

**MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON
MR WILLIES MCHUNU AT THE 3rd AFRICAN WOMEN IN SHIPPING CONFERENCE GALA
DINNER IN DURBAN ON THE 28TH OF AUGUST 2012.**

Programme Director;

The Honourable Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma;

The National Chairperson of Transport Portfolio Committee: Ms Ruth Bhengu;

His Worship the Mayor of the City of eThekweni: Cllr James Nxumalo;

WISTA South Africa President: Ms Fiona Calitz;

All stakeholders present;

Distinguished Guests;

All protocol observed.

On behalf of the Provincial Government and all the citizens of KwaZulu-Natal, I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the women of Africa under the banner of Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA), for identifying this province to host the 3rd African Women in Shipping Conference.

We know that many of the African countries are still characterized by inequalities which require redress, equity and reconstruction and indeed all of us are in agreement that skills development is an essential component of the reconstruction of our society.

The fact that about 90% of the world's trade happens through the shipping industry, does not only suggest that the industry in question presents us with long-term opportunities to create jobs and wealth, but it says we have an industry that has since the beginning of mercantilism dominated all modes of transport. This then suggests to us that this is one industry we can trust to continue providing opportunities for skilled and suitable qualified individuals to venture into the shipping sphere without which there would be no importation and exportation of affordable food and goods in our interconnected global economy.

Here in KwaZulu-Natal, the ports of Durban and Richards Bay handle approximately 78% of South Africa's cargo tonnage.

About one million containers go through our Durban harbours and this is about 60% of the total trade that relies on our oceans for transportation. Gross tonnage of ships using the harbour amounts to about 100 million tons.

The Richards Bay Coal terminal, which is the largest coal export terminal in the world, handles about 72 million tonnes of coal every year.

Virtually no production can take place in certain parts of Africa and the world unless inputs such as raw materials, labour, and fuel can be moved from different locations through our ports. Neither can manufactured products be delivered to consumers. Indeed, a wide variety of services carried out are completely dependent on our ports.

It is on the basis of this that as the government of KwaZulu-Natal we are greatly encouraged and are fully behind the move to raise awareness about maritime operations amongst our women.

We regard this as a timely intervention that will go a long way in addressing the historic discrepancies that have seen the majority of the African people, particularly women, not being exposed to maritime transportation business and related trades worldwide, as it is still the case today.

These discrepancies have translated to certain racial groups dominating this industry.

It is collective duty to look at how the process of introducing women into the infrastructure development that is taking place in all African Ports is fast-tracked or implemented speedily in order to make up for the lost ground.

I find it reassuring also that one of the objectives of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is to identify opportunities within the transportation industry, including the maritime sector, for enterprise development and job creation, in order to facilitate access to skills and capital for emerging enterprises.

We are determined to play our role in attracting more women to the maritime industry and in supporting women in management positions.

We hope that this conference will be an eye-opener to our young female learners who will now realize the importance of this industry. We know that the maritime industry provides employment opportunities, not only in the transport operational sector, but in a wide range of associated activities, including ship supply and maintenance, warehousing and storage, and manufacturing of equipment and components.

We are excited about the latest developments in our province's ports, including the Dube Trade Port. We are excited that the intention of our Government is to take the shipping industry to its optimum

level. We envisage that the economic sustainability of our ports will ensure that our previously disadvantaged communities derive some benefit from them.

It is our wish therefore, ladies and gentlemen, that hosting this conference in the City of Durban will prove to be a worthwhile experience and will lend a hand to the province's sustainable economic development.

We want KwaZulu-Natal to be an example of an environment where the maritime industry flourishes with entrepreneurs from historically disadvantaged population groups and remote communities benefiting and contributing towards socio-economic development.

With those few words, I wish to express my appreciation to all of you. Thank you once again for inviting the provincial government to be a part of this historic conference gala dinner.

It is vital that the suggestions and resolutions that will come out from your discussions tomorrow are turned into action as soon as possible.

I thank you.