

**CHINA IN SOUTH AFRICA WEEK**  
**ADDRESS BY**  
**MEC FOR ECONOMIC, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT,**  
**TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS - MOSEBENZI ZWANE**  
**Venue: PACOFS**  
**Date: 15 APRIL 2015**

Hon. Premier of the Free State, Ace Magashule

The Executive Mayor of Mangaung Metropolitan City, Cllr Thabo Manyoni

Your Excellency the Consul-General of the People's Republic of China to South Africa, Dr Sun Dali

The Hon. Speaker and Members of the Provincial Legislature

Executive Mayors and Mayors and Speakers of Municipalities

Distinguished Guests from the People's Republic

Representatives of the Chinese Universities present here

Representatives from the Free State University and Central University of Technology

Ladies and gentlemen

Members of the Media

Programme Director, today we take yet another step towards making the Free State a better place to live in. We are hosting what could easily be one of the most important investment destination promotion exercises this province has ever seen. This resonates well with the declaration of the ANC Government when declaring 2015 the Year of Freedom Charter, "Unity in Action to Advance Economic Freedom." As we host our friends from China we hope to strengthen relations and partnership with Chinese provinces for the development of the Free State. This visit from our Chinese

counterparts comes in during the Freedom Month where as a nation we celebrate 21 years of Freedom and Democracy.

From this Freedom Charter, South Africa has developed a worldwide respected Constitution in 1996 which declares, the people of South Africa will build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations. There is no doubt that, the China in South Africa Week gives expression to that undertaking.

The Freedom Charter further declares that South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations; South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation - not war; and that peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding equal rights, opportunities and status for all. It furthermore states that all people shall have equal right to use their own languages and to develop their own folk culture and customs.

This exercise we are undertaking today further endorses the strategic National Development Plan which aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. According to the plan, South Africa can realise its goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society. The NDP also seeks to promote multi-sectoral collaboration.

Once again, the activity today strengthens and justifies the inclusion of South Africa in BRICS in 2010. Our country has surely developed and is claiming its space as part of an economic modeling exercise to forecast global economic trends over the next half century. China Week is a response to the call made by National Government to strengthen ties and deepen relations with our BRICS counterparts after all, China is one of the best trading partners in the World since it has the second largest economy footprint in the world and our partnership in the past has proved to be successful and productive in all spheres. Arising from the declaration of the Year of South Africa in China in 2014, we as the Free State province were

amongst others, able to attract investments into the province from Chinese Companies involved in Solar Projects, and Construction.

China plays a pivotal role in our economic landscape as the Free State Province has a very old relationship with China since 1994. To this end, the Free State Province has seven towns which have good relations with the Chinese towns in different sectors, these are: Matjhabeng, Mangaung, Metsimaholo, Xhariep, Maluti-A-Phofung, Mantsopa Local municipality and Letsemeng Local municipality. This shows that we are on the right path in moving our province and country forward in terms of economic development.

Nestled at the centre of South Africa, the Free State province is favorably situated as a potential economic hub intertwined by various main routes leading to the rest of the country and the country's ports. Farmlands stretch over thousands of hectares that produce various crops including maize, sunflower, sorghum, beans and orchards. Free State shares borders with 6 provinces and the Kingdom of Lesotho. The N3 and N1 are two major roads that run through the Free State.

Four main sectors make up the Free State economy namely manufacturing, mining, agriculture and tourism. Other significant economic sectors are services, trade and infrastructure. In addition to key infrastructure projects the Free State has is the establishment of the Maluti-a-Phofung Special Economic Zone with the aim to promote trade, economic growth and industrialization.

Some of the targeted sectors for establishment within the M-SEZ are:

- Automotive
- Pharmaceuticals
- Information and Communication Technology, and Business Processes Outsourcing
- Manufacturing

These sectors are examples of job creation initiatives through government. We are doing all in our power to attract as much investors in our province as possible so that we can be able to take the economic landscape of the Free State to the next level.

The Free State Province's objectives of the China in South Africa Week are:

- Promoting the province's trade and investment profile with the aim to attract foreign investment.
- Promoting the provinces manufacturing sector to boost exports and alternate markets across the country.
- Strengthening relations between the province and China with the broader framework and context of the Bilateral Relations between South Africa and China.
- Learning and exchanging best practices from one of our major BRICS partners.

We want to strengthen trade and attract investment into each other's territories. A further purpose of the hosting of the China in SA Week is to further the people-to-people relations including cultural relations between the peoples of our two countries to enhance and enrich the already good relations existing between South Africa and the People's Republic of China and the Free State province and our co-operating Chinese provinces in particular. We furthermore want to use this opportunity to further promote economic and trade; tourism, and strengthen co-operation in the areas including but not limited to education, agriculture, and other industries.

We have already made our mark in creating an impression to our Chinese partners, hence there is no better time but now to host them in our province. With that said, we believe the Free State has the potential to grow if we can all work together, know our area and claim the space. We shall all enjoy in the wealth of the province and South Africa in general if we work together towards growing the economy.

We hope that by the end of the China in South Africa Week we would have lured more Chinese investors to our province. We are looking forward to successful and productive deliberations that will benefit our province and its people.

**I Thank You**