

MEC'S WELCOME SPEECH ON MEBALA YA RONA

BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE

26 NOVEMBER 2017

BAKGATLA RESORT, PILANESBERG, MOSES KOTANE

LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

HON. MANKETSI TLHAPE

MEC: RURAL, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURAL

DEVELOPMENT



read

Department:
**Rural, Environment and Agricultural
Development**
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

- ✓ Tonakgolo ya porofense yaBokone Bophirima, Rre Supra Obakeng Ramoeletsi Mahumapelo,
- ✓ Honourable Members of the Executive Council;
- ✓ Magosi a rona;
- ✓ Esteemed Executive Mayors, Speakers and Councillors;
- ✓ Management of READ and other provincial, district and local municipalities;
- ✓ The Wildlife Industry (Sector) representatives
- ✓ Educational Institutions and Scientific Institutions reps;
- ✓ Our Emerging Game Farmers;
- ✓ Provincial and Local Government structures present;
- ✓ Representatives of our National Departments (DEA, DAFF DRDLR);
- ✓ Our Enforcement Agencies (SAPS, SARS etc);
- ✓ Neighbouring countries reps;
- ✓ Financial institutions Management reps;
- ✓ Our CPAs
- ✓ Community members present
- ✓ Bagaetsho lotlhe dumelang.

South Africa is an exciting developing country. Our future as a country looks bright. This is despite the fact that we are yet to overcome some of the challenges of the past.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome everyone today once more to be in this collective agreement: To accelerate Biodiversity Transformation and to find a way in which we can together make a contribution to the blueprints for conservation, our guideposts for growth and sustainable use of our resource base of Bokone Bophirima.

In essence ladies and gentleman, Biodiversity is recognised globally as the cornerstone for economic growth and sustainable development. South Africa is one of the most mega-biodiverse countries in the world and therefore needs to find ways to harness the sector so that it can effectively contribute to economic growth.

We have created the Mebala Ya Rona Biodiversity Conference platform to facilitate a dialogue to consider possible means of biodiversity trading in Africa in a manner that is sustainable and can contribute to the continent's green economy and Bokone Bophirima's economic growth.

The Wildlife Economy is centred on the sustainable utilisation of indigenous biological resources including biodiversity-derived products for trade and bio-prospecting, the hunting industry, agriculture and agro processing of indigenous crops and vegetables and livestock breeds and indigenous marine resources and fisheries. Wildlife Economy focus areas centred on the socio-economic benefits of eco-tourism, co-managed conservation areas and ancillary services to protected areas.

So ladies and gentleman, sustainable use of our own including natural resources can contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth. Harvesting indigenous biological resources is a significant source of income for communities as it does not require a minimum level of education or professional skills rather indigenous skills. In many cases, one harvester supports an entire household but the overdependence on these have led to the depletion and at the extreme the extinction of some of the biodiversity.

Furthermore, women and the elderly traditionally hold knowledge associated with the use and application of the indigenous biological

resources. Now, this knowledge is often used as a basis for bio-prospecting, and in many instances the use of such knowledge is never compensated. We are saying that this monetary benefits from the sale of the material which accrues to women who are most likely to be invested in the welfare and education of their children needs to be maximised.

Bagaetsho, we are simply saying through Mebala Ya Rona Biodiversity Initiative that collective participation will ensure our resources are equitably and sustainably utilised to contribute to socio-economic development of our communities.

It has been an exciting journey since we had our first meeting last year.

We have equally seen how biodiversity economy sectors in the hunting, game farm and related industries and bioprospecting, natural product and biotrade industries to consider the contribution of these sectors to economic growth. In a nutshell, we have seen a demonstration how biodiversity sector carries a great potential and can be a major contributor to job creation and the fight against poverty.

Transformation is in essence is a journey. A journey which our 5th provincial administration of this province had declared to bravely take. Tonakogolo Supra Mahumapelo says we are together made to Saamwerk and Saamtrek. Our collective input will lead us somewhere....Alone we can do little but together we can do so much more! Bokone Bophirima a reyeng! **This Biodiversity must bring out Mebala Ya Rona... Must set us apart and Must Place us high on economic growth trajectory....**

Like one unknown writer once said: My countrymen: we have reached a turning point in our history. The choice is yours. Shall we venture into this brave new world, bright with possibilities, or retreat to the safety of our familiar but sterile past? I am for crossing the frontier.

I take this opportunity to invite all to robustly participate in this three day program and change the lives of the communities here for better.

Re a leboga. Welcome to Mebala Ya Rona Biodiversity Conference!