

# Partnership renewed

Nonhlanhla Mondlane

When former president Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela spoke at the Maputo Development Corridor Investor conference 12 years ago, he said, "Our governments have blazed the trail of this new partnership. The challenge for investors is to match the boldness of this unique undertaking with their own practical decisions."

Mandela added that the corridor had strategic significance in more ways than one.

He described it as a practical implementation of the commitment of governments to regional cooperation within southern Africa. He also highlighted the mutual benefits for both Mozambique and South Africa, which were apparent to everyone.

Mandela's words resonated on April 23 when Mpumalanga premier Mr Thabang Makwetla signed and sealed a renewed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Maputo governor, Ms Exa Telmina Pereira, as part of ongoing efforts aimed at advancing

geopolitical and economic objectives of New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad).

The original memorandum was signed in 2001 in pursuance of the general agreement entered into between the two countries. Makwetla described the meeting between the Mpumalanga executive cabinet and the Maputo delegation as a platform to correct their neglect of the memorandum. Apparently the neglect was brought about by the restructuring processes in Maputo.

Upon their arrival, the Mozambican delegation made a first stop at the Samora Machel Monument in Mbuzini before they proceeded to Matsamo Cultural Village where they experienced Mpumalanga's hospitality at its best.

On the second day, the delegation, accompanied by MEC for culture, sport and recreation, Mr Jabu Mahlangu, toured the 2010 Mbombela Stadium and proceeded to sign the renewed MoU at the Mpumalanga cabinet boardroom.

The primary focus of the pact will be on establishing and consolidating institutional mechanisms that focus on the development of activities to promote the exchange of information, experience sharing and mutual collaboration in the spirit of cooperation and friendship.

The mechanisms include creating institutions, and maximising investment opportunities arising out of the flagship Maputo Development Corridor that links Gauteng and Mpumalanga to Maputo and its harbour.

The flagship project aims to position the corridor as an attractive route for trade and export promotion.

Other new areas of cooperation will include tourism, agriculture, local government, environmental conservation and cooperation in the preparations for the 2010 Fifa Soccer World Cup when the need arises for the provinces to collaborate.

Political affairs pertaining to the MoU between the two provinces will be

coordinated by the joint political forum (JPF) which comprises the premier of Mpumalanga and governor of Maputo Province and two designated MECs (Mpumalanga) and directors (Maputo).

The JPF meets annually to consider the reports of the joint technical committee.

Article 10 of the MoU states that it is in no way conflicting with the provisions of the arrangement between the government of the Republic of South Africa and the government of the Republic of Mozambique for the establishment of a joint permanent commission for cooperation, or with any sectoral agreements entered into between them.

The MoU came into effect on the date of its signature by both parties, and will remain in effect for a period of five years, subsequent to which it may be renewed upon mutual arrangement.

However it may be terminated by either party by giving one month's written notice of such intention to the other party.