

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, ME MATHABO MOKAPO ON THE OCCASION OF AN INTERACTION WITH MINISTER ESSOP PAHAD, MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY, ON TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2006, WELKOM

**Programme Director
Minister in the Presidency - Dr. Essop Pahad
Mayor of Lejweleputswa District Municipality - Mr. Sebenzile Ngangelizwe
Honourable Councillors
Members of NAFCOC
Members of Civil Society Organisations
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am overwhelmed by the privilege that has been bestowed on me, to address you as we meet to interact on a subject that is not only crucial, but relevant to the discourse that is currently underway in our country.

Matters relating to the rejuvenation of the economy and programmes for service delivery constitute a fundamental question, as we grapple with the challenge to create a better life for all our people.

In 1994, when we assumed the reigns of power, we inherited an economy that was in long-term decline and was massively distorted by apartheid's political and economic policies.

Since 1994, with the advent of our democracy, the economy has grown tremendously. The constraint however is that it is still characterized by a dual nature, i.e. the first economy which is advanced and predominantly in white hands and the second economy which is backward and absorbs most of our people. The challenge therefore is to gradually bridge this divide within our economy. In this light, our government in 2004 was mandated to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014. Hence programmes such as ASGISA and JIPSA which aim to put our economy on a trajectory of high economic growth and skills development.

This year, when the Minister of Finance tabled the Medium Term Expenditure Framework government committed itself to increase expenditure over the next three years so as to accelerate economic growth, social development and employment creation. The MTEF also aims to step up investment in infrastructure, services, skills development and research.

During the 2006 Local Government Election we committed ourselves to certain targets with regard to the delivery of services. These among others include providing access to clean water, electricity and sanitation to our people, and eradication of the bucket system by 2007.

Because as local government we work closest to the people, it is where each of our plans must be put into practice. I therefore hope and believe that this engagement will live up to the challenges we face in trying to push back the frontiers of poverty.

Also the composition of the participants in this interaction, prove beyond reasonable doubt that we are conscious of the fact that, matters of economic rejuvenation and service delivery need the active involvement of all role players.

We must ensure that at all times that our people become active agents of social and economic development, by involving them from the level of the ward.

The campaign of 16 Days of Activism against Women and Child Abuse is currently underway in our country, and as we deliberate on ways and means to rejuvenate the economy, we should note that women continue to be the worst victims of the inequalities that characterize our economy. And in this light we must ensure that women are empowered with skills so as to be fully integrated in the mainstream economy.

On this note I wish to welcome everyone present within the borders of Matjhabeng Municipality and hope that this engagement will come up with localized strategies and plans to rejuvenate our economy.

Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR MATHABO MOKAPO
EXECUTIVE MAYOR**