

Remarks by Eastern Cape MEC for Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism Hon. Lubabalo Oscar Mabuyane at the Ngxingxolo Cultural Village held on April, 17, 2019.

Chairperson of the ECPTA Board

Board Members present

CEO of the ECPTA

The Tofu Family

Invited Guests

Abahlali ngokubanzi

Molweni ngale mini yanamhlanje. Mphathi Nkqubo since I became MEC responsible for Tourism in May last year, I have taken interest in watching travel and tourism programmes on global television networks such as our own SABC, CNN, BBC and others. In those shows I learn that there is a common denominator to why people embark on tours, and that is people want to experience and learn about things they don't have in their own communities and countries and these range from incidents of historical significance, heritage and culture to sightseeing.

As the Province of the Eastern Cape we believe we are unmatched by other provinces and countries in all these areas, hence we are of the view that we must vigorously add the Heritage and Cultural aspect to our tourism product which is currently dominated by adventure and leisure. Through our extensive focus on adventure and leisure, we have unintentionally deprived both domestic and international tourists

and an opportunity to experience our rich Heritage and Culture and that must change now.

The last time I checked up to 9 Wars of Dispossession (Frontier Wars) were fought by the Xhosa led by our brave traditional leaders, Khoikhoi and San people against the colonizers between 1779 and 1878 here in our Province. We are also home to most of the struggle icons who were convicted in the Rivonia Trail. At the height of the struggle against apartheid, it was here in the Eastern Cape that many lives were lost in the Ingquza Hill Massacre, Queenstown Massacre, Uitenhage Massacre, Duncan Village Massacre, Kwazakhele Massacre, Egerton Massacre and the Bhishe Massacre.

In addition to this rich historical and liberation heritage we are also home to diverse cultures. Here I refer to the different cultures that are practiced by AmaXhosa, AmaMpondo, AmaBhaca, AmaHlubi and other nations within our province. Truth be told, we had not done enough to elevate this rich heritage and culture to grow our tourism sector in the past. I have no doubt in my mind that this is the direction uMama uTofu was trying to point us in, when she started the Ngxixolo Cultural Village. **Kuba ke singuRhulumente omamelayo nofuno ukuphucula oko abantu bakuthi baziqalela kona, siye sanika unxanduva iECPTA ukuba isondele kumaphulo afana neli, liwancedise akhule.**

Silapha ke namhlanje sizokunikezela ngempahla ezokuphucula nangakumbi umgagatho wale Cultural Village. We are making this contribution to fulfil three goals.

Okokuqala senza umbulelo wethu kuMama oTofu siqinisekiso kanjalo ukuba singuRhulumente sakuhlala sileseka eliphulo lokhenketho waliqala ngokuzinekela.

Secondly, through the donation of this furniture we want the Ngxingxolo Cultural Village to meet the expectations of international tourists as well as give the village a competitive edge. The Tourism Sector is very competitive, and at all times product owners must find new ways of improving tourist's experiences. One of the ways to do that is to create a homely environment for tourists and we believe the furniture we are bringing here will contribute towards maintaining visitor experiences.

Thirdly, we are on a path to transform the tourism industry in our province by bringing previously disadvantaged people to the front line of the industry. As we all know in the past, tourists would only spend their time in hotels and resorts. But now in this democratic dispensation tourist what to experience village life. I am aware that there are many tourism villages that are owned by women in other parts of our province and my instruction to ECPTA is clear; provide support to them and improve what they have started to meet tourism sector standards.

Through initiatives such as Ngxingxolo Cultural Village jobs are created in our villages and other families make a living by selling crafts to tourists. This is in line with government efforts of creating and sustaining work opportunities to where our people reside to minimise migration to urban areas. I know that the

Ngxingxolo Cultural Village has created 42 indirect jobs for locals and has maintained a strong influx of tourists over the years. **Yabona ke ikhona into eniyenza kakuhle ebangela ukuba baquqe apha abakhenkethi. Ndiyarhana inoba ninempatho entle ngakubo, zeniyigcine lonto yaye niqinise nokhuseleko lwabakhenkethi benu.** Safety is very critical to tourists, so I urge you to guard their safety jealously because one incident of violence against tourists could have disastrous consequences for what uMama uTofu started here. Don't get me wrong I am not being alarmist or casting aspersion about the conduct of local people. These thing happen so you better take measures to prevent them from happening than reacting after the fact.

I know is some parts of our province villagers host students from America on a yearly basis who stay for weeks learning about life in those villages. You would find many of them attending traditional ceremonies and sports tournaments in the villages they are staying in. They continue to come back for more partly, to the warmth and love they receive from locals in those villages. They are embraced by the communities and no one threatens their safety.

Sifuna abakhenkethi abazohamba babalise ngobubele baseNgxingxolo ukuze kutsaleke abanye abakhenkethi. Auphumelela ekwenzeni oko uba ukhuseleko lwabo lusemgciphekweni. Ngalomazwi sithi Makwandeee apho uMama uTofu washiya khona.

Enkosi.

