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Attention: News Editors and Journalists

For immediate release

## **MEC Kgosientsho Ramokgopa Pitches High In His First 100 Days**

The 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2019 marked 100 days since Members of the Executive Committee in the Gauteng Province were sworn in. Since then, Dr Ramokgopa, Gauteng's MEC for Economic Development, Agriculture and Environment, has crafted bold plans and made major strides to grow the Gauteng economy, curb unemployment and facilitate investment in the province. The climate change and sustainability agenda also features prominently in the 5-year plan.

In his State of the Province Address, Premier Makhura tasked MEC Ramokgopa with crafting a detailed plan, outlining all sectors that have the greatest potential for employment, sectors that can grow exports and empowerment as well as sectors that can increase jobs in the township economy. Premier Makhura also tasked the MEC to craft a climate change and sustainability strategy for Gauteng within the first 100 days.

In responding to this directive, after an extensive period of engagement with key stakeholders, including informal traders, business forums, captains of industry, farmers, environmentalists and many more; a six pillared programme has been drafted as the basis for labour intensive growth, economic transformation and renewed emphasis on sustainable development and climate change, these are:

1. Agriculture: agri-industrialisation and market access
2. Environment and sustainability agenda
3. Industrialisation and multi-tier special economic zone (SEZ)
4. Township and solidarity economy
5. Trade, investment, and economic tourism
6. Inner city revitalisation

In tandem, Dr Ramokgopa has singled out agriculture, agro-processing, tourism and construction as having the greatest potential for mass employment absorption. In order to grow investment, the department will expand the SEZ to draw investment into industries like the automotive sector. True to the commitment made by MEC Ramokgopa to position Gauteng as a leader in the green economy, a climate change and sustainability strategy has already been crafted for the consideration of EXCO.

In the first 100 days, Dr Ramokgopa has leveraged a R2-billion investment from Vumatel that will roll-out fibre to the house connections in townships and offer connectivity to households at affordable rates. The first project will commence in Vosloorus. A similar project will be run with TELKOM through their fibre-roll out programme focussing on the Mogale City area in the West Rand.

The MEC is also at an advanced stage of discussions with the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) on a township innovation and an agricultural support fund to be supported by the NEF. The NEF has distinguished itself as a centre of excellence in supporting the production of black entrepreneurs from start-up to advanced business development stages. Through this partnership, the NEF will also provide technical support to the restructuring of the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller, which will be remodelled as a Provincial Development Finance Agency, focussing on the development and support of black owned and managed SMME's in the identified sector.

The MEC has also sought to partner with the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and other institutions of higher learning. He is in discussions to create a specialised training programme for the department's agricultural extension officers through TUT, extension officers are a key resource in ensuring successful agricultural production. In addition, we will be drawing on the institutions expertise (TUT) to source technical support for our renewable energy and sustainable development technical support programmes.

In summing up his positive outlook for the next five years, Dr Ramokgopa said, "I am encouraged that in just 100 days of engagements with different industries and businesses we already see a slight improvement in the business sentiments and manufacturing figures in the second quarter. We hope to carry these positive sentiments into the next five years so that we can grow the Gauteng economy to improve the lives of our residents."

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