

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR PAT NGOMANE, MPL, DURING THE OCASSION OF THE RIBBON CUTTING TO SIGNAL THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE EXPANDED SONAE ARAUCO SOUTH AFRICA FACTORY IN WHITE RIVER, CITY OF MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Friday, 29 November 2019

Diretor do Programa (Programme Director);

Ambassador of Portugal to South Africa, *Sua Excelência* (His Excellency), Dr. Manuel Carvalho;

CEO of Sonae Arauco, *Senhor* (Mr) Rui Correia, and his management team;

Other private sector partners;

Government officials present;

Members of the Media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Bom Dia/Good Morning/San'bonani!

1. His Excellency, Dr Carvalho, I would like to start-off by confirming that **Sonae Arauco South Africa, is indeed, *Taking wood further!***

2. The **additional investment in excess of 200 Million Rands**, the company has ploughed here, in its White River factory, is a clear sign of its commitment in ***Taking wood further!***
3. As the Provincial Government, we are therefore excited about this additional investment, and the expansion of your wood processing factory, as this will further increase our contribution to the sector.
4. Currently, **our Province is the biggest producer of forest and wood products at 40.5%**, and such an investment is highly welcomed.
5. This much-welcomed investment has **provided additional job opportunities for our people**, and will surely also contribute to the growth of the economy of the Province.
6. As a result, **less people will go to bed on an empty stomach**. To us as government, **no amount of new jobs is too little to be acknowledged**, for as long as it is the people, who eventually benefit from it.
7. This is because we have a mammoth task of addressing the **triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality** in our Province, and South Africa in general.

8. We also appreciate the **contribution of 20.5 Million Rands made by Sonae Arauco, in terms of Corporate Social Investment initiatives** in education and environmental sustainability in our Province, over the last ten (10) years.
9. Notwithstanding this contribution, we, however, believe you can still do more, in this regard. You are **our valuable partner in the manufacturing sector**, and we hope this partnership will increase significantly, moving forward.
10. I wish you well in your future operations, and **urge you to invest even more** in our Province. If your business operations prosper, I am certain you will not hesitate to plough back more through your CSI projects.
11. As I close, in the words of UK author and publisher, David Odunaiya, and I quote: ***“Faith and hope work hand in hand, however, while hope focuses on the future, faith focuses on the now”***, unquote.
12. Your investment in the new, state-of-the-art melamine press – which is the best of its kind in the whole of Africa – **signals your faith in our Province, becoming the economic growth game-changer in our country.**

13. This gives us hope that – with you as a strategic partner – the future of our children is very bright. We applaud you for the additional investment. *Parabéns* (Congratulations)!

14. ***Let's grow the economy of Mpumalanga together!***

15. *Muito obrigado* (Thank you very much)!