



GAUTENG PROVINCE

ROADS AND TRANSPORT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH

25 October 2017

To: All Media

Att: News Editors / Transport Reporters

SPEECH DELIVERED BY MEC ISMAIL VADI AT THE GAUTENG TRADE AND INVESTMENT CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION ON 25 OCTOBER 2017

I wish to thank Inspire Communications for inviting the Gauteng Provincial Government to the Gauteng Trade and Investment Conference and Exhibition.

The conference is taking place at an opportune time as the Province is currently hosting the South Africa/Italy Summit aimed at strengthening strategic and business relations between South Africa and Italy whilst exploring business development opportunities.

Earlier this year, the province hosted the Gauteng Infrastructure Investment Conference targeted at driving investment for inclusive growth and sustainability.

Furthermore, yesterday we signed an MoU with Erongo Region of Namibia on identified areas of cooperation such as exploring of investment opportunities and cooperation on capacity building between the two regions.

These and other initiatives are a clear indication that the Gauteng Province is committed to driving economic growth, creating investment opportunities as well as strengthening trade and investment relations within the Southern African region through partnerships with key stakeholders and investors.

The current economic environment that we are working in requires us to establish strategic partnerships to boost investment in our economy.

It is therefore of utmost importance for all stakeholders to work together in showcasing Gauteng as the preferred investment destination.

The province's long term vision for economic development is heavily dependent on our investment in quality infrastructure, maintaining existing infrastructure as well as building new infrastructure, especially transport infrastructure.

In line with the Provincial Government's commitment to providing a world-class road infrastructure, investments on public infrastructure projects have exceeded R30 billion in the past three years.

The investments has been on improving our freeway and provincial road networks, the Gautrain, the modernisation of Metrorail and the rollout of bus rapid transit systems in metropolitan municipalities. This is apart from that which has been spent on social infrastructure projects such as schools, hospitals and clinics.

The injection of funds into transport projects is meant to facilitate improved mobility, allow for social inclusion, stimulate economic growth and enable the development of small and emerging contractors.

Moreover, the Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport has since 2014, spent over R3 billion undertaking heavy and light rehabilitation of the road infrastructure along various corridors in the province.

In the current financial year, the department's allocated budget is R6.8 billion with R1.9 billion specifically earmarked for transport infrastructure.

With regard to freight and logistics, the province will on Thursday, 26 October 2017, host a Provincial Freight Summit at the Parktonian Hotel, Johannesburg.

The summit, hosted under the theme "Optimising Freight to Support Economic Growth", will focus on freight infrastructure projects, freight industry's best practices, international freight trends as well as innovative ways of modernising the freight industry.

As per this conference's objective of inspiring SMMEs that have the capacity to co-create with corporates and international companies, I am hopeful that our discussions today will focus on how we can create opportunities to stimulate local economic development as well as support and develop sustainable SMMEs.

From the point of economic transformation, our infrastructure spend has played a decisive role in pushing forward the empowerment of historically disadvantaged individuals (HDI) and black firms.

In construction and professional services, we are spending up to 91% of the budget on HDIs.

It is therefore critical to ensure that there is true empowerment of SMMEs so that they become more sustainable and contribute to economic growth and development.

I would also like to encourage companies to partner with the Provincial government's Tshepo 1 Million initiative aimed at empowering the youth by equipping them with the necessary skills and opening opportunities for them to generate their own income and wealth.

I am confident that this conference will explore various opportunities and share best practices aimed at encouraging, supporting and promoting investments in the province.

Allow me conclude by wishing this session a constructive and fruitful deliberations and success.

Ismail Vadi

MEC for Roads and Transport

25 October 2017