

**Address by President JG Zuma at the Launch of the Dube Trade
Port, La Mercy, KZN
08 March 2012**

The Honourable Premier, Dr Zweli Mkhize,
Honourable Ministers,
MECs and Mayors,
The CEO of the Dube TradePort,
Investors and partners in this important venture,
Compatriots,

Good Day to you all!

Just over two years ago, we officially launched King Shaka International Airport, in this precinct, which was one of our 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup flagship projects.

We were proud to have finished the projects in time for the tournament. We also proved our infrastructure development capability and the ability to manage mega international projects.

I am happy to be back to launch the second phase of the Dube TradePort project and to unveil the statue of the founding President of our liberation movement, the ANC, Dr John Langalibalele Dube, after whom this project is named.

It is clear that work did not stop after the airport construction.

Many projects have impressively been completed in the past 22 months, such as the Cargo Terminal, the Trade House, the Trade Zone, Dube City infrastructure, the Agrizone , and the IT and Telecommunications platform. The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, in his 2012 State of the Province Address, announced further developments, including a road link that will provide additional access to the Cargo Terminal and Trade Zone from the N2 and R102 highways.

These interventions demonstrate that government wants to achieve without delay, the broad and strategic objectives of the Dube TradePort project.

The Dube Trade Port Corporation, a state owned enterprise, has been assigned to deliver a unique airport city north of Durban, stretching from Umhlanga to Ballito.

In doing so, we will be able to boost economic development and job creation and take forward our campaign against poverty, unemployment and inequality.

We cannot do this work alone as government. Working together with the private sector and the community, greater success is achievable.

We believe we will make good progress for various reasons. Firstly, the Dube TradePort is strategically located between the two largest seaports in the Southern hemisphere – Durban and Richards Bay.

The Trade Port is also set to be Southern Africa's premier logistics platform, given that the Port of Durban provides connectivity to 53 international destinations and access to local distribution networks.

Secondly, just a few weeks ago, in the State of the Nation Address, I invited the nation to join us on a massive national infrastructure build programme. Amongst the five projects I announced was the improvement of the movement of goods and economic integration through a Durban-Free State-Gauteng logistics and industrial corridor.

This project is intended to connect the major economic centres of Gauteng and Durban/Pinetown, and at the same time, link these centres with an improved export capacity through our sea-ports and improved railway lines.

We expect this corridor to also stimulate growth in the KZN Midlands, a major agricultural and industrial region through which this route will pass. The Dube Trade Port project forms an important part of this pipeline of development projects.

A logistics hub such as the Dube TradePort is also critical for growth given the fact that we are located far from the main global marketplaces in America, Europe and increasingly the emerging markets in Asia.

In southern Africa, too, the distances are long between our economic centres and those of neighbouring sister countries.

For all these reasons, efficient, low-cost and reliable transport and information hubs are critical for our economic prosperity.

The Dube TradePort also demonstrates how carefully designed infrastructure can stimulate economic growth and development.

Already, the construction phase has generated close to 20 000 jobs in each of the past two years.

Looking forward, this project has the potential to support much more employment as it links our producers to markets around the world. King Shaka International Airport is an important part of this TradePort project. The time has come to think of the airport as South Africa's secondary hub and not just a regional feeder airport. The airport bears the name of a great leader, innovator, military and political strategist who is respected and admired world-wide. For this reason, it has to conquer, expand and grow, like its namesake! And indications are that King Shaka is indeed growing as expected.

For the financial year that ended on 31 March 2010, the former Durban International Airport before relocation to La Mercy facilitated 4, 4 million passengers, according to the Airports Company of South Africa, (ACSA). The number of passengers increased to 4, 8 million during the 2011 financial year following the move to King Shaka International. Passenger traffic is growing at a healthy 3, 8 percent which compares favourably with the national average passenger traffic growth of 2,8 percent for the current financial

year. It is anticipated that the airport's passenger traffic for the 2012 financial year will surpass the five million mark.

