

MEC FINANCE SPEAKING NOTES AT THE INTERNS GRADUATION

11 JUNE 2013

Programme Director;

Invited guests;

Our graduating interns;

Ladies and gentlemen

This graduation ceremony today is historical in the true sense of the word. It marks the conclusion of the 12-month training period of the 2012/2013 financial year for our interns who participated in this programme. The conclusion of this programme continues to build on the legacy of the successful implementation of the internship programme of the Free State Provincial Treasury since 2006.

At the start the 2009 electoral term, government recognized that it was necessary to introduce an approach that would enable the broader sphere of government to work together in a more focussed manner to deliver the real and concrete change in line with the electoral mandate it had received. It therefore agreed on 12 outcomes as the key focus of work between 2009 and 2014. Outcome 5 of this approach deals with “A skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path.”

Skills development is therefore recognized as an important component of our national development effort. Our economy, our government and the county are in dire need for the appropriate skills to be developed in

accordance with the demands of the labour market to push our nation to a higher development trajectory. That is why the National Development Plan and our revised Free State Provincial Growth and Development Strategy focus extensively on education and training.

Access to skills development programmes, specifically for the youth coming from disadvantaged communities, is one of the areas that we have been focusing on. In addition, through a more innovative approach to skills development, we are also able to alleviate the pervasive problem of unemployment. In addition to these two critical objectives, government benefits from this skills development programme as we increase the efficiency through which public services are delivered.

We need skills in our economy so that we can have, as we articulate in the Free State Vision 2030 of the Provincial Growth Development Strategy: ***“a resilient, thriving and competitive economy that is inclusive with immense prospects for human development formation anchored on the principles of unity, dignity, diversity, equality and prosperity for all.”***

I am particularly happy that this graduation is happening in the month of June which we commemorate and celebrate as Youth Month in South Africa. This year marks the 37th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprisings and the new phase of the revolution that unfolded from that catalytic event. The youth of 1976 had a mission to fight and liberate South Africa.

The youth of today must work hard and equip themselves with the necessary skills that must advance our national development by helping us deal with unemployment, poverty, disease, crime and substance abuse, and put South Africa firmly on the global map as a noteworthy competitor.

If our youth are really to be treated as the; “valued possession of our nation”, as former president Nelson Mandela once quipped, a lot of work remains to be done to ensure that our youth benefit from programmes such as the Provincial Treasury’s internship programme. The recently concluded Youth Employment Accord continues to emphasize this undeterred focus on training, internships and apprenticeships.

I have deliberately made reference to “necessary skills” earlier. Those “necessary skills” are those skills that will increase our country’s efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. These are critical skills, and in some respect, also scarce skills and include the fields of finance, engineering, science and technology.

We are pleased that the majority of our graduating interns today have gained invaluable skills and experience in the areas of finance and administration. They were placed at various line function directorates such as Economic Analysis, Public Finance, Budget Management, Risk Management, Accounting Services, Cash Management, Asset Management, Supply Chain Management, Municipal Finance Management and Financial Management. I am sure that you are now ready and

prepared to face the world of employment with all its challenges and difficulties.

This graduation ceremony takes place in the presence of some of the key role-players in the public and private sectors. These are not only our critical partners but also potential employers. The Provincial Treasury is obviously one of those potential employers.

We have also invited the media so that they not only report about the conclusion of another phase of the successful internship programme of the Provincial Treasury but also to help market each of the 31 graduates from our 2012/13 internship programme.

The internship programme has equipped you with the necessary skills and abilities to enter the market place with the required confidence and determination to succeed in each and every endeavour that you undertake. I therefore wish you all the best in your future careers.

Congratulations!