

MEDIA RELEASE

East London, Thursday 25 October 2011

For Immediate Release

EASTERN CAPE CO-OPERATIVES IN MARGINAL OR SURVIVALIST CATEGORY

Addressing the second Eastern Cape Provincial Annual Co – operatives Indaba held at East London ICC, MEC Mcebisi Jonas stated that the majority of the cooperatives in the Eastern Cape were barely coping and with some of them in a state despondency. “Most of our co – operatives in the province are in the marginal or survivalist category. Only a handful is commercially viable and sustainable. We have not sufficiently linked co – operative development to mainstream economic and industrial programmes,” says MEC Jonas.

The role of various social partners to engage in a dialogue that seeks to take stock of the progress made and develop concrete actions plans for sustainable implementation was also highlighted.

Themed “building vibrant and sustainable co-operative enterprises that stimulate the social economy of the province”, the Indaba brought together co – operatives across the province with the aim of broadening initiatives to build the economy and address the unemployment plight.

Representing the Buffalo City Metro Mayor Zukiswa Ncita; Cllr Pumla Nazo urged delegates to strive for a common ground in pursuit of sustainable cooperative development. “Let’s approach this Indaba with a common objective of seeking to maximize the economic potential of cooperatives within this Province” says Cllr Nazo.

She further challenges all to combine “expertise, efforts and divergent institutional capacities to work towards building a cooperatives sector that will compete favourably with conventional business in the struggle to better the lives of our people”.

Clarifying the role of higher learning institutions in the development of sustainable co – operatives, Dr Jabulani Mjwara – Deputy Vice Chancellor at University of Fort Hare said the higher learning institutions have a moral responsibility to redress the injustices of the past through education and knowledge acquisition. Sadly, these institutions are still struggling to fully transform the system to emancipate the people so they can participate in the wealth and

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the economy of the country. “It therefore becomes abundantly clear that the role of higher education in ensuring proper development and sustainability of the various cooperatives is still far from being effective”.

Dr Mjwara emphasised the role of the Institute for Co-operatives Development, as instrumental in building the requisite knowledge and institutional base to enable a lifelong sustenance of community based co-operative enterprise and as well as lending development support through education and training.

The 2nd Annual Co – operatives Indaba is taking place at East London ICC from 27 – 28 October 2011.

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