

Speech and Message by Deputy Mayor of eThekweni Metro on Rhino Poaching at the occasion of One Land Love It – OLLI Frontier Rhino Ride 2017

Programme Director,

Honoured Guests,

Media present,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Rhino poaching does not only threaten our heritage but also threatens our security as a country and as a people, a matter that threatens our tourism industry and the jobs that we have in our Game Parks and surrounding areas.

As eThekweni Metro we view this matter as a matter of national importance that speaks to the conservation and protection of our heritage including rhino poaching.

Just to take you back a bit, in the 1895 there were 50 Rhinos in South Africa, the Continent and the World. Through our good conservation practices we have increased the rhino population to over 25 000 in Africa and all over the world. Of the 25 000 world rhino population, over 21 000 are found here in our country which accounts for more than 90% of the continent and world rhino population (Survey 2012). This is a testimony to our conservation efforts over the years, conservation efforts that have not only served our country and our continent but efforts that have served the entire world community. We must thank our conservation pioneers for this sterling work.

As the governing party we have always stated in our policy documents such as "Ready to Govern".

It is this noble goal of the protection and conservation of the environment that has also found concrete expression in our Constitution, which the African National Congress was a major sponsor of, which states that "**all South Africans have a constitutional right to an environment that is not harmful to their health, well-being, and**

to have the environment protected for the benefit of the present and future generations".

We welcome the progress that has been made by our government and society in dealing with Rhino Poaching. The awareness has made it difficult for syndicates to walk freely. As this this city, we are grateful to this initiative by the OLLI FRONTIER RHINO RIDE.

According to Department for Environmental Affairs (DEA led by Minister Edna Molewa, the rhino poaching statistics for the first half of 2017, shows a slight decrease compared with the same period last year. But regional spikes in areas like KwaZulu-Natal which is where we are today and an overall rise in poaching attempts has dampened any cause for celebration – and given rise to many more questions about the state of the poaching crisis beyond the headlines.

We must hold hands together and protect our environment for present and future generations.

We want to see more people who are like Wayne Bolton of the One Land Love It Expedition. I am told that Wayne will cover 2000kms from Nelson Mandela Bay through the Zulu Kingdom to the Mozambique Border, paying tribute to the role that these parks are playing in conserving our rhino and other species. We wish him luck what is important is the message and funds that he is raising towards a just and noble cause for our environment.

As the new leadership of this city of Durban, we want to reiterate the message that says: Extinction cannot be our legacy!

Stop Rhino Poaching Now! Let's save these species for future and present generations. Let us do it now