



the dtic

Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Keynote Message of Support by Minister Parks Tau at the KwaZulu-Natal
Provincial Investment (KZN) Conference,**

International Convention Centre (ICC), Durban

11 November 2024

Programme Director,

Premier of the KwaZulu-Natal Province,

Deputy Mayor of eThekweni Metro Municipality, Cllr Zandile Myeni,

Deputy Minister Zuko Godlimpi,

MEC for Economic Development, Rev. Musa Zondi,

Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Executive Council,

Board Chair of Trade and Investment KZN, Mr Khanyisani Shandu

CEO of Trade and Investment KZN, Mr Sihle Ngcamu

Co-Chair of the eThekweni Presidential Working Group, Mr Michael Mabuyakhulu

Traditional Leaders present,

CEOs of State-Owned Enterprises both National and Provincial

Members of the Diplomatic Corps and International Organisations

Captains of Industry,

Esteemed Guests,

Introduction

Good Morning, and thank you to the Province of KwaZulu-Natal for the opportunity to address this KwaZulu-Natal Investment Conference. It's a privilege to acknowledge the significant role KZN plays in driving trade and investment into our economy.

This conference arrives at an opportune time for strengthening the collaboration between the public and private sectors as we work together to build an inclusive economy and generate jobs.

Since the Government of National Unity's (GNU) formation in June, we've seen dynamic engagement with investors, both local and international, resulting in a positive shift in perceptions toward South Africa's business environment. Investors now view our country with renewed optimism, which has bolstered business confidence and a willingness to invest here. We are pleased to see growing interest in KZN as a key part of South Africa's economic landscape.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are turning the tide.

Government's Targeted Interventions in KZN

We are proud of the support the dtic family has provided to businesses during the challenges of COVID-19, social unrest, and floods, as part of our economic recovery efforts in KZN. This financial and infrastructure support has been instrumental in helping businesses in the province rebuild swiftly. Stats SA confirms that KZN is now leading with a growth rate of 1.1% and remains second in GDP contribution, representing 16% of the national economy.

Through Operation Vulindlela, a task team under the Presidency and National Treasury, we are implementing structural reforms to improve the investment environment. In the next phase, we will work with municipalities to strengthen service delivery and support local capacity.

The Presidential eThekweni Working Group is addressing challenges that hinder investors in executing projects in this city. This task team focuses on key issues impacting the people of eThekweni, including service delivery, which requires strong collaboration between the public and private sectors.

In addition, work by the National Logistics Crisis Committee has led to a 73% reduction in vessel congestion at the Port of Durban since November 2023. The Freight Logistics Roadmap, recently approved by Cabinet, will allow for significant reform in the freight sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Trade and Investment Opportunities

Expanding trade and investment is critical for re-industrializing our economy. The dtic remains committed to enhancing our industrial base through sectoral masterplans, and we encourage businesses in KZN to scale up their investments while inviting new investors to take advantage of the province's potential.

Our focus is on positioning South Africa as a preferred investment destination and regional hub, encouraging companies to establish their operations here and grow their export reach. Many companies have committed to the Presidential Investment Drive, pledging significant investments in KZN that will contribute toward our national target of R2 trillion in investment over the medium term. We applaud those companies already on board.

With our enabling industrial policy, we're expanding Special Economic Zones (SEZs), promoting export-led growth, and harnessing the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). This year marked the start of preferential trading under the AfCFTA here in eThekweni. Companies located here also have strategic access to other trade instruments such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the European Free Trade Association-SACU Free Trade Area.

Honourable Premier,

Special Economic Zones and Industrial Parks

South Africa's SEZ Programme has been instrumental in attracting capital investment, with KwaZulu-Natal's Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone and Dube Trade Port offering world-class infrastructure. These zones, along with KZN's industrial parks, are pivotal for driving industrialization across the province.

Richards Bay hosts major investments, including Wilmar Industries' R1.5 billion edible oil refining plant, which supports agro-processing and logistics, and Nyanza Light Metals' R15 billion titanium dioxide pigment project. At Dube Trade Port SEZ, 57 investors, including Samsung and AIH-Mahindra, contribute to a wide range of manufacturing sectors.

I recently witnessed Toyota and Ojihara South Africa break ground on a R1.2 billion automotive investment, advancing the South African Automotive Masterplan's localization goals.

In an attempt to reverse the impact of Apartheid spatial planning, it seems as if we threw the baby out with the bathwater when it came to Industrial Parks. We are hence embarking on a targeted program of refurbishing our Industrial Parks so that they may play the important functions of creating jobs and stimulating local economic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Conclusion

These investments highlight the impact of strong public-private partnerships and underscore the successes possible through our collaborative efforts. To grow these achievements, we need a unified approach across all levels of government to support economic growth.

I congratulate KZN on hosting this conference and encourage all of you to engage in productive discussions that will help to improve the investment climate and attract

more opportunities to the province and South Africa. Together, we can forge a path toward shared success, building a resilient economy that benefits all our people.

The dtic family looks forward to supporting you as we continue this journey of economic development together.

I Thank you!