

**Speech by the Executive Mayor during the Launch of District Anti-Crime Strategy,
Welkom, 31 July 2007**

Programme Director

MEC for Safety and Security

Executive Mayor/Mayors

Speakers

My Fellow Councilors

Representatives from Business

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's strategy is the culmination of a journey of change both for progressive politics and for the district. It marks the beginning of the district commitment to social consensus on safety and security. This will attempt to strengthen our approach towards being proactive than reactive. We want to join those communities that have come out strongly to rid their areas of criminal activities.

The 1994 saw a huge breakthrough in terms of freedom of expression, of lifestyle, of the individual's right to live their own personal life in the way they choose. It was the beginning of a consensus against discrimination, in favour of women's equality, and the end of any sense of respectability in racism.

It was John Stuart Mill who articulated the modern concept that with freedom comes responsibility. But somehow people abuse freedom thinking that one can do anything that one wishes to do and infringe on another's rights.

Law and order policy in the past focused on defending the minority regime whose intention was to fight against people's liberation. Our country has now moved from the notion of protecting the minorities. Offenders are dealt with and protect the innocent, but also need to understand the social causes of criminality. We understand the underlying causes of criminality which the government needs to deal with unapologetically. But I hope our people have had the opportunity to witness the commitment the government has displayed in dealing with social ills our government inherited from the past.

Here, now, today, people have had enough of this justification of the social ills of the past and thus would want to see a change. People want rules, order and proper behaviour. They know there is such a thing as society. They want a society of respect. They want a society of responsibility. They want a community where the decent law-abiding majority is in charge; where those that play by the rules do well; and those that don't, get punished.

First, we seek to revive community policing. People want a strong organised uniformed presence back on the streets. And the local community itself wants a say in how they are policed. They want to be in charge.

Secondly, we must give local communities and police the powers they need to enforce respect on the street.

We need the public to get engaged. But our people have already complied with the notion of community policing by being involved in Community Policing Forums (CPFs). Although people felt overpowered by crime, they should have the strength to act against it. Lets take cue and learn from the communities that had already taken a stance in the fight against crime.

It is also important to involve influential people in our programmes to fight crime. We should promote faith-based crime prevention, through which pastors and faith-based groups reach out to troubled youth, and steer them away from crime, drugs, and gangs.

Amongst other programmes that are key is to prevent crime from happening through a comprehensive approach that create jobs and economic development in poverty stricken areas, and alternatives to crime and drugs such as quality after-school care.

Leaders of civil society, religious communities and business sectors are also keen to make a constructive contribution to the fight against crime. We therefore appeal to them to assist the government to reduce crime.

Basically, the intention seeks to revitalise and strengthen community policing forums (CPFs), mobilise civil society and stakeholders and people of all backgrounds to act in support and in partnership with the government to fight crime. This is drawn from the book of life "Freedom Charter" which states that 'All people shall have the right to live where they choose, be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort'.

We [also] encourage leaders in community-based organizations to provide support to CPFs.

Lets also attempt to strengthen bonds of trust between the community and the police. This can only be achieved by improving the way in which policing is experienced by communities and the quality of the service they receive.

Programme Director, Let us welcome this initiative and the MEC for gracing this occasion. I wish to call upon everyone of us to respect the spirit and intention of this document. Our district will reap good benefits by acceding to the call.

I thank you.