

**REMARKS BY GAUTENG PREMIER DAVID MAKHURA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONGRESS 2017. SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE. JOHANNESBURG.**

**28 July 2015**

Programme Director, Mr Ravi Naidoo;

President of the Global Entrepreneurship Network, Mr Jonathan Ortman;

Minister for Small Business Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu;

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms Tokozile Xasa;

MMC for Economic Development, Councillor Ruby Mathang;

The Executive Head of SEA Africa, Kizito Okechukwu;

CEO of Barclays Retail and Business Banking, Mr Jan Moganwa;

Advocate Fay Mukkadam, President of JCCI;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The launch of the Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2017 (GEC) is a development of significant proportions because Johannesburg will host the first Global Entrepreneurship Congress in Africa.

The GEC will bring together entrepreneurs, start-up champions, innovators, investors, researchers, thought leaders as well as policymakers from across the globe to help bring new ideas to life that will drive global economic growth, job creation and

innovation as part of our unending quest to improve the human condition and enhance social wellbeing.

On behalf of the Gauteng Provincial Government, we welcome this important development and will work with our national government and the City to make the Global Entrepreneurship Congress a pleasant and memorable experience for all participants.

The hosting of the GEC fits very well into our vision of making SA and the Gauteng City Region globally competitive and a preferred destination for investment and tourism.

The hosting of the GEC is also in line with both the NDP and Gauteng's ten-pillar radical Transformation, Modernisation and Re-industrialisation of our Gauteng City Region through which we seek to create a new breed of entrepreneurs, innovators and industrialists and change the racial and gender composition of our economy.

It is through Entrepreneurship that we will be able to address change the domination of key sectors of our economy by few big monopolies and elevate the role of the SMME sector and the township-based enterprises and cooperatives to become key drivers of growth, employment and empowerment.

Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate the City of Johannesburg for winning the bid to host the Global Entrepreneurship Congress in 2017. There is no doubt that Johannesburg is Africa's most dynamic, cosmopolitan, globally competitive and world-class city. We are very proud of you!

We applaud the work done by all the partners, especially our private sector partners to ensure the success of the bid to host the Congress. We know that the success of the bid is as a result of a true collaborative effort by partners who were determined to continue putting our province and our country on the global map.

The need for strong partnership between government and the private sector was reaffirmed at our inaugural Gauteng Infrastructure Investment Conference. The presence of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry working in collaboration with all spheres of government attests to the emergence of a partnership in action.

It is evident that the resolution of challenges such as poverty, unemployment and inequality requires that we work together to grow and develop our economy.

We have no doubt that hosting this important Congress will go a long way in helping to consolidate Johannesburg's position as a financial centre, the hub of the services industry and growth point for the ICT and pharmaceutical industries in our country and our continent.

Let us use the Congress to showcase the advances we are making to build and entrench an entrepreneurial culture in our country and continent. This is particularly important because

Gauteng has the highest concentration of small, medium and micro enterprises, more than 40 per cent.

We see this Congress as an opportunity to strengthen our on-going efforts to build a sustainable global movement that advances entrepreneurship as a tool for development; a means to encourage innovation as well as a means to stimulate sustainable economic growth and job creation.

On this important day we recall the words of a true modern day entrepreneur and philanthropist, Sir Richard Branson, who eloquently sums up what entrepreneurs are and do when he states that: *“...entrepreneurs have been the driving force for growth in countries around the world. Their ability to see opportunities, to see order amongst chaos where others see only issues, problems and disorganisation, has helped transform communities and economies.”*

It is indeed this rare breed that Sir Richard Branson describes as the driving force for growth; those who see opportunity and order among chaos that we have a responsibility to nurture in our province, our country and on our continent.

We know from history that ours is a country of business pioneers, of optimists even in the face of adversity. Ours is a country that has produced trailblazers such as Ntate Richard Maponya and Dr Sam Motsuenyane, to name but a few, whose entrepreneurial spirit refused to succumb even to the might of apartheid.

As we seek to build a new generation of entrepreneurs, we must draw lessons and inspiration from these pioneers. We

must endeavour to emulate their example. We must heed their wise counsel.

In a recent survey conducted among 609 South African students, over 80 percent of the respondents indicated that they found entrepreneurship to be an honourable occupation and that they respected people who are entrepreneurs. More than 50 percent said they intended starting their own business.

However more than 40 percent of those sampled, admitted that they are attracted by the employment and financial security available in large corporations.

Our immediate task, therefore, must be to change, fundamentally, this trend. We must do this not only to catch up with our peers globally but also and most importantly to respond to our own unique challenges, key among them are the high levels of unemployment especially among young people. Youth and women are the most entrepreneurial in society.

We are confident that with the capable leadership of the Minister of Small Business Development and the energy and creativity she has shown since the establishment of this new department, we shall overcome and succeed.

Programme Director, I can report that as the Gauteng Provincial Government we have taken the issue of entrepreneurial development and support very seriously.

I wish you all a successful Congress in 2017.

Let the preparations begin.

Thank you. Asante Sana. Rea leboga. Siyabonga.