

**Remarks by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal on the Occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Chief Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre, Durban, South Africa, 13 November 2022**

**Your Excellency, Domitien Ndayizeye, Former President of the Republic of Burundi**

**Your Excellency, Joyce Banda, Former President of the Republic of Malawi**

**Your Excellency, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa**

**Your Excellency, Prof Eddy Maloka, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the African Peer Review Mechanism**

**Excellencies and esteemed guests...**All protocol observed,

**Madame Mama Machel,**

On behalf of the Government of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal thank you for extending an invitation to me to join you this evening and the rest of the ACCORD family – which includes its Management, Staff, Associates, Political Advisors and partners like the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the African Union Peace and Security Council – to commemorate the Province's and indeed South Africa's committed partner for a better Africa in a better world – ACCORD!

Programme Director,

We gather here today to celebrate 30 years of ACCORD, in the same venue which hosted the inaugural summit of the AU – our continental body – which turns twenty this year!

It is fitting that this glorious occasion is held here, at Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre... a stone's throw away from these halls - at KwaDukuza - lies the mortal remains of this gallant fighter for peace, freedom, and dignity, Chief Albert Luthuli, the former President of the African National Congress (ANC), and the first African to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

I am saying it is fitting because, what Inkosi Luthuli represented, what he fought and died for, is the very *raison d'être* of ACCORD, whose 30 years of tireless efforts to contribute to peace in Africa is being celebrated.

In his acceptance speech, in December 1961 in Oslo, Norway, Inkosi said the following words:

*I can only pray, friends, that The All Mighty will give me the strength to make my humble contribution to the peaceful solution of South Africa's, and indeed, the world's problems, for it is not just South Africa, or Africa, there are other parts of the world where there are tensions, and those places are sorely in need of peace, as we are in my own continent, as we are in my own area of South Africa*

How Prophetic! although spoken 61 years ago, these words might as well have been read today, at a time when the world is yearning for peace...it is in so much need of individuals and institutions that must make their contributions to peaceful solutions to the world's challenges.

Therefore, we are gathered here today, to show our support, to express our appreciation, but most importantly, to give ACCORD strength to continue in its chosen path of ceaseless efforts to build peace in South Africa, Africa, and the world.

Programme Director,

Another of our great leaders, Former President Mandela, once said: “**may your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears**”.

This clarion call from our Madiba was answered by ACCORD...at a time when South Africa was engulfed in fear about the uncertainty of our negotiations and whether we would be able to achieve a democratic breakthrough, ACCORD's foresight gave us hope, as it offered its services in conflict resolution by training thousands of South Africans across the length and breadth of our country ...At that time, I cannot forget ACCORD's contributions in silencing the guns in the Township of Mpumalanga here in KwaZulu-Natal which had earned itself the name of 'little Beirut' given the sheer magnitude of the carnage and brutality of violence in that township.

Post our democratic breakthrough, we more than once called on ACCORD's services to support our government in many different challenges that we continue to face...

The list is endless..but I would like to highlight a few of ACCORD's decisive involvements on our efforts to build a socially cohesive, economically prosperous, and politically stable province...

During the unfortunate incidents of violence against foreigners that the Province experienced in 2015, ACCORD was called upon to serve as the Secretariat of the **Social Cohesion Committee and Reference Group on Migration and Community Integration**

which was Chaired by Judge Navi Pillay. The recommendations of this Committee in form some of the policy interventions that we are making as a Government to attend to these issues.

South Africa is very much still a country in transition, still grappling with its history of social engineering of opportunity, skill, and capital....this history continues to frustrate and offend Government efforts to transform communities so that all South Africans, regardless of race, gender, and creed, can enjoy the benefits that our province, and our country has to offer.

When we were then confronted with socio-economic tensions between different racial groups in the Province, we called on ACCORD to lead a ***Special Committee on Social Cohesion in KwaZulu-Natal*** chaired by the distinguished Prof Poulos Zulu. The recommendations of this Committee – which were presented in December 2015 – continue to guide our government-wide interventions to build a socially cohesive province.

Deeply embedded in the history of South Africa was a culture of politically inspired violence, and killings which unfortunately, was more prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal. Despite all our efforts as government, working with various social partners to defeat this culture, it reared its ugly head again in recent times. As government, we saw it fit to call on ACCORD – in particular its Founder & Executive Director, Adv Vasu Gounden, to be part of the ***Moerane Commission Investigating Political Killings in KZN***. The work of this Commission assisted government to uncover a lot of underlying causes, thus enhance the quality of the interventions we are already making to address this scourge.

We were also grateful to ACCORD when it coordinated an African Observer Mission made up of 20 distinguished African personalities led by former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo to monitor the elections in this province in 2009.

I can say without any shadow of a doubt that working with ACCORD as an independent and impartial organisation, has fortified our resolve as government to indeed ensure that our decisions reflect our hopes, and not our fears.

Programme Director,

The international relations policies of the South African Government commit all of us to work for a better Africa, in a better world.

It commits all tiers of government to advance a people-centred foreign policy, build bridges of peace and friendship, connect peoples, cities, and provinces. As the government

of KwaZulu-Natal, we are playing our part in this commitment through the many partnerships and twinning agreements we have with the various provinces and regions globally, and in our beloved continent in particular.

As we continue to live up to these commitments, especially that of strengthening Africa's voice in global politics and of advancing a Pan-African Agenda, I am convinced that victory is certain, because we would walk this path with ACCORD as one of our strong social partners.

Madame Mama Machel, Distinguished guests,

Allow me to conclude by saying congratulations ACCORD!

Thank you for putting the Province of KwaZulu-Natal on the South African Map! Thank you for putting South Africa on the African Map!

And working with your many other partners, thank you for putting on the Global Map our pan-Africanist and noble goal of *African Solutions to African Challenges!*

Thank you