



**GOPIO DINNER – MESSAGE FROM MAYOR OF ETHEKWINI,
CLLR ZANDILE GUMEDE**

20 May 2017, Coastlands Hotel

Programme Director,

Bayede Hlangalomhlabathi, His Majesty King kaDinizulu

Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Willies Mchunu

Prime Minister of India,

MECs Present,

The local coordinator, Mr Ishwa Mabheka Zulu,

Delegates,

Councillors,

Media

Ladies and gentlemen,

All protocol observed,

Sanibonani,

I would like to take this opportunity and welcome you to this wonderful city of ours. We are pleased to have international guests and those coming from outside this province. We hope and wish that this gathering will be of great success. We would like to thank you for choosing this city for this gathering.

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) is network of people of Indian origin. GOPIO was founded at the First Global Convention of People of Indian Origin in New York in 1989. The initial

thrust of GOPIO was fighting human rights violation of people of Indian origin.

This organisation has similar values like those of the organisation that liberated us, the African National Congress. In fact its objectives are in line with our world renowned constitution. For many years, with Natal Indian Congress and other liberation organisation, the ANC has fought side by side with the Indian people against the violation of human rights. This is the battle we won in 1994, when we voted for the first time for a democratic government. The apartheid government tried so much to divide our people by threatening Indians and Africans differently. It wanted to plant the seeds of hate but they were defeated. They were defeated by president of the Natal Indian Congress, Dr Yusuf Dadoo and the then President of the ANC, Dr Xuma.

The unity of Indians and Africans is important for the people of South Africa and Durban. We must always remember that those who oppressed us are still planning on how to win back the power. They want to see suffering. This year our message is on Unity, we are deepening unity and social cohesion in society. Durban must lead in social cohesion and unity.

The Indian population makes Durban unique city in South Africa. In fact if you want to understand the true meaning of why we are called a rainbow nation, you must be a resident of Durban. The influence of Indians in Durban has been significant, bringing with them a variety of cuisine, culture and religion.

Programme Director,

In closing, yesterday I had a pleasure of re-launching a Non-Profit organisation known as Light of Ubuntu. It was known as Mama Zandile Foundation when we started it in 2015. We will be using it to promote the spirit of Ubuntu. The spirit of sharing and caring for one another. It will be used as a platform for giving and reaching out to the poor.

I believe that we need to all contribute towards change in South Africa. President Jacob Zuma called on all of us to work together in order to achieve more. Government cannot do it alone. I call on of you gathered here to invest in humanity with your time and money.

With those few words, I would like to call on all of us to unite. Unity of black and whites in this country is what will move this country forward. We must push for unity agenda. We are one nation – a nation of Nelson Mandela and President Oliver Tambo.