

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY CONSUL-GENERAL MOKUENA
AT HER OFFICIAL WELCOMING RECEPTION HELD ON 28
NOVEMBER 2008**

Programme Director,
Your Excellency, Amb Funde,
Minister Schneider,
Mr Driessen,
Consul-General Karatschewzew, Doyen of the Consular Corps,
Excellencies,
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Guten Abend!

I firstly wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for being here this evening. There is a popular t-shirt back home right now that says: “Africa is not for sissies”. But after my brief exposure to European winter, I will tell all back home that Europe is not for sissies either! So, once again, thank you to all for braving the cold to be here.

2010

Ladies and Gentlemen, when South Africa became the first African country to be awarded the well-deserved privilege of hosting the next FIFA World Cup in 2010, we chose as our theme the Sotho phrase “*Ke Nako*”, which means “The Time Has Come”.

Ke Nako. The time has come. Following Germany’s successful hosting of this event in 2006, FIFA’s decision to grant hosting honours to South Africa, reaffirms that *the time has come* for South Africa – and Africa – to take its place among highly advanced countries. Our readiness, ladies and gentlemen, has been confirmed by FIFA which has visited South Africa not less than five times this year alone. Plans are on track to host a phenomenal event in 2010! And I see it as my personal duty to convince everybody here

that *ke nako*, *the time has come* to start planning their vacations to South Africa for 2010. We promise you not only spectacular matches, incredible scenery and beauty, but also the mother of all parties!

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

The economic importance of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg cannot be overlooked.

In an effort to link these economically powerful states with South Africa, we will be guided by our Government's Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (or AsgiSA). AsgiSA suggests that the Consulate focuses on a few key economic sectors. The automotive industry, with all its spin-offs and related industries has been thriving in South Africa and we look forward to strengthening existing partnerships and establishing new ones. Being in almost the same time zone as Germany, we feel South Africa presents an excellent opportunity for business outsourcing or call centres. We will similarly also be focussing on the ICT sector. The challenges faced by the world relating to energy shortages presents an opportunity for interaction in the fields of energy-efficient technology and renewable energy, in particular wind and solar energy, and biofuel.

Mr Driessen, we have noted that Bavaria accounts for one sixth of German trade with South Africa. This is remarkable and not unexpected given the economic prosperity this state has generated over time. Our statistics show that Baden-Württemberg's total trade with South Africa increased by almost 40% when comparing 2007 and 2002. Bavaria's has increased by 32%. I know these two states are very competitive, so, Mr Driessen, it looks like Bavaria has some catching up to do! But let me assure you that we shall be here, whenever needed, to assist in closing this gap.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

But we cannot only talk about economics. We need to link economic benefits with skills development. On a person-to-person level, part of AsgiSA looks at ways of addressing the skills gap that exists within South Africa due to the legacy of apartheid. We will also be looking at ways of increasing scholarship and vocational training opportunities for South Africans by German-based companies.

We have also noted and appreciate the efforts of, among others, Tübingen and Würzburg Universities to reach out to South Africans. In this vein, we hope to boost partnerships between South African universities and universities across Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria.

PARTNERSHIPS

Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg have strategically partnered with the world's finest. As Mr Driessen pointed earlier, we can proudly say that Bavaria is twinned with the South African provinces of the Western Cape, which includes the popular city of Cape Town, and Gauteng, home to our economic heartland, Johannesburg.

Baden-Württemberg is in turn partnered with the province of Kwazulu/Natal, which includes the magical city of Durban.

Some of these partnerships have been in place for over a decade, and have delivered concrete results. For the efforts invested by these two states, we wish to extend our appreciation.

It will be our challenge as a Consulate to ensure that these partnerships are enhanced and that they are mutually beneficial. I am convinced, however, that there are many *more* provinces in South Africa that stand to benefit from relations with these two powerful states.

LANGUAGE EXCHANGES

Minister Schneider, I have been informed that you have a great admiration for Africa. You would therefore probably know that South Africans are a very vocal bunch. Most South Africans are multilingual. This is not unusual in a country like ours that has 11 official languages. Yet, despite our 11 languages, we fully understand that it is only through a grasp of the *German* language that we can reap all the benefits this great nation can offer South Africa. We will therefore be exploring ways of assisting interested parties in increasing the penetration of the German language into South African schools and other institutions. In so doing, we hope to correct the skewed ratio that sees more German students/scholars in South Africa than South Africans in Germany. We would also like to see larger cultural exchanges taking place between South Africa and Germany.

ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP:

Once again, honourable Minister, and our dear guests, as the largest economy of the African continent, South Africa sees its future as inextricably linked to that of Africa. We are fully committed to ensuring that South Africa is not an island of prosperity in a sea of poverty. Our efforts in the development of Africa are well-documented. As a member and current chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), we were excited by the recent launch of the SADC Free Trade Area

and firmly believe that these benefits need to be explored. We will also therefore be reaching out to academic, business and research partners to explore – through seminars and other fora - the many benefits the region of Southern Africa can offer. We believe that this holistic approach will help address some of the challenges the region currently faces. It will also help SADC reach some of the goals it has set for itself, including the formation of a common customs union and a common monetary area.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues and Friends, I could blow you away with statistics. I could tell you that South Africa's GDP has grown by 5% or more for the last three years. I could tell you that, in discussing the global financial crisis, our Finance Minister has already said that, while South Africa is not immune to this worldwide crisis, "our finances are in order, our banks are sound, and our investment plans are in place."

But this is not really the occasion to only speak about statistics and work. I am here to greet friends I have already made, and to make new ones among the consular corps and beyond.

I also challenge all of you to visit South Africa if you have not done so already. You'll never understand South Africa until you feel it. Until you taste it. Until you experience it. And don't wait. There is no time like the present. *Ke Nako*. The time has come!

MAMA AFRIKA:

On a personal note, may I just say that I was deeply moved by the passing of Miriam Makeba earlier this month. (I have also been informed that she performed in Munich a few years ago.) Mama Afrika was much loved by the nation. Her efforts at fighting

Apartheid are remembered and resonate with me right now. Without such efforts, I would not be standing here now representing a free and democratic South Africa.

Mama Afrika has given not only myself, but South Africans in general, the rhythm that you will see later! The music of Mama Africa therefore continues to speak to me and will continue to inspire me and make me want to celebrate her life. And it is in the spirit of celebration that I once again welcome you all this evening.

VOTE OF THANKS:

1. I wish to thank Mr Driessen and the IHK for providing us with this amazing venue.
2. Ambassador Funde, the warmth you bring to this reception is much appreciated.
3. Minister Schneider, thank you for your presence here this evening and for your encouraging words.
4. Thank you also to officials from the Consulate who have made tonight a reality.
5. Ladies and Gentlemen, without further ado, thank you to all of you, and please enjoy yourselves.

Let's eat and dance!

I thank you.