

REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE KZN PREMIER MR, ES MCHUNU DURING SADC- PF GALA DINNER

Programme Director

Speaker of the National Assembly & Host of SADC-PF, Hon. Baleka Mbete

Secretary to Parliament, Mr. Gengezi Mgidlana

Vice President of the SADC-PF & MP Malawi, Hon. Joseph Njobvuyalewa

Honourable Members of SADC-PF

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to thank each and every one of you for making time to be with us here tonight.

The past days offered us an unusual opportunity to interact with SADC Parliamentary representatives. I am confident that our togetherness will help us form a strong basis for long term diplomatic relationship, and possibly forge economic and cultural ties.

SADC parliamentary forum can easily be equated to a body such as the European Parliament, of course ours is still on a developmental stage. Having been approved by the Summit in 1997 as an autonomous organization in its own right, SADC-PF has made significant progress. This institution will go a long way in forging relationships with our neighbours in a more mutual beneficial role which ultimately can improve the quality of life of our people.

The world we live in is littered with world organizations which are established to fulfil specific objectives, such as UNO, IMF, European Union, African Union, etc. The relevance of these bodies can easily diminish if they are unable to respond by converting diplomatic relations to tangible benefits to lift member states and its people out of poverty. Of significance, is the fact

that KwaZulu Natal is involved in some business activity with SADC countries which include, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana and others. When you compare economic and political and cultural exchange, and our cooperation within SADC, you will realize that our relations far outweigh any perception or scars brought by the recent xenophobic incidents. Judging by the turn out of people who joined the march against xenophobia in the city centre, we can agree that not all KwaZulu Natal people are xenophobic. But we do have criminal elements that we are working very hard to contain.

Our relations go beyond politics and economy, they include religion. There is a free flow of congregants of the Methodists, ZCC and other churches who cross all regional borders every Easter and Christmas Holidays.

This is enough proof that there is more that bind us together as a region.

On behalf of the Province of KwaZulu Natal and its people, I would like to express my appreciation for the support and understanding you extended to this province and our country during the very trying moment early this year. I thank you for agreeing to dialogue and interact with us as brothers and sisters of our Great continent.

I thank you