



**WELCOME ADDRESS BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY & LIAISON, MR. BHEKI CELE AT THE CELEBRATION TO MARK WORLD MARITIME DAY HELD ON THURSDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005 AT THE PORT OF DURBAN.**

**All Protocol Observed.**

- I am extremely honoured to welcome you to the World Maritime Day Celebrations being held here today.
- I am particularly delighted that this celebration is being held in our beautiful city of eThekweni in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Maritime transport encompasses all forms of transport by sea, inter-modal links and inland ports.

- The mission of the maritime transport system is to encourage and support the South African maritime transport industry, which encapsulates four fundamental objectives namely:
  - Meeting basic needs;
  - Growing the economy;
  - Developing human resources; and
  - Democratizing decision-making.
- The maritime transport system is also aimed at providing safe, reliable, effective, efficient and fully integrated transport operations, which will best meet the needs of the customers of this industry.
- It will assist in improving levels of service and cost by supporting government strategies for social and economic development.
- We at the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport recently hosted a Freight Transport Empowerment Summit to look at opportunities within the Freight industry, including not only the transport operational sector, but also a wide range of associated sectors such as the maritime industry.
- KwaZulu-Natal is naturally endowed with the two largest ports in South Africa, which are strategically positioned on major shipping routes, serving as major gateways to domestic and international trade.
- Freight transport in all modes, is one of the most important economic activities in the province contributing to about 11% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and is a key element in the future development of the Province's agricultural and industrial potential.

- The volume of freight transport through KwaZulu-Natal is continually increasing, as the logistics systems for imports and exports from the interior of South Africa and the neighbouring countries direct cargo through our road and rail corridors, to the ports of Durban and Richards Bay.
- Shipping is perhaps the most international of all the world's great industries and one of the most dangerous.
- World Maritime Day therefore provides an ideal opportunity to draw attention to the vital role that shipping plays in underpinning the international economy and its significant contribution to international trade and the world economy, as the most efficient, safe and environmentally friendly method of transporting goods around the globe.
- With these few words, once again, welcome to our beautiful city and province.
- Siyajabula Ukuba Nani!

**THANK YOU.**