We would like to see an increase in these numbers. Therefore, King Shaka International should aggressively market itself as a key entry point for international routes. It must attract various international carriers to Durban via additional bilateral air service agreements.

We also look to all our strategic airports to help us promote the African agenda by opening up new routes or expanding. In this regard, I am happy to announce that SA Express has identified Durban as a base in which to grow its footprint into the SADC region.

SA Express has concluded an agreement with the Dube TradePort Corporation, which will see a connection of King Shaka airport to the region, especially to Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique.

Upon success of these operations, SA Express will expand further into countries such as Namibia, Malawi, Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. SAA will also increase frequency to the region and the Mango airline will also serve the SADC route from Lanseria Airport in Johannesburg.

The SA Express expansion decision was taken after months of market research with critical stakeholders. Evidence showed that Durban is not only a leading tourism destination but also a dominant sporting and conference destination for the region.

Durban also has significant potential to develop air cargo flows between South Africa and its neighbouring regional markets. There can only be positive results from this strategic move. You will recall, ladies and gentlemen, that there is a major African Union move to develop a continental free trade zone.

Three regions alone - SADC, the East African Community and COMESA - bring together about 600 million people. Added to this, Africa provides a market of one billion people. The focus on our continent is therefore a step in the right direction in terms of the country's strategic goals.

Compatriots, Earlier this morning, I visited the Agrizone site which we are also officially opening today, and I am impressed by the developments. The focus on agriculture and food security in this airport city is a very progressive step. The advantage of the Agrizone is the use of limited growing space for the production of high volumes of high quality produce.

As this project demonstrates, there is real scope for growth and finding new markets for the produce, including exports. Other than improving food security, agriculture is an important source of exports.

More importantly, for too long, agriculture has been a neglected sector that was a symbol of division due to the contestation over land.

Colonial oppression and apartheid pushed our people into settlements far from economic opportunities, and then denied them even the land and water they needed to support themselves.

Very often it is the women who bear the brunt of poverty in harsh rural conditions. We are emphasising this point especially on this very important day for gender equality globally, as today is International Women's Day. Incidentally this year's theme is Empower Rural Women – End Hunger and Poverty, which challenges us to improve the quality of lives and participation of women in the agricultural value chain.

Compatriots,
Today we are celebrating success and progress.

Moments like this underscore the distance we have come since the founding President of the ANC, John Langalibalele Dube and his peers established the oldest liberation movement in the continent. Undoubtedly we have far to travel still, given the legacy of colonial oppression and apartheid. But we are getting there and we must celebrate our successes like this Trade Port launch today.

The Dube Trade Port has appropriately been named after a man who symbolises success. He expressed eloquently his vision for the regeneration of Africa. He said he was longing for that day:

"When the sunshine of a new civilization shall rise upon a land teeming with commerce, where upon every hill top shall be seen the school house and the church, when indeed Africa will be a nation among nations."

Each day we work to fulfill his wishes and those of all the founding fathers and mothers of this free, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa which is working towards inclusive growth and prosperity for all. When people who visit the Trade Port see Dr Dube's statue, they will be inspired to do better each day, to make South Africa a great country.

Compatriots,
Let me reiterate that we are here to launch this project as we have decided to invest in infrastructure in an unprecedented manner in this country.

To be able to build dams, power stations, bridges, roads, viable ports and railway lines and even new cities and towns, we need a single-minded approach towards a seamless infrastructure development programme over at least 20 to 30 years.

The global economic situation remains fragile.

We have to create opportunities locally and regionally in the continent and investing in infrastructure is the way to go.

We have carefully examined the successful efforts of other major developing country economies that have used infrastructure to stimulate growth and employment. They have succeeded in turning their economies around. As I said in the State of the Nation Address, we are beginning to write a new story about South Africa, the story of how, working together, we drove back unemployment and reduced economic inequality and poverty. The Dube TradePort is part of this new story.

Distinguished guests, Compatriots and friends,
It is my honour and privilege to declare the Dube TradePort officially open!

I thank you.