SPEECH

27 AUGUST 2009, BONN

"Fighting Poverty through International Development Cooperation and Solidarity - Perspectives on the Mpumalanga - NRW cooperation experience"

ADDRESS BY MEC JABU L. MAHLANGU
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

Your Excellency, President Horst Köhler - in Absentia

His Majesty, Otumfu Osei Tutu of the Ashanti People of Ghana

Honourable Minister Armin Laschet and your colleagues in the executive of the North Rhine Westphalia State

The Premier of the Western Cape, Madam Helen Zille

Delegates, friends and comrades

The Premier of Mpumalanga sends his highest regards and best wishes and expressed his regrets for not being able to join us in this conference today

In doing so, the premier mandated me and my colleague, the provincial Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Norman Mokoena to attend this conference and communicated our renewed our commitment for continued cooperation with Germany and all those who believe in our friendship
We thank the Ministry for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women and Integration of the Federal German State of North Rhine Westphalia, under your leadership, Minister Laschet and your partners for inviting us to participate in this conference.

Fresh from our elections, we have just received a new mandate through a fair and free ballot resulting in the ruling party led by President Jacob Zuma resoundingly winning eight out of nine provinces.

This mandate was a confirmation of the correctness of both our domestic priorities and our relationship with our friends around the world.

In this regard we have an average 50% women representation in both national and provincial parliament and the executives, a world record for youth representation, all but except in one province which we lost to the official opposition.

From the shared experiences of amongst others North Rhine Westphalia, We now have designated a Ministry for Women, Youth and Children - because in the wisdom of the founding father of democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela, *a nation cannot be free until its women are free and emancipated*

Because we learn and listen, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now called and mandated to be the Ministry International Relations and Cooperation – once again thanks to the German experience
Development Cooperation and Provinces – A shared South Africa perspective

As a South African province with challenges similar to those of other federal, sub national governments, the issue of development cooperation can be a thorny one as it always gets mixed up in debates about sovereignty, the rights of foreign government to surpass national states and work directly with their municipal and regional governments and non-state actors.

We as Mpumalanga province continue to participate and engage in efforts to maximise the mutual benefits of development cooperation fully aware and conscious that South Africa is one – and that our provinces have equal but differentiated responsibilities in making our country a better place.

It is our belief that both Overseas Development Aid (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) should always be premised on national development priorities of our people as a whole.

Development cooperation from our perspective should complement and not undermine national efforts – nor should it be used to shame and mock poorer national governments.

That development cooperation should not undermine collective national efforts and create room for inequality under the guise of the right of federal sates and provinces to pursue their local priorities – is a principle we cannot forego.

South African provinces like Mpumalanga do not have the similar configuration and mandate for international affairs as some of the German
federal states would have. Our engagement therefore has to be conducted robustly enough to manage a balance between our foreign and domestic policies and our sub-national competencies and priorities.

We are pleased that the international platform both within an outside the formal multilateral system continues to be created for dialogue and for actions between federal states and their counter-forms in countries in Africa and the world.

**Our Cooperation with North-Rhine Westphalia**

The first MOU with Mpumalanga Province and the Province of North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) was signed in April 1995 and renewed in 2008, committing to work together in the fields of economic development, Youth and Culture, good governance, HIV and AIDS and support for the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, for the benefit of our province and South Africa as a whole.

Our experiences have been a mixed bag of constraints and best practice and success stories.

Whilst through our cooperation we seen our senior managers in government being exposed to public management environment of world class through an outbound training and work-study, we also say that there are areas where there remains room for improvement;

We have not done enough in the areas of economic development and we believe that we can learn more and share more in areas such as of Small
Medium and Micro Enterprise support, regulation for the improvement of investment environment and improving the capacity of provincial administrations to implement poverty reduction strategies.

We need from our own experience to guard against a civil society that utilise the cooperation space for their own agenda as it sometimes happens in our country and everywhere else in the world. We have in this cooperation continued to work with our major groups as implementers and joint planners.

The cooperation with North Rhine Westphalia and Germany broadly through the Mpumalanga Rural Development Programme has seen improved cooperation and success in the following areas:

**Integrated Municipal Development** - supporting Departments of Cooperative Governance (CGTA); Economic Development, Environment & Tourism (DEDET) and municipalities on the development and implementation of policies, guidelines and standards related Local Economic Development and Local Governance/Integrated Development Planning.

**HIV and AIDS Mitigation** – ensures that the Department of Health, Municipalities, AIDS Councils and Home based care centres work together to support HIV and AIDS mitigation measures through a wide variety of policies and programmes. Special attention is given to support the establishment and performance of HIV and AIDS committees on all government spheres.

**Community Based Natural Resources Management** – continues to support our Tourism and Parks Agency in the development of a strategy to support natural
resource-based income generation for communities (through Community Public Private Partnerships) and sustainable co-management of protected areas.

**Agro – Based Local Economic Development** – for a province like ours is achieving greatest results in creating agro-based market oriented sustainable livelihoods by giving support to emerging farmers and the beneficiaries of land reform processes.

Over and above the areas mentioned, the cooperation space continues to support the Provincial Government on the design and implementation of our framework policies.

As we in South Africa continue to play a bigger part in regional economic cooperation and development assistance, we find ourselves in situation where provinces have no prior experiences of acting as agents for such cooperation and lack the system for financing our international commitments outside of our borders – We are certain we can learn from many amongst us here today.

I must say our cooperation with North-Rhine Westphalia and from other cooperation experiences with the Mozambique provinces of Maputo, the Chinese provinces of Chong Ching and Sin Chuan, Ismailia in Egypt has made us believe that it is possible.

We should in conclusion say that in summary the following issues needs to continue to occupy our minds
• The ability and flexibility of provinces to be able to fruitfully benefit and maximise the opportunity from development cooperation needs to be strengthened. This should be done without undermining nation states and central governments.

• Mechanisms by national governments to guide provinces to commit resources to meet their reciprocal commitments needs to be developed and supported and the ability of municipal governments to translate cooperation agreements into priorities and translate them into integrated development plans needs attention.

• The donor countries and developed country partners should be responsive to the needs of the recipients of aid and development funding and craft their development cooperation to meet those, including the minimisation of conditionalities.

• Whilst we agree that aid can make a difference, we also know that at the centre of the development challenges, remains the need for an equitable global trading system, opening up of markets for Africa, the removal of pervasive agricultural subsidies in the north, and the eradication of technical barriers to trade and technology transfer and capacity to make us true partners in the world trade market.

In the light of the current global economic situation, we are also found wanting as sub-national governments as it relates to our responses to this crisis. It would be important to understand and share experiences on how this economic down impacts on the effectiveness of development cooperation.
Conclusion

Let me conclude by saying that nine years since the Millennium Summit and exactly seven years since the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, we cannot continue to fiddle whilst Africa and Asia and Latin America continue to starve whilst it produces food and her markets continue to be flooded with goods from the South.

The Paris Declaration (on Aid Effectiveness), The Monterrey Consensus (on Financing for Development, and the Doha Development Agenda (on Trade) needs to find new and urgent impetus –

If we had responded to the calls from these voices in the last ten years, I am certain the global economic crisis would today be nothing but a chilly breeze not a storm as it has become.

We must meet our mutual commitment and live to our principles – for the World’s poor cannot afford another summit not yet grandstanding by the rich.

May we have fruitful discussions for the rest of the conference.

I thank you

ENDS