

**ADDRESS BY MEC FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM, HON. MLUNGISI
MVOKO, DURING THE NYANDENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
INVESTMENT SUMMIT AT DAN'S COUNTRY LODGE ON 07
SEPTEMBER 2023**

Greetings to you Programme Director;

King “*Ndlovuyezwe*” Ndamase;

Deputy Minister of Finance Dr. Masando;

Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform

Hon. Z.N.R. Capa, MP

Honourable MECs present, MEC Williams and MEC Nkopane;

**Executive Mayor of OR Tambo District Municipality, Cllr.
Ngqondwana;**

The Mayor of Nyandeni LM, Cllr. V. Ndamase;

All councilors present;

Chairpersons of the boards present;

HODs, CEOs and Municipal Managers present;

Representatives from Business;

Investors and potential investors

Esteemed guests;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning.

Let me take this opportunity to appreciate the time I have been afforded to be part of the Nyandeni Local Municipality Investment Summit. Premier Oscar Mabuyane was supposed to be here today, but due to other competing government activities, he has submitted an apology.

I am therefore honoured and grateful to be standing here and addressing this critical milestone in the context of the economy of this area.

Ladies and gentlemen, you would agree with me that since the beginning of the current term of administration, Investment has been one of our key focus areas as we march towards building an inclusive and growing economy that creates jobs and secures livelihoods for all.

During the Provincial Investment Conference towards the end of last year, Premier Oscar Mabuyane announced 11 new investments totalling R46.5 billion, covering different sectors of our economy, including agro processing, automotive, manufacturing, tourism and others.

One of the key messages that came out of that Conference was that municipalities have a critical role to play in mobilising investment into the Province.

I am pleased to note that municipalities are heeding to that call as we see here and other municipalities, including in Sarah Baartman, Chris Hani, Matatiele and others.

It is also pleasing to note that the focus areas that have been identified for discussion during the course of this Investment Summit are aligned to key provincial economic sectors such as Manufacturing, Tourism and Agro processing.

Colleagues and friends, like in other parts of the Province, data on unemployment, inequality and poverty require us all, including government, business and civil society organisation, to be intentional in our efforts to change the lives of our people.

We are now less than a year before the national elections 2024, and we can expect added pressure for government to deliver quality service.

This time requires an agile, responsive and efficient government, and a government that is accountable to its people.

Our immediate task is to advance the interests of our people by responding to challenges of youth unemployment, infrastructure and low performance of sectors of great potential as springboards of recovery and growth.

We now have a task to put our heads together, find one another, as we rebuild our economy for inclusive growth and job creation.

Today's Summit must serve as a platform to improve the investment climate of this area, and to have meaningful benefit to its people.

Distinguished guests, I am aware that different groups of commissions will be formed to discuss key policy interventions that would enable this municipality to grow its investment value and economy. As you discuss and strategise, there are critical questions that must preoccupy your thinking:

- What are the competitive advantages of your municipal area?
- What are the comparative advantages of your municipal area?
Could be coastline, arable, mountains, landscape, livestock, etc
- What are your existing enablers for investment? How to nurture those and leverage more investors?

- Which emerging sectors have a potential to grow your economy and be attractive to potential investors?

Equally important is to take into cognizance the feedback that we get from investors. For us to attract and retain investment, the following are some of the concerns from our potential investors that we must attend to:

- Skills deficit/skills migration;
- High cost of compliance;
- Poor management of government infrastructure;
- Policy Uncertainty (various sectors);
- Energy Security;
- Access to land; and
- Technical limitations –transitioning to 4IR, digitalization, connectivity.

Some of the constraints, as articulated in the Provincial Economic Development Strategy, include poor maintenance and management of existing infrastructure at the municipal sphere, alongside limited access to services.

There seem to be no meaningful capacity in many municipalities for effective and responsive decision making to attract and facilitate investment.

Red tape has also been identified as one of the things that bothers investors. Red-tape reduction is one of the strategic interventions that strive to realize administrative efficiencies, which play a critical role in investment attraction.

