

Opening Remarks of MEC VR Shongwe Head of Delegation from Mpumalanga Province in South Africa with the Authorities of Mozambique held in Matola on the 07th June 2012.

Acknowledgement of Dignitaries

On behalf of the Provincial Government and the people of Mpumalanga in South Africa, I would like to extend warmest greetings to our Mozambiquen Counterparts.

I must start from the beginning and relate my gratitude and excitement on the hospitality you have given us since yesterday afternoon when we crossed the border into Mozambique.

As if that was not enough, you went further to host us to a beautiful Gala Dinner and I must again confess on behalf of my delegation that, indeed the food was delicious and we enjoyed every moment of it. It was a very heartwarming experience and it is orderly that I highlight our excitement right away.

His Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have come to Mozambique with our heads held high, knowing that we are visiting a country that has a deep rooted and heartwarming history with South Africa and Mpumalanga Province in particular.

The Mozambiquen people opened their doors to the South Africans when days were dark in their country. Our comrades were living and staying amongst the Mozamiquens and were well taken care of.

As a result of the warmth and hospitality the people of Mozambique displayed towards our freedom fighters who crossed the boarder, apartheid South Africa inflicted unimaginable pains to the people of Mozambique.

The former South African Defence Force crossed the border and committed horrendous crimes during the Matola raid and many other raids in which the lives of both Mozambiquens and South Africans were lost.

To add insult on the already injured people of Mozambique, the Head of Sate of Mozambique perished in the mountains of Libombo at Mbuzini, Mpumalanga Province in the South African soil.

Even though there has never been conclusive evidence on the death of President Samora Machel, it remains a mystery to this day and many suspect that it was the work of apartheid South Africa, the (Boers) in particular.

The President died coming from a meeting of the frontline states pursuing the liberation of African countries like Zimbabwe and South Africa.

This is our shared history and I am well aware that we are all privy to its details and I am not opening a lecture here. We got our freedom as South Africans and Mozambique remains a sovereign state under the capable leadership of Frelimo the party of President Samora Machel.

It is fulfilling that he may have lost his life in South Africa coming from a meeting which was looking into ways and means of freeing it from apartheid and we are today visiting the country to discuss amongst other things the death of the people of the two countries on our roads.

I am sure that his spirit is hovering above our heads today to ensure that as we close this meeting we will have made strides to ensure that going forward, our people are saved. He was fighting for a noble course and as such it should pains him when Africans are dying like flies on our roads, be it South Africans, Swazis, Zambians or Mozambiquens.

We are here to acknowledge and appreciate the fact that this two countries fought side by side in the trenches and FRELIMO and the ANC are today leading the two respective countries.

We have a moral and political obligation to ensure that we live by the ideals of all those who perish in the course of the struggle, fighting for freedom, justice, stability, peace and security.

We have lost too many precious lives during the struggle and the main purpose of our visit is to share with one another the new challenges that have manifested themselves.

You have protected and ensured our safety since we crossed the boarder into Mozambique. It is my intent and purpose that I also give every Citizen of Mozambique the kind of protection that is just and fair, as soon as they cross the boarder into South Africa and Mpumalanga Province in particular.

Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen, our people are dying on the roads.

We must stop this with immediate effect and we cannot do that as the authorities of Mpumalanga on our own. We need your cooperation and clear plans and strategies on how we will go about doing that.

We cannot fail on this one and I am sure that in as much as we find it extremely difficult and hard to explain as Authorities in South Africa, to families that their loved once are no more,

His Excellency Artur Verissimo must have been totally lost on how to report to authorities here that 18 lives have just perished in South Africa.

It is sad, it is painful, it must be stopped. We cannot take shortcuts over this one. We must find a ways and means to stop this, our roads are becoming death traps. We lose more and more people everyday.

Another issue that I would like us to look closely into is the issue of crime committed by South Africans to people of Mozambiquen origin and vise versa.

This shared history that I spoke about earlier should motivate us to coordinate our efforts in ensuring that both the people of Mozambique and South Africa appreciate and work towards sustaining it in honor of all our comrades whose blood was shed fighting for our liberation.

The liberation that was fought for so hard cannot be donated to criminals both in Mozambique and South Africa to start committing crime. President Samora Michel did not fight so that we have our freedom and start committing crimes against one another as Africans.

Our comrades who were poisoned, massacred and brutally killed, did not die so that we can be free to committee any kind of criminality against one another.

In my last engagement with the Consul of Mozambique, His Excellency Artur Verissimo raised an issue about Miss Albertina who was allegedly treated badly in Tonga because she was a woman and a foreigner which is totally unacceptable and this meeting seeks to ensure that such incidences do not occur again.

Our Border Management is also an area that requires serious attention and as a results there should be sharing of information and improved cooperation between the two countries to stop counterfeit goods which comes in bulk through our borders.

The issue of bribery in the two countries and our people becoming victims on the bases of number plate is also an area of concern which requires urgent attention.

Rhino poaching is another headache we are faced with and the Consul raised an issue that some of the people of Mozambiquen origin involved in this kinds of crime might be from the soldiers that were trained by apartheid South Africa to sustain the civil war in this country which lasted for 16 years.

The fact that they were trained in South Africa mean that they know the areas very well hence they are able to get away with it. We are here to say lets coordinate better and unite our efforts to fight this kind of crime.

In honor of our fallen heroes and heroines, I am appealing that we take this opportunity to look at the issues that will be raised in the presentations that we are going to make and carefully apply our minds over how best should we overcome them.

I will not go to the details and statistics because they will reveal themselves as we proceed.

We respect the sovereignty of the two countries and it is important that we all move from an understanding that our engagements will respect that fact. We engage to find solutions to issues that affects all of us irrespective of our citizenship and as authorities, we have a duty to discharge here.

It is on that not that I would like to thank the Authorities of the Republic of Mozambique for taking time to engage with us and I am certain that the Spirit of President Machel is with us because our presentations will paint a picture of a situation that defeats his ideals.

We must preserve the good that is happening and focus our efforts on all the things that seek to divert us from the noble ideals of the icons of Africa which include President Machel.

As I close, Vladimir Lenin when cautioning against dangers of rhetoric by opportunists, he wrote “ **there are, however, moments, when a question must be raised sharply and things given their names, the danger being that otherwise irreparable harm may be done**”

This is our moment to raise sharp questions and give things their names because our failer to do so has a potential to cause unprecedented harm to our people. They have seen enough and we are not gathered here to seek popularity nor to make rhetoric's, but to avert and break a vicious circle.

I thank you,

Muito Obrigado!!!!