

**SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF POTCHEFSTROOM,
CNCLLR M MAPHETLHE AT THE BUSINES DINNER HOSTED
BY THE PREMIER OF THE NORTH WEST IN MARCH 12, 2008**

Programme Director

Premier of the North West Mme E Molewa

Acting Chairperson of the NCOP, Hon. Ms. P. M Hollander

Speaker of the North West Provincial Government, Mme T. Modise

Members of the Executive Council of the North West Provincial Government

Members of the NCOP,

Members of the North West Provincial Legislature

Chairperson of the North West Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, Kgosi

Executive Mayor of the Southern District Municipality Hon. Cllr. P Moloji

Honourable Members of the Tlokwe Local Municipality

Member of the business community

Ladies and gentlemen

Having observed protocol I am here this evening not to deliver another long speech at all. That will be done by the Honourable Premier. I have however decided with your permission to use this opportunity to make some remarks around the business of doing business in our city and the partnerships required in that regard.

Programme Director, the municipality of this city is committed to fostering working and enduring partnership with the business community in order to grow the economy for our people. In this respect, such a partnership is unavoidable. Much as structures of governance at all spheres do need business, the latter also needs government to facilitate and create conducive conditions for business to thrive.

This dynamic relationship is the bedrock upon which good development is rested. The city of Potchefstroom is collaborating with both national and Provincial Governments in order to realize this objective. One of the key programmes one can mention in this regard is the development of the N12 Treasure Route. Business people are called upon to join this partnership and invest along the route as various opportunities are provided.

Our municipality has committed itself to work for and broaden this partnership as much as possible. For the past few weeks we have been hosting and interacting with the Swedish delegates across various sectors. Amongst the various elements of the understanding entered into is the one of local economic development. In this regard several projects aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs will be undertaken.

Furthermore, I would like to mention that the office of the Executive Mayor will be launching a Breakfast Discussion Forum on March 25, 2008 at the local municipal Banquette Hall. This is an informal colloquial that will comprise mostly of the local business people, the University of North West School of Business in Potchefstroom and other related NGO's. The purpose of this forum is to advice the mayor on how best to attract and keep investment into the city. There will be four sessions of the forum per year. Other Provincial role players such as Invest North West and the Parks Board will be involved at a later stage.

In the final analysis, Programme Director, I lay no claim to having the ultimate knowledge of what an entrepreneur should look like or possess by way of competencies. However, allow me to mention a few characteristics that I think we expect in our interactions with the business sector; and I would like to highlight three key characteristics of entrepreneurship that will make our partnership a lot easier.

- First, the **capacity to identify opportunities**. By the time an entrepreneur bids for a tender, they must have built their capacity for fulfilling market demand for their goods or services. For a real entrepreneur, government should not be the first port of call to test their capabilities.

Opportunities lie in the gaps in the market in the form of unfulfilled demand. Not all of us have the skill to see such gaps. Even where opportunities are dressed in pink and red, very bright colours indeed, some of us would still not recognise them. Because markets are more ruthless than government, some of our enterprises can only remain in business because they are dealing with government. This syndrome we all cannot be happy about.

- The second critical entrepreneurial competency is the **capacity to mobilise financial and physical resources**. This is probably where the name enterprise comes from because a person who can creatively access and use minimal resources to maximal effect is generally said to be enterprising. For most of us who come from a history of lack of access to resources and economic opportunities, this is a critical capability. Those with rich uncles might be able to rely on them to fund their ventures. The rest of us need to develop business plans that demonstrate viability and can attract funding.

Talking about financial resources – let me admit that the provision of sufficient resources to provide the business community in our province with seed capital has always remained a big challenge.

- The last critical competency is the ability to **mobilise a team that is relevant to the opportunity and lead such a team**. This is a human rather than a technical skill. To some it comes naturally, others have to be taught how to do it. Even the best IT boffin might not be able to mobilise and lead a team relevant to a given opportunity.

Distinguished delegates, honourable guests, I have remarked somewhat briefly and broadly on the partnership between private and public sectors but out of a desire to see such a partnership development and gaining ground generally in the Province but particularly in our district and city.

And tonight, as the proverbial saying goes: “may we drink to it!”

I thank you all.