One of the critical functions in a municipal space is Town Planning. It must be responsive to business needs. This is further linked to improved turnaround times for zoning applications, approval of plans for business development, etc. It is a make or break for investment attraction.

What we must also embrace and take advantage of is the fact that we are a rural Province, and we must think of how we can use that to our advantage. How are you planning to utilise your traditional activities and/or products as unique offerings to attract new investments?

Programme Director, today's Investment Summit is a great initiative that has the support of Provincial Government.

We have invested a lot of resources in this part of the world to support your economic development initiatives. As an area with a lot of potential in tourism, there are a number of projects that we are implementing through Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA).

These include upgrading of the wild coast network of nature reserves and tourism products. Reserves infrastructure upgrades in support of wild coast destination development include construction of Hluleka Nature Reserve Cabin and Viewing Deck.

We are currently embarking on procurement of Game Drive Vehicles for nature reserves and Marine and Coastal Cluster, including Dwesa/Cwebe, Silaka, Hluleka and Mkhambathi nature reserves.

At Nyandeni Great Place, the national Department of Tourism has invested R18 million in the development a 16-bed accommodation facility. The construction of the chalets is almost complete for handover to the cooperative that will manage the facility.

In partnership with National Department of Tourism, we have developed the Wild Coast Tourism Corridor master plan, which includes the 6 day wild coast hiking trail development from Port St Johns to Coffee Bay. Nyandeni LM project include the Mgcibe hiking trail revitalization.

You must be proud to learn that at the recent Provincial Tourism Careers Expo (PTCE) for high school learners of “Tourism, Hospitality and Consumer Studies” held at East London International Convention Centre on 11 August, it was a learner from Victor Poto Senior Secondary School here at Nyandeni Local Municipality who was the winner of the provincial tourism debate. The Department is now busy with travel arrangements for a total of 30 learners and 3 educators from the province to represent the Eastern Cape at the National Tourism Careers Expo [NTCE] to be held at Johannesburg Expo Centre, Gauteng from 29 September to 01 October 2023.

Ladies and gentlemen, the establishment of the Wild Coast Special Economic Zone in Mthatha is now taking shape, with the appointment of the service provider to start with the construction of the bulk infrastructure. We have earmarked that particular SEZ to serve as an Agro-processing hub. There are currently eight (8) investment projects that were signed between the 2019 and 2022, which have a combined investment value of R 1.7 billion. These are expected to create an estimated 968 operational jobs. The Nyandeni LM has good access to the SEZ through the routes R61 and N2, and you should use that to your advantage.

In your endeavours to attract investment, Mayor and your team, we commit our support before everyone that is here.

We will lobby additional resources, facilitate access to markets and support you with sector strategies that would assist with economic development road map, necessary for investment attraction.

The soon-to-be-launched Provincial Investment Council (PIC) by the Premier will lead and coordinate investment efforts in the Eastern Cape to identify and unblock red tape and identify investment stimulation measures, including critical reform programmes and interventions to address any bureaucratic processes impacting industry relevant to provincial departments, provincial agencies and national government.

The Province will be hosting the 3rd instalment of its Provincial Investment Conference on the 29th of September 2023 and will be looking to build on the R49 billion attracted in last year's conference. It is very important that the local and district investment platforms contribute to the provincial investment efforts of increasing the value and quantity of investment that will contribute to the growth and development of the provincial economy.

In order to have equitable distribution of investment landing in the province, a concerted effort will need to be made to build an investment pipeline that will feature projects within the rural district by ensuring proper project packaging and leveraging the competitive advantages of the rural districts.

I hope, and I trust that this instalment of Investment Summit will serve its purpose and objectives, but also align with investment objectives of the Province. Use this opportunity to showcase the Municipality's value proposition.

It is my wish that as we gather today, we do not only look at inward facing solutions but also look at outwards one, while we also identify key

potential partners in executing these. In this instance, local business formations should be integral part of your investment solutions.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must at all material times bear in mind that we carry the hopes of the poor and marginalised. The decisions that we are going to take over the next two days will have a lasting bearing on the future of this municipality.

I wish you all the best in this Summit, and I hope it is the start of great things to come.

Thank you very much Programme Director.