



Tuesday, June 19, 2007

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Dr Phosa coming to SD

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Stories by Njabulo Dlamini

CHAIRMAN of the Maputo Corridor and renowned SA businessman Dr Matthews Phosa is coming to Swaziland in a bid to motivate business and government participation.

Dr Phosa has reportedly alluded that they were not going forward 'without Swaziland on board' in the project which runs into billions of Emalangeni.

He has reportedly agreed to honour an invitation by Swazi business and influential persons to present an outline of the Maputo Corridor project and accruing advantages therein.

This was disclosed by Muzikayise Dube, an Economist at Federation of Swaziland Employers/Chamber of Commerce (FSE & CC) during a meeting held at Emafini Business Centre yesterday.

"Dr Phosa has agreed to come down and present a report because his argument is that Swaziland should have been involved at inception of the project. He wants us to form part of the board of directors in the Corridor," stated Dube.

Further he promulgated: "I believe whilst we missed out at inception, this provides us with yet another opportunity as Swazi business to get on board the Maputo Corridor project. How soon we can join in the project is dependent on the political will to push it through".

The Maputo Corridor is a stretch running into 600km according to information gathered and along it several tourist sites will be put up, infrastructure for the movement of cargo by rail and road improved, etc.

Dr Phosa's visit and logistics are yet to be finalised though according to the FSE & CC.

However, some business persons were skeptical with Dube's presentation especially when he urged them to consider using the Maputo Port instead of the Durban one which he viewed as a distant away and processes involved tedious.

These processes involved the logistics of transport which the FSE and CC officer alleged took longer than the Maputo arrangements.

Dube was part of a team that went to Maputo on Tuesday for the third Annual General Meeting on the Maputo Corridor logistics initiative.

The AGM was convened by the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI) to address and update member states on issues of road, rail, border post, port and terminals.

In attendance at the FSE & CC meeting were Customs officials, South African Revenue Services (SARS) and business persons.

The SARS officials also questioned the switching to Maputo Port as suggested by Dube with some citing the communication barrier (Portuguese being the second language as opposed to English) as well as what they termed a use of a scanner on cargo that had been a deterrent to business over the years in that country.

But Dube said they should note that SA was doing business with Mozambique, highlighting that the issue of communication was not much of a concern.



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