Inkhosi Mnisi of Mantjolo Traditional Council in our midst, for his sterling leadership in his tenure, his successors and the current Chairperson, Kgosi Mokoena, for guiding the house towards the realization of its objectives which it was established for.
- 5 We share the responsibilities of tackling social challenges confronting our communities. Let me reiterate His Excellency, Hon. President J.G Zuma by commending traditional leaders for their active participation in government's fight against the scourge of HIV/AIDS. The Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga, has been identified as one of the highest regions with high statistics of the disease. Your active participation in government's programmes in the fight against the spread of the disease is highly commended and we hope for a reduction in the figures, due to your intervention.
- 6 Over the 21 years of our democracy, we have realized the importance of a partnership with Amakhosi dealing with the socio-economic challenges facing our people, especially in the rural areas. We commend you for the role you continuously play in education, health, development and security in our communities.
- 7 Chairperson, over the years, our beloved province has experienced a fair share of death cases of young boys in the initiation schools. This remains a matter of serious concern. Initiation schools should be a death-free passage of our young boys to adulthood through the old age traditional practice of **'ukusoka'**.
- 8 Unfortunately, some of the schools as we have seen in recent years, have become a death knell. This is as a result of people who perform the tradition without following procedure. They cash in money at the expense of our children. As Kgoshi Mokoena describes them, they treat our kids as ATMs.

- 9 I want to assure this house, Chairperson that such malpractise will soon be a thing of the past. Last year our Premier, Hon. DD Mabuza signed into law the Mpumalanga Ingoma Act of 2011, which gives us enough powers to pursue those who cause loss of lives during the initiation process.
  
- 10 The act came into effect in September last year and for the first time this year, we will have legislation to back us up when we take action against people who operate the initiation schools without complying with all provisions of the act. Those who fail to comply, their days are numbered. They cannot escape this time.
  
- 11 I must say that the act is meaningless without your support. Government alone cannot win this war. In our desire to have a zero-tolerance towards death cases, we need your assistance and the communities to help us prevent the death of our initiates.
  
- 12 We appeal to Amakhosi to monitor the schools, to make sure that those who perform this tradition comply with the act. We also appeal to the parents, to first check if the school operators have the permission to run the schools and that their children are in a good healthy condition to undergo the initiation process.
  
- 13 Programme Director, job creation remains one of the top priorities of this Administration. Our people in the rural areas are the worst hit by the triple challenges of poverty. We share the concern of Amakhosi about this matter. As you are aware, economic conditions are not favourable for economic growth to enable us create as many jobs as possible in line with the National Development Plan (NDP).
  
- 14 Despite this, our Government is exploring every possible means with a potential for job creation. We are inspired by the President's pronouncement during the opening of the National House of Traditional leaders last week. The President said: "This year Operation Phakisa will be expanded to the mining industry with the view to partner with the mining sector to introduce downstream beneficiation of the country's mineral resources. I trust that traditional leaders will be able to participate in some of these programmes at the local level".

- 15 The President's pronouncement was reiterated by the Premier during the State of the Province Address. His focus was on the the revitalization of distressed mining towns, with more targeted intervention to improve the conditions of poor communities living near the mining areas.
- 16 Some of these mines are within the jurisdiction of land belonging to you. We are convinced that communities in the vicinity of the affected mines will benefit from this intervention. This will be the first step in the fight against the poverty which our people in the rural areas find themselves in.
- 17 As a department, we will ensure that Amakhosi/Makgoshi participate in these initiatives aimed at unlocking the economic potential of the mining sector for the benefit of rural communities.
- 18 We also support, strengthen and capacitate the institution of Traditional leadership to accelerate rural development, nation building and social cohesion in Traditional communities. During the financial year 2014/15 the department has supported Traditional Councils to ensure sound financial management, improved governance systems and proper office administration.
- 19 In the year 2015/16 financial year Honourable Chairperson we will develop a Provincial Policy on Financial Management for TCs to ensure financial accountability and sound financial management system. Our vision for a proper functioning Traditional Council is the following:
- Financial accountability with a sound and transparent financial systems.
  - Community participation with a coal phase of development, and to participate in Municipal IDPs and Councils sittings.
  - Adequate resources to ensure conducive and friendly working environment such as office equipment.
  - Management of partnership and relations for proper management plan of dealing with partnership.
  - Preservation and promotion of culture as stated in the constitution.
  - Administer justice to deal fairly with conflicts.
  - Land administration for proper land use management.

20 Programme Director, as I conclude, it has been 10 months since I assumed responsibility of this Portfolio. Let me take this opportunity to express words of gratitude to the Chairperson of the House, Kgosi Mokoena, members of the Executive and all Amakhosi/Makgosi gathered here for the warm welcome they have given me.

21 Your support makes me part of the family. I look forward to work closely with the house and all structures of the Institution of the House of traditional leadership.

**Ngiyathokoza!**