

## **Address at the Opening of the Western Cape Municipal Police Service Training Facility**

Philippi, Cape Town, 12 September 2001

Premier Gerald Morkel,  
Members of the Metropolitan Council,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Yesterday, a terrible tragedy befell the people of the United States as acts of terror claimed the lives of many people and destroyed a number of important buildings. Both our government and people condemn these repugnant and indiscriminate acts of murder with all the force at their command.

We take advantage of this opportunity to reiterate our deep-felt sympathy to the bereaved and to the government and people of the United States at this unprecedented moment of crisis and grief which touches all decent human beings everywhere in the world.

We are confident that those responsible for the crimes committed yesterday will be brought to book. We stand ready to extend such humanitarian assistance as we may be requested to extend. This is the least we can do.

As an expression of our solidarity with the innocent people who lost their lives and suffering injury and, once more, to convey our condolences, I request that we all stand and observe a moment of silence.

Master of Ceremonies:

I am pleased to be here at the opening of the Western Cape Municipal Police Service Training Facility in Philippi.

This launch demonstrates that concrete progress is being made to put in place structures that will contribute to the wellbeing and safety of the people of the Western Cape and to our nation as a whole.

Clearly, this is a step in the right direction in ensuring safety and security in our municipalities and in creating a truly people-centred society and a caring community that we speak about a great deal.

Indeed, we must see this development as part of the continuing process of improving the quality of life of each and every citizen in our new democracy. We have to ensure that especially those who are vulnerable in our society, every young person, every woman, every child and every mature citizen, can walk through the streets of their towns without fear and with pride and confidence in themselves and the future.

The stark reality we have to confront is that we have all inherited a very violent society. Too many people in our country die and are incapacitated through acts of violence. These include road accidents, domestic violence, crime, social violence especially among the poor and occupational deaths and injuries.

Much of this is caused by an uncaring attitude towards other human beings and a deep-seated disrespect for the very sanctity of life itself. It is driven by a social psychology that tells many people that all that matters is the gratification of the individual, regardless of what happens to the next person.

As we continue the struggle to give birth to a new South Africa, it is vitally important that we also focus on ensuring the success of what has been described as the RDP of the soul.

When we say that our country must truly belong to all who live in it, we must be conscious of the fact that any sense of belonging must come, in part, from a sense of safety and security enjoyed by all our people.

The role of our municipal police must be to prevent crime and to ensure the enforcement of traffic and municipal law. In other words, we must ensure proper and effective policing at grassroots level so as to create the necessary conditions for the upliftment and sustained development of all communities.

High standards of policing will have to be created and maintained, resulting in the rendering of a consistent and committed service to those who need it most.

The involvement of the various spheres of government in the formation of Municipal Police Services is indicative of the seriousness with which government views its obligation to eradicate and prevent crime and the understanding that this can only be achieved through a united and integrated approach.

Aside from the necessary increase in the numbers of police personnel, there must also be co-operation between the South African Police Service and the Metropolitan Councils to expedite the establishment of Municipal Police Services.

Through the integration of the three tiers of our system of co-operative governance, we are working to ensure that all our representatives work together at local, provincial and national level to improve the lives of our people.

Our strengthening of government at the local level must mean that our local representatives work together with the people so that everyone in this city works together as one to improve the quality of life and treat safety and security as an important part of civic duty.

For a municipality to establish a municipal police force that will protect its citizens for decades to come and not only at the present time requires visionary and creative leadership, sound management and the willingness to make brave and tough decisions in the interests of the people.

Our municipal police must be men and women of integrity, who are respectful of and devoted to the people. We need selfless men and women who will act in a professional manner, convinced that their life's work must be to serve the people.

The Municipal Police will also have to be very vigilant to ensure that it does not harbour within its ranks people who are corrupt, who will exploit their uniforms to commit crime.

