MESSAGE OF SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY BY PREMIER OF KWAZULU-NATAL NOMUSA DUBE-NCUBE DURING 20TH NELSON MANDELA ANNUAL LECTURE HELD AT THE INKOSI ALBERT LUTHULI CONVENTION CENTRE ON SATURDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2022  
  
Good Afternoon!  
  
RECOGNISING THE PRIME MIMISTER OF BARBADOS  
Programme Director, allow me to open by recognising in our midst the presence of the Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados, Her Excellency Mia Mottley who this afternoon, delivers the 20th Annual Nelson Mandela Lecture.  
We are greatly honoured Your Excellency, that you have found the time to be part of this historic occasion, which is the first in our province, and the first being held in person since the world underwent the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.  
  
As Prime Minister of Barbados today you are one of the most recognised leaders in the world. From the small island in the North Atlantic Ocean, Prime Minister Mottley you have dared to raise your voice against the historic injustices wherever these occur in the world.  
  
We have in these hallowed halls of the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre, the first female Prime Minister of Barbados.  
  
She has taken the power that God and the voters placed in her hands, not only to transform the people of the Caribbean, but to champion the international cause against Climate Change in order to save humanity and in that vein, the people of KwaZulu-Natal.  
  
KWAZULU-NATAL IS MADIBA’S SECOND HOME  
We also wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Nelson Mandela Foundation for honouring our people in such a humbling and uplifting manner, as we rise to leave the challenges and devastation of the floods that took place in April and May this year.  
To bring the Annual Nelson Mandela Lecture in its 20th anniversary to KwaZulu-Natal is to give hope to the people of our province and to recognise the special place that Madiba himself held in his heart for KwaZulu-Natal.  
Every corner of our province is dotted with Madiba’s footprints. This is not only where the founding President of a democratic South Africa was arrested on 5 August 1962 at what is now the Mandela Capture site in Howick, this is also where Madiba delivered his last speech as a free man under apartheid. That meeting was at the All-In-Africa Conference held in 1961 at the Manaye Hall, Imbali Township in Pietermaritzburg.  
  
Madiba was later incarcerated to what would become 27-years in prison.  
President Nelson Mandela writes with fondness about his many trips to then Natal where he interacted with President of the African National Congress (ANC) Inkosi Chief Albert Luthuli and other leaders of the Congress Movement. It is these intimate discussions that led to the formation of Umkhonto weSizwe, the armed wing of the ANC, and the adoption of the armed struggle that changed the trajectory of our struggle for liberation.  
  
It was to KwaZulu-Natal that Madiba returned to cast his first vote in a democratic South Africa on 27 April 1994 at the historic Ohlange Institute which is the brainchild of ANC President Dr John Langalibalele Dube. Before casting his vote Madiba famously went to Dr Dube’s grave to report that South Africa “is now free”.  
  
MADIBA’S ICONIC STATUS AS A RALLYING POINT  
Therefore, we are honoured to gather in Madiba’s name to remember his role as a global icon in the fight for justice and a better life especially for the oppressed and downtrodden of this world.  
It is no coincidence that Madiba is reported to have once said: “I dream of our vast deserts, of our forests, of all our great wildernesses. We must never forget that it is our duty to protect this environment”.  
  
This Annual Lecture is being held at the right place at the right time 7-months after the devastating floods that hit mainly our coastal areas, resulting in massive loss of life and destruction to infrastructure. We are beaten and battered, but the recent events have also spurred us, working together with all stakeholders, business and civil society, to resist and to rise again.  
  
Rebuilding must take into consideration not to build on flood lines, flood plains or dry riverbeds which may erupt during flash floods. If we work together, we can save lives and not only speak of recovery and rebuilding after the fact.  
  
CONCLUSION AND INVITE TO VISIT KWAZULU-NATAL  
Ladies and Gentlemen, many will perhaps say that KwaZulu-Natal is a small subnational state seeking to punch above its weight by wanting to lead fellow Africans to the medium-term goal of improved climate action in the continent.  
Today, indeed we say, “Yes We Can”, because we have learned from Madiba and Prime Minister Mottley that with leadership, a country like South Africa can become the centre of human rights struggle internationally.  
We can, because with the leadership of Prime Minister Mottley, the island country of Barbados has indeed become a mobilising, conscientizing and authoritative force for reason and persuasion in the face of climate change.  
With these few words, we welcome all our visitors to the beautiful province of KwaZulu-Natal and home all colours of our rainbow nation!  
Welcome you to the land of Dr John Langalibalele Dube, Fatima Meer, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Inkosi Albert Luthuli; Mahatma Ghandi, the Big Five, the Great Drakensberg/ Ukhahlamba Mountains, and Isimangaliso Wetlands; the warm-sandy beaches and the gorgeous warm weather.  
We look forward to welcoming you all again and again in the near future as leisure and business visitors or as you make our beautiful province your permanent home.  
  
I THANK YOU!