

**GREMARKS BY FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM MEC MLUNGISI MVOKO  
AT THE OFFICIAL SOD TURNING CEREMONY OF THE BOARDWALK  
MALL DEVELOPMENT IN GQEBERHA ON 13 MAY 2021**

Executive Mayor of Nelson Mandela Metro,

CEO of Sun International,

Managing Director of the Flanagan & Gerard and Management,

Chairperson of Emfuleni Resorts,

ECGB Board Members

CEO and ECGB Management

Leadership of Business,

Members of the media,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

Program Director, let me first appreciate the opportunity that we have been given as the government of the Eastern Cape to address this important occasion of the sod turning that launches the development of landmark project here in Gqeberha.

Indeed, this development augurs well with our broad agenda of growing our provincial economy to create jobs, especially at the time when our economy has also been ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to appreciate

and commend the co-owners of the Boardwalk Mall development, Flanagan & Gerard and Sun Boardwalk for this R500 million worth of investment to develop this mall. It is a necessary booster for the Eastern Cape economy in general and for the Gqeberha economy in particular that we wish to welcome as a province.

At the centre of this development are the job opportunities that will be created for our people in this corner of our province; and this is also most welcomed. We know now that about 1000 temporal construction jobs in various trades and another 1000 permanent jobs on completion of this mall will be created. This will indeed give confidence to our people and will come to huge benefit to families of those whose job opportunities will be created for. Critical to this development would be to ensure that the local Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) also get to benefit in the entire value chain. I am however happy to hear that R290m of all goods and services on this development will be procured locally.

Program Director, we see this development within the lenses of our Provincial Development Plan, which directs us to revitalize and expand our economic opportunities through investment in infrastructure, innovation, entrepreneurship and private investment.

We appreciate that you are broadening your scope of investment into a mall of this nature that would provide our people with a variety of experience, including entertainment, leisure, dining, business, conferencing and hospitality. This wide scope will have a direct impact on the tourism industry - one of our economic growth enablers in the province - in that there will be economic spin-offs coming from the gambling, leisure, hospitality and other sectors within the puzzle.

I have been fortunate to bear witness to the consistent and responsible rise of the gaming industry in the province where it has maintained a double-digit increase year on year, and if we continue to diversify product offering such as the development of malls and other recreational facilities, we will surely achieve the mandate of the sector, while also ensuring provincial tourism boost.

This kind of investment supports our efforts to promote the Eastern Cape brand as a destination of choice. It is in that context that the province locates tourism at the centre of our economic rehabilitation and recovery plan. The Eastern Cape government is committed to the implementation of regulatory functions, including issuing of licenses and regulating of gambling operations to maintain order in the industry.

We hope and trust that this development will feed into the economic value chain that come with other developmental initiatives that are in Gqeberha, such as the relocation of Transnet Head Offices into this area and the infrastructure developments that we see at COEGA.

It thrills us to witness a multifaceted development in this region that contributes to economic growth and job creation opportunities. In many ways this initiative shall contribute to inspire many people to seek to live and work in this province and beautiful city. Just recently Programme Director, Tourism Minister and myself presided over the grand opening of the Bluewater Sunrise Hotel, a 5-star hospitality infrastructure establishment that is owned by COEGA in this municipality.

As provincial government and the municipality, we must strengthen our infrastructure delivery initiatives such as the provision of water and the

surfacing of roads to support and complement all the investments that are coming into our shores. It is through such support that our ambitions for investments will be achieved.

Program Director, our government is committed to inclusive economic growth and job creation in this Province, locating infrastructure delivery at the heart of that objective. We have invested millions of rands into infrastructure initiatives, using our two Special Economic Zones, COEGA and East London Industrial Development Zone, and industrial parks as strategic centres for investment attraction. In the Wild Coast region, we have established an industrial park that has been approved to graduate into being our 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Economic Zone, once it has met all the requirements. These are our sweet spots that are found in different regions of our province where potential investors would invest their monies for infrastructure development to stimulate economic growth and job creation.

I want to invite all businesspeople who want to come and invest into our province to do so as that would result to the development of our province. We can only create jobs and increase our employment numbers through infrastructure investments like this one.

Once again Programme Director, I wish to congratulate the group and welcome this investment on behalf of the provincial government. It is when there is evident social-dividends in our communities that we will begin to realise the impact and value of our business initiatives and contribution.

I hope that I will be the first to be invited when this mall opens its doors to all the potential consumers.

I thank you!