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FREE STATE PROVINCE

For Immediate Release

Date: 01 February 2024

THE FREE STATE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT TO DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH BY HARNESSING INVESTMENTS.

In his 2023 State of the Province Address, Premier Hon. Mxolosi Dukwana made a commitment that the province will host the second instalment of the Free State Investment Conference as part of the government's efforts to grow the economy by harnessing investments. This year's conference will be held on 27 February 2024 at the Centenary Complex at the University of the Free State.

This conference is hosted against the background where the latest statistics indicate that the Free State official unemployment rate increased to 38.5% in the third quarter of 2023; from 33.8% in the third quarter of 2022. In the third quarter of 2023 there were 727 000 employed people; 3000 jobs were lost in the same quarter. Annually, when quarter three of 2022 and quarter three of 2023 are compared, the province lost 70000 jobs. The high unemployment rate is largely due to contraction of key economic sectors such as mining, manufacturing, and construction.



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MEDIA RELEASE

The Free State Provincial Government is thus excited to host this significant event, which will build up on the resolutions of the inaugural Investment Conference, which took place in October 2019. The conference will offer an interactive programme that will see government, business, academics, entrepreneurs; local and international investors, experts and other role players discuss the Free State investment opportunities, explore the emerging economic trends and find solutions to investment challenges.

The investment conference will seek to promote the province as an investment destination of choice and highlight strategic investment opportunities across various sectors. The focus areas are: energy; mining and gas extraction; infrastructure; transport and logistics, as well as tourism.

This instalment of the Free State Investment Conference will be held under the theme: *'Harnessing Partnerships and Stimulating Growth and Development Through Investments'*.

Members of the media are invited to cover the conference with the following details:

Date: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Time: 07h00

Place: Bloemfontein

Venue: University of the Free State Centenary Complex, (Main Campus)

Issued by the Free State Provincial Government Communications Services

For Media RSVP please follow this link:

<https://forms.office.com/r/RBgvW8naXz>

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