

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND TOURISM 2010

SIPHO MFUNDISI

UCDP

The Department of Economic Affairs is supposed to be the goose that lays the golden eggs to fill the treasure nest of the North West province.

It is this department that has to ensure that job opportunities are created by luring investors to the province. It is unfortunate that those who were in charge of things in 1994 and subsequent years seem to have had other ideas about investment and improving the quality of life in the province except self-enrichment.

They were seized by the spirit of politics of hunger, that is why even on this day they are hard put to let go of Chancellor House. They will ruin it like they have done with this part of the country.

We hope that the visit to the Mogwase Industrial Park by Deputy Minister Gwen Mahlangu was not only a gesture in futility. People are hungry and they want to earn a living and not be made dependent on grants.

Attention should be given to all industrial sites even those in Tlhabane, Taung, Ganyesa and hopefully those in Ga-Rankuwa, Babelegi and Selossha are still on the inventory of the North West government courtesy of the North West Development Corporation.

We pray much the strength of MEC Matsomela for the trouble she takes, North West does account to this legislature. She has ensured that they produce audited books of account, something they never did since the concern came into being.

She is the best thing to have happened in that department since 1994. Under her stewardship the shopping complex at Marapyane in Mpumalanga has been resuscitated and is fully occupied with O K bazaars as the main occupant. We hope the shopping complex at Mabeskraal will be upgraded and have tenants of note.

We note that she is at pains to revive the Sisal and wild silk projects at Madikwe and Ganyesa respectively. These will alleviate shortage of jobs in those areas.

The UCDP is, however, concerned about the duplication of investment and development institutions. Invest North West was put in place to stifle what was BNDC and is now NWDC. Our advice is that the two should be collapsed into one institution as they perform the same functions by and large. This exercise will result in one CEO instead of two. This will be a saving as staff will also be rationalized.

There is very little money in the province yet we have gambling dens in Sun City, Mmabatho Palms and Rio in Klerksdorp. Proceeds from these instances should generate enough income for the province to enable us to do more with the additional funds that we generate from them.

It is an open secret that most of the triple storey school buildings spread in rural and urban areas of the erstwhile Bophuthatswana were built from proceeds from the gambling resorts. What happens to the money they churn out? Surely that has to belong to the province and should not be controlled by Pretoria.

Some armchair critics and cynics used to say that was artificial economy but we argue that people did not starve and were not jobless.

FIFA looked east, south and north but could not find suitable accommodation for Heads of Government and FIFA big heads except at Sun City. Nothing artificial about the magnificence of that place; the founding Fathers who had prophetic vision knew that a place like that would come handy in the twenty first century.

It is unfortunate that the deregulation that came with democracy in 1994 saw many businesses folding because every other house is a spaza shop. Licensed dealers compete with the rank and file and the result is that their businesses fold while we watch the proliferation of spazas shops.

The Tourism and Parks Board should also be bringing revenue to the treasury. Most of our game reserves have the big five and hunters of repute pay in dollars for their hunted trophies.

We in the UCDP argue that there is money but it is not being accounted for well.