

Program Director

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Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to have been invited to deliver the
keynote address at the official opening of the Eskom Small
Business Development Exhibition. Eskom initiated the expo
with the intention of sponsoring an event that has a broad
impact in stimulating entrepreneurship and contributes to the
development of small, medium and micro enterprises with a
view to enhancing the country's future economic prosperity
and employment opportunities.

The popularity of exhibition as seen in the number of exhibitions taking place in our country, and the positive attitude of exhibitors and visitors in particular, indicate a need for an event of this nature.

An exhibition is a versatile marketing medium which represents the marketplace in one place and time and provides an ideal opportunity for exhibitors to launch new products, generate media coverage, build brand awareness, generate leads and interact with customers.

As a department charged with the government's Expanded Public Works Programme among other things, we have done our best to provide the necessary service and resources to ensure that we develop and provide opportunities to emerging entrepreneurs, so that they can play a pivotal role in the economy of our country.

In his address at the opening of parliament, the president of our Republic the honourable Thabo Mbeki made bold his statement of intent and action when he said “The work we will do must move our country forward decisively towards the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment in our country. We must achieve further and visible advances with regard to the improvement of the quality of life of all our people, affecting many critical areas of social existence, including health, safety and security, moral regeneration, social cohesion, opening the doors of culture and education to all, and sport and recreation.

We will have to score new victories in the struggle to create an egalitarian society, successfully addressing the important challenges of persisting racial and gender inequalities, the disempowerment of our youth and people with disabilities, and proper care for children and the elderly”.

In a transforming country like South Africa, there is a constant tension between economic growth and redistribution. As government, we have committed ourselves to building a people's contract towards more jobs. Clearly, no society can grow in a peaceful and sustainable manner without reasonable equitable distribution of wealth. Since 1994, government has put poverty alleviation as a national imperative, and we recognize that economic transformation, black economic empowerment and job creation are key drivers in this fight.

As government we have as our principal role the provision of a conducive environment to enterprise formation and job creation – which we are doing through a holistic range of policies, programmes and partnership with key stakeholders. Key to this is government's expanded approach on Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment. We envisage as

government to underpin job creation across a broad front by promoting among others;

- Corporate investment in society including welfare and job creation initiatives
- Broad ranging skills development
- Corporate investment in emerging enterprises
- More inclusive ownership of existing business

Government has put in place an expanded Public Works Programme whose aim is to provide poverty and income relief by equipping participants with training and work experience.

In the last financial period, Eskom spent a total of R50.3m on 594 grants and donations for economic and social development projects, national and legacy programmes as well as donations, benefiting 57 196 people, ranging from

preschool learners to senior citizens as part of its Corporate Social Investment programmes.

The Eskom Development Foundation has worked very hard towards improving the lives of ordinary citizens, especially in rural areas. Of importance for Eskom is the Integrated Sustainability Reporting prescribed in the Code stated in the King II report requiring three levels of reporting. Last year Eskom met all the prescriptions of the Code as stated in the King II report. Eskom's corporate social investment speaks volume since its incorporation.

In 2004/5, Eskom was voted ahead of its peers (by the beneficiaries) as the company with the most hands-on approach in CSI. Eskom was also voted as the top caring company, two years in a row. A caring company is one that supports, develops and uplifts all communities in South Africa without prejudice and we at the Development

Foundation have achieved that. Eskom has discovered during the course of executing its functions that communities always appreciate the opportunity to be consulted on the social programmes implemented as they believe their participation could largely contribute to the success of such a programme.

There are a number of initiatives which have been approved by the Eskom Development Foundation that have begun to show why Eskom is one of the most loved brands in South Africa. Through Eskom, government has successfully launched and brought to life hundreds of successful economic projects, which have now become sustainable businesses. The Eskom Small Business Development exhibition which is a yearly event in the Eskom calendar over the last nine years, has provided opportunities for some of the projects and opened much needed markets for them to export their products and interact with customers. Last year,

a total number of 11 500 visitors attended the expo held here at the Gallagher Estates.

As government, we will continue to work closely with all of you through various programmes. Our government has developed a Ten Point Plan. The Ten Point Plan is focused on the following aspects:

- Developing a comprehensive social security
- Ensuring accessibility to social welfare
- Implementing an integrated poverty eradication strategy
- Committing to cooperative governance in all government related work
- Rebuilding family and community by empowering the young, old, disabled and women
- Address violence against women, children and the elderly

- Address youth criminality and unemployment
- Re-design services for people with disabilities
- Train, educate, re-deploy, and employ new category of workers in social development
- Mitigate the social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS

Through Eskom and other SOEs we have committed millions of Rand towards addressing government's Ten Point Plan.

May I take the opportunity to wish the Eskom Development Foundation, the black SMMEs and the organisers well with this exhibition and may other corporates follow your example to promote partnerships in development – for the sake of a better South Africa for all its citizens.

I thank you

