

**REMARKS BY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES PENSION
FUND, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MR PHINEAS TJIE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
GEPF NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCIAL OFFICE, 11 Old
Main Street, Kimberley
01 OCTOBER 2009.**

Embargo: 11h00

Programme Director

All dignitaries present here today,
GEPF senior management team,
Distinguished guests,
Members of the media amongst us,
Ladies and gentleman,
All protocol observed,

Good Morning, Goeie More, Dumelang

It is with a great sense of joy and pride to be part of this historic occasion, as we are collectively here this morning to witness the realisation of a strategy whose implementation started a year ago, as we officially open the doors of the GEPF Northern Cape Provincial Office to its members.

Part of our strategy for period 2008/09 to 2012/13 “Is to grow GEPF footprint into all provinces,” and to bring services closer to the people where it is needed the most. Through, this office, we are now boldly proclaiming that we have managed to imprint GEPF footprints in the Northern Cape as we did in the other eight provinces.

Today, ladies and gentleman, as we mark this important milestone in the history of GEPF’s calendar of events, let our clarion call reverberate throughout the length and breadth of this magnificent Flamingo Province, just a stone throw away from the internationally renowned, **‘The big hole’ that: “never again will the citizens of this province travel to Pretoria, only to sort out their queries related pension benefits”.**

As from today, just like the rest of the provinces, people of the Northern Cape will enjoy pension services provided to other GEPF members in other provinces and receive their services directly within the comfort of their province.

Ek is oortuig daarvan dat die takbestuurder van hierdie nuwe kantoor, meneer Dumisane Fanele (wat ‘n seun van dié provinsie is) en sy personeel, die nodige kapasiteit, verbindtenis en entoesiasme het om die beste diens aangaande RWPF voordele in die provinsie te lewer. My sekerheid berus op die uitstaande werk wat reeds deur my senior bestuurslede gedoen is om hierdie kantoor ten volle toe te rus.

Dames en Here, hierdie kantoor, wat vandag ge-open word, is ten volle toegegerus met die nodige toerusting en die personeel is elektronies verbind met die hoofdatabasis, CIVPEN, in Pretoria

Dit sal, onder andere, hulle in staat stel om dadelik oplossings vir probleme te vind sonder om hoofkantoor te skakel.

(English translation):

I am certain that the Branch Manager of this new office, Mr Dumisane Fanele, who is the son of this province and his entire staff members have the necessary capacity, commitment and enthusiasm to offer the best service regarding GEPF benefits and services in this province. My confidence, ladies and gentleman derives from the outstanding work already done by my senior management team to capacitate this office.

This office, we are opening here today, is fully equipped with the necessary resources, staff members are linked electronically to our main database, called CIVPEN at Pretoria. This will, amongst others, allow them to offer solution on the spot, without having to phone the head office.

Programme Director, I have been reliably informed by the Senior Manager, Ms Mmalerato Thage, responsible for Northern Cape, that the branch Manager is going to be assisted by Client Liaison Officers, who will be expected to travel and interact, train and offer workshops

to various government human resources practitioners, as well as trade unions personnel in the comfort of their offices.

Through this office, we are starting to provide a client-centric service experience to improve turn-around times for our members. We are currently reviewing our IT infrastructure and our employee benefit software in order to significantly enhance the whole experience for our membership.

I urge every one of you present here today, to spread a word of mouth and promote the existence of this magnificent GEPF Office. It is our duty and responsibility to see to it that the people of the Northern Cape know about this office. My advice to the branch manager and the entire staff: the best way to promote and market the existence of this Office is to offer the best pension service to all clients irrespective of their colour, age, sex and educational background at all times.

Through this event, we are boldly declaring that GEPF is very committed to the spirit of Batho Pele principles. Ladies, and Gentleman, we are all aware that Batho Pele promotes taking public services to the coal face of service delivery, where they are needed the most. Furthermore, in support of Batho Pele, the opening of these offices is about improving accessibility to government services. Our focus this year is on pursuing the GEPF's mandate of providing pensions and other related benefits to members and beneficiaries in an efficient, effective and responsible manner.

The GEPF's core functions include member admissions, contribution collections, members roll maintenance, withdrawals and benefit payments, and the investment of all the Fund's assets to match future liabilities. The GEPF administration also administers benefits on behalf of National Treasury, including medical subsidies special pensions, military pensions and other sundry benefits.

Programme Director, I am proud to announce that GEPF is the 6th largest pension fund in the world, with 1.2 million contributing members, 320 000 pensioners and more than R637 billion in assets under its management. Of the 1.2 million members, Northern Cape accounts to approximately 20 thousand members.

In conclusion, ladies and gentleman, allow me to take this opportunity to once more reassure and reaffirm to our members not to panic and make uninformed decisions to terminate their employment in haste as a means to access their pension benefits because of the current economic climate.

At GEPF, We are aware that our members are being deliberately confused and misinformed, and those due to retire are being advised to delay their retirement because they stand to lose their golden pension benefit payout because of the recent economic recession. Allow me to state categorically that: The Fund is defined Pension scheme and benefit payment do not depend on performance of investment but by the rules of the fund.

Ek wil verder van hierdie geleentheid gebruik maak om die nuutaangestelde RWPF se Raad van Trustees te verwelkom. Hulle het alreeds verlede week begin werk en namens die RWPF senior bestuur en die personeel, gee ons onverdeelde ondersteuning aan die voorsitter, Meneer Arthur Moloto, en sy Raad.

Meneer die programbestuurder, dit verskaf my groot plesier om die RWPF Noord-Kaap-kantoor nou amptelik te open!

(English translation)

I would like to take this opportunity to express a heartily warm welcome the newly constituted GEPF Board of Trustees that officially started with its work last week. On behalf of the GEPF senior management and the entire staff, we pledge our unconditional support to the GEPF Board of Trustees under the chairmanship of Mr Arthur Moloto.

It gives great pleasure, Programme Director to declare the Northern Cape GEPF office officially opened (The CEO to open the plague)

I thank you.

Baie dankie