

## Ekurhuleni is hoping to attract investors

The Ekurhuleni metropolitan council is hoping the Airports Cities world conference currently under way in Kempton Park will lessen the burden of unemployment, homelessness and poverty in the region.



More than 160,000 residents of the region live in shacks and unemployment is high at 28.8%.

Member of the mayoral committee, responsible for city planning and economic development, Bennett Nikani said the metro made a bid to host the conference with an aim to attract investors.

"Local and international investors will grace the conference and we will market the region, particularly around the OR Tambo Airport, as a destination for investment," Nikani said.

"We have available under-used land in areas near the airport and there are investors who have indicated that they are interested in buying houses near the airport with an intention of flattening them to build high rise buildings for business purposes," he claimed.

Before the conference started on Thursday (25 April), the metro council held a series of ward meetings to explain its objectives to residents.

"We told residents that they have an option to sit and do nothing or come up with plans to benefit from this initiative," Nikani said.

"The OR Tambo Airport is located in the region and it cannot be a standalone. The conference will help us find ways in which the airport can benefit the region," he added.

He said the council had entered into a partnership with the Airports Company South Africa, provincial and national government.

"We realised that during the World Cup the region was not part of the event and we did not benefit at all. We came up with this concept as a way of creating jobs," Nikani said.

About 800 delegates, including 110 airport operators from different countries and chief executives are attending the conference.

Source: Sowetan via I-Net Bridge