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Author: Siyabonga Sithole

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ECONOMY

Clean Gauteng curb crime unlock R300 bn investment potential

SIYABONGA SITHOLE
siyabonga.sithole@mni.co.za

TO MAKE Gauteng better again, Deputy President Paul Mashatile has urged Premier Panyaza Lesufi and his executive team to invest in the province's ailing infrastructure and crime-fighting and ensure that the province across its metros and towns is clean and attractive to investors.

Mashatile delivered his keynote address virtually to the more than 500 guests and delegates at the inaugural Gauteng Investment Conference held at the Marriott Hotel in Melrose Arch on Thursday. The conference is being held with the hope of attracting R300 billion to the province's coffers through investment pledges from local and international investors.

On Wednesday, during the launch of the conference, MEC for Finance and Economic Development Lebogang Maile said the province was ready to position itself as the ideal investment destination, which was why it had decided to embark on getting investors under one roof to attract the much-needed investment through pledges from local and international investors.

Mashatile said that despite the many challenges facing the country's biggest economy, with a 35% contribution to the country's GDP, President Cyril Ramaphosa's ambitious target of achieving a 3% GDP will not be possible without investors pouring into the province's economy.

"The story of Gauteng economic transformation is one of resilience since the late 19th century and is today an economic powerhouse and contributes 35% of the country's GDP, making this province a crucial gateway for investment in the continent," he said.

Mashatile said that with jobs in the country and economic growth hard to come by, there have to be new ways of trying to grow the province's economy and ensure an inclusive economy that attracts jobs and growth.

"With this rich and strong base, we need to think about how to grow the economy. For that to happen, we need to work together in making the province a strong and vibrant economy... While the private sector must generate employment

and contribute to industrial development, the government needs to demonstrate its commitment to building a future with sustainable economic growth despite the challenges we face as a country," he stated.

Mashatile said investing in infrastructure, fighting crime, improving ease of doing business, and ensuring a cleaner and more attractive Gauteng are some of the best possible ways in which the provincial government can enable investment and economic growth.

"With the private sector investment, Gauteng is well positioned to overcome its infrastructure deficit despite its growing population.

"However, Gauteng needs to invest in maintaining its infrastructure, especially in the inner city while roping in the South African Local Government Authority to conduct city cleanliness to give awards to the cleaner city.

"We want this clean city campaign to start here in Gauteng and here in Johannesburg... We also want the province to enhance its ease of doing business while eliminating crime and extortion syndicates."

Speaking during a panel discussion on driving the province's infrastructure through innovation, Gauteng MEC for Public Works, Transport and Infrastructure Development, Jacob Mamabolo, indicated that the province was working at finding ways of raising funding through alternative sources while improving some of its digital performance tracking platforms.

"As a province, Gauteng is exploring various ways of using advanced and better methods of securing alternative funding. We are looking at ways of facilitating investment and are exploring with the private sector to find alternative ways of raising capital as accessing private partnership requires preparation," he stated.

Mamabolo also indicated that in 2024, his department launched an infrastructure delivery risk and management platform that uses scientific and reliable data in the built-environment sector.

"We are now able to know what is happening at construction sites as we use drones and other instruments to check what is happening on our sites. There are multiple risks that we need to manage as a province to ensure that we deliver on services," he stated.