

- Media Release -

Business Against Crime South Africa on the President's Anti-Unusual Address



For Immediate Release: Friday, 08 February 2008

Business Against Crime South Africa agrees with the President in relation to the Apex Priorities mentioned in the speech – it must be “Business Unusual” as we go forward into the next term. This is very much aligned to the Government / Business Step Change Initiative which was approved by Cabinet over a year ago in the need for an intensified fight against crime.

Crime is a top Apex priority for operationalisation in the country, and the President's reference to the need to revamp the Criminal Justice System is a step that Sipiwe Nzimande, CEO of Business Against Crime South Africa, sees as critical. He says:

“Yesterday, we were involved in the Joint Committee briefing to the Chief Justice of the Justice Service Commission and the Judges President, which discussed issues of sentencing, bail, and trials which lead to appropriate convictions and sentences being meted out to offenders swiftly”.

The President has acknowledged that society believes that we are at a crossroads at this particular moment in our history, where, the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and Government's capacity to defend democratic rights is in question, while our National Commissioner is on leave and our National Director of Public Prosecutions has been suspended.

As Business Against Crime South Africa, we were heartened to hear that the President has provided the nation with a categorical and renewed commitment to ensuring that Government meets its constitutional mandate to protect citizens against crime by intensifying the fight against crime and by stepping up the initiative to improve the management and efficiency of the law enforcement agencies.

We agree that in the fight against crime, a systematic and holistic approach is needed, where initiatives already under way are integrated in such a way as to be complementary and sustainable.

We look forward to the announcements of the JCPS Cluster next week, where Business Against Crime South Africa will continue to play an active role in providing strategic thought leadership and support to Government in implementing the cluster's programme. The President's speech has given us strong direction in the need for a modernized, efficient and transformed Criminal Justice System reliant on a new integrated management structure, from national to local level, incorporating such bodies as the Legal Aid Board and Community Policing / Safety Forums.

The new system that is being proposed and, in particular the emphasis on the role of Community Safety Forums, is an integral part of the Mobilising Society work group of Government and Business Against Crime South Africa and part of the Step Change Initiative.

We are pleased that issues of safety are being devolved to local community level so that communities become actively engaged in reporting crimes and in taking ownership for their own safety and security. Local communities have a role to play in creating disabling environments for crime.

The President's call for the creation of a caring society is further supported by his emphasis on socio-economic inclusion in the interests of a better life for all.

Business Against Crime South Africa supports comments by the President relating to the setting of performance contracts and the monitoring of targets relative to officials in the public sector. We anticipate that the new proposed structure would be in the forefront of these changes.

The emphasis on enhancing the capacity of Government to fight organized crime, to promote a Victim's Charter, to transform the judiciary and the magistrate's courts, to improve border controls and to deal effectively with repeat offenders, are initiatives we will continue to work closely with in Government's Security Cluster through the provision of resources, skills, expertise and / or time, wherever possible.



"The location of the Directorate of Special Operations (DSO) and the legislation to urgently address this issue is welcomed", said Sipiwe Nzimande.

"We believe it is important that the current levels of uncertainty with regard to this structure needs to be dealt with decisively in order to end low morale, while not compromising the fight against organized crime".

The President has been frank in his identification of the challenges ahead. Business Against Crime South Africa commends the President for his balanced approach and for the breath of fresh air that conveyed a commitment to tackle service delivery issues and poverty through an APEX plan of action focusing on 24 priorities. We reiterate the need, alongside the President, for strong and sustained partnerships that will assist us to find solutions together to challenges and problems which we believe are not insurmountable.

Business Against Crime South Africa will continue to support Government in turning the tide against crime. Only when South Africa is safe and secure for all will we enjoy the 'best of times'. This vision gives us hope and we have heard and support the rallying call of the President to achieve this through collective action.

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Note to the Editor:

Business Against Crime South Africa was formed in 1996 at the request of former President Mandela for business to play a pivotal role in supporting Government on crime fighting initiatives, through harnessing business resources and skills.

Business Against Crime South Africa is not a law enforcing agency or lobby group. It is a Section 21, not-for-profit organisation mandated to support Government in the fight against crime.

Since 2006, Business Against Crime South Africa has been working with Government to implement the Step Change Initiative which falls under the governance of the Anti-Crime Leadership Forum, with representation at Ministerial and CEO level on the side of the JCPS Cluster and business, established to provide structure to the need to tackle crime in the country as a matter of urgency.

The organisation is primarily funded by the business sector, with a national and provincial footprint and its national office in Johannesburg, Gauteng.

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