

**MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON DURING THE SIGNING OF A COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE FEDERAL STATE OF LOWER SAXON AT THE KING SHAKA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> OF MARCH 2012.**

Programme Director;

Head of the Lower Saxony Police in Germany, Uwe Binias;

Eastern Cape MEC for Human Settlements, Safety and Liaison

Helen Sauls-August;

All delegation;

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Protocol Observed

It is a great honour and privilege for us to be part of this auspicious event where we will witness the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Federal State of Lower Saxon and South Africa's Province of the Eastern Cape. As the province of KwaZulu-Natal, we applaud the strong and growing relationships between Germany and South Africa.

Tonight's occasion reconfirms the commitment to a long and lasting relationship between our two countries as represented by the province of the Eastern Cape and Lower Saxon. We are stretching out the hand of friendship across the seas into the vast country that is Germany. We have no doubt that this agreement will also open the way to the rest of South Africa.

We in KZN are making the transition as a province on the move. KZN is a major tourist destination of the country and a major coastal city in Africa.

According to statistics provided by the Tourism Authority of KZN, the province receives an average of 1 million international visitors per annum. So our efforts are already bearing fruit but we have yet to reach the figures of other federal states or provinces in highly developed countries. In time, we believe we can achieve this.

We have a great climate, a splendid topography of rolling mountains and meandering valleys. In our natural parks we have the so-called Big Five of the animal kingdom which is one of the attractions visitors come to see. We also have the St Lucia wetlands area which has a variety of aquatic animals that are not found elsewhere in Southern Africa.

Our province is blessed with plenty of rainfall which makes the agricultural sector an obvious choice for investment. Our province also boasts the largest and busiest ports in Africa, with special reference to the Durban Harbour and Richards Bay.

We are passionate about our sport and have staged major events including the A1 Grand Prix. We played our part in the Soccer World Cup in 2010 by hosting one of the semi-finals between Spain and Germany.

Our vision is to create a truly developmental state which places its people at the center of economic growth. But having said all this, we have always maintained that safety and security takes priority in all our endeavors.

Ladies and gentlemen, because of our full realisation of the negative and destructive impact crime has in the lives of our people, as government we have prioritised the fight against crime.

This is one of the challenges we must confront without any compromise. We have to confront crime with courage, concentration and clarity of purpose.

In view of this, the province of KwaZulu-Natal through its Department of Community Safety and Liaison, which I am privileged to lead as MEC, launched a programme that is aimed at “Building a United Front Against Crime”. This is an integrated anti-crime strategy which seeks to rally communities behind the crime-fighting cause.

This initiative is impacting positively on the fight against crime, in that through community mass-mobilisation, we see greater cooperation between the police and the community. This is resulting in communities being more willing to give critical crime-related information to the police in order to arrest criminals.

We commend KwaZulu-Natal on reversing its history of unbridled violence and mayhem. The South African Police Service in our province once always had their hands full of extraordinary challenges. They always had to go the extra mile for stability to be maintained.

They have been able to bust many organized crime syndicates, even those that cross over from other provinces. We remain dedicated to ensuring that our hard-earned political freedom is not threatened by crime.

We are hard at work to ensure that law and order, peace and stability become a reality and not a far-fetched ideal.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thought I should touch on these things so that you have a picture of how the province of KwaZulu-Natal is contributing to ensuring that South Africa becomes a safe and a prosperous country.

We would like to see these mutual visits being sustained, maybe not only on safety issues but also on economic and infrastructural development in the interest of creating jobs, fighting unemployment and reducing inequality as well as poverty as these provide a fertile ground for criminality.

**I thank you.**