The challenge to our police on parade today is:

- to ensure that every child in this community can walk to school and return home in safety;
- to ensure that every woman walks the street without fear of rape or any other violent crime;
- to ensure that our children, our families are no longer victims of abuse or crime within their own homes;
- to ensure that our youth are not left alone with idle hands and drawn into the underworld of gangsters and drugs.

Clearly, the measure of your success will be based on how closely you interact with the community and earn its respect through your actions. Your task in policing the community must also be to work with community organisations and local government structures in organising sporting and cultural activities for the youth. This broader social function is not simply a task of our elected public representatives but also the responsibility of the police as they strive to help create a better life for all.

Similarly, the ordinary people of our communities must also see it as their civic duty to promote safety and security within their neighbourhoods. We must do this, not through resort to vigilantism, but by cooperating and working together with the police services.

In civic and community organisations, there must be safety and security programmes as part of their day to day activities that help to prevent crime. It is also the responsibility of the community to make sure that criminals are not given hiding places, but exposed for their criminal activities.

Here in Philippi, our people are also faced with great hardships and suffering as a result of poverty, homelessness and joblessness and the recent floods have added to this dire situation by rendering large numbers of people on the Cape Flats homeless.

Government continues to provide assistance to the flood victims. But clearly more must be done to build houses and to ensure that homelessness does not continue to impose suffering on millions of South Africans. Already two areas have been identified in the Western Cape, namely Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain, as part of the urban renewal programme.

I think it is significant for us here today that this facility is situated in the heart of one of these areas and in close proximity to the other. This site has the potential not only to create conditions of safety and security, but also to stimulate the socio-economic growth of the entire area, so that Philippi becomes a beacon of hope for the people of this city and of this province.

I believe that a new era can begin right here and now for the people of Philippi, of the city of Cape Town and of the Western Cape as a whole.

It is an era that must be characterised by community support for municipal policing, community participation in creating the conditions for an end to crime and poverty, and the success of the strategic partnership between the government, the municipal police and the people.

All this constitutes the deepening of our democracy and the realisation of the dream of our cities as vibrant, flourishing places in which young people can learn and grow and prosper. This signifies a movement forward into the future in which our lives and livelihoods are not determined by the inhumane legacy of apartheid.

We must work together as agents of change to eradicate crime and poverty, to break down all the barriers of the past and to transform this legacy of separate areas, this scarred landscape, into a united municipality and country bound together by an undivided future.

Almost twenty years ago, Jeremy Cronin, now Member of Parliament, wrote the following poem about Cape Town while he was imprisoned as a fighter for freedom:

Faraway city, there  
with salt in its stones,  
under its windswept doek,

There in our Cape Town where  
they're smashing down homes  
of the hungry, labouring people  
will you wait for me, my love?

In that most beautiful  
desolate city of my heart

where if staying on were passive  
life wouldn't be what it is.

Not least for those rebuilding  
yet against their demolished homes  
with bits of plastic, port jackson saplings,  
anything to hand - unshakeably

Defiant, frightened, broken,  
and unbreakable are the people of our city.  
Will you wait for me, my love?

Clearly, in this rainy and windswept, yet beautiful city, the people cannot remain homeless and helpless, frightened by crime, broken by lives of suffering.

The time must come when we no longer have makeshift houses easily demolished by wind or rain, but solid structures.

Certainly, the Cape Town we wish to build must be a beautiful city of an unbreakable, resilient and united people, where all have homes and where love for one's brother and sister prevails, a caring community for the good of all.

I have been told that the Western Cape and this city are resolved to place the first Municipal Police Officers on the streets of this city by December 2001, before the festive season starts.

With a great deal of determination and hard work this is indeed possible.

Let us have the courage of our conviction to realise our dreams so that this place, this city is indeed the city of our hearts.

On behalf of the government, I thank you for your commitment to fight against crime and wish you success in the important work you will be doing.

May this academy produce many of the committed municipal police of the future and set an example to us all.

I now declare the 'Philippi Academy' officially open.

I thank you.