

SAIA DONATES OVER R1.7 MILLION TO COMBAT CRIME

Address by Dr Graham Wright: CEO of Business Against Crime South Africa

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Johannesburg – Wanderers Club, Illovo

INTRODUCTION

Chairperson of SAIA, Mr Ronnie Napier, Mr Barry Scott, Chief Executive of SAIA, Ms Refilwe Moletsane, SAIA Deputy Executive, SAIA representatives, business leaders, distinguished guests, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank SAIA, its Board and all its members, for continuing to be staunch supporters of Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA). Since 2002, SAIA has directed more than R 10 million to the fight against crime.

Today's contribution to the fight against crime represents the 8th consecutive year of support from the organisation. This year's donation is significant in not being borne by SAIA's motor insurance members alone, but by all of SAIA's members who wish to see crime addressed in a sustainable manner.

As CEO of BACSA, I extend on behalf of the organisation our deep thanks to SAIA for being a stalwart in the fight against crime.

As Ronnie Napier has highlighted, motor vehicle crime has reduced significantly over the years with the result that the short-term insurance industry is no longer as gravely affected by this type of crime, as, for example, accident-related claims. Ronnie Napier has quoted the shocking figure of approximately 70% of claims to the short-term insurance being accident-related. The needless loss of life and property in South Africa due to crime and a dangerously non-compliant society remain pressing challenges for the country. Both SAIA and BACSA, over the last years have recognised this and have as a result worked in partnership over the years to improve the situation.

Initiatives undertaken to prevent crime are important as they serve as a springboard for efforts aimed at reducing the high accident rates. We believe that systemic improvements are necessary, in addition to addressing the South Africa's prevailing culture of non-compliance.

BACSA works not so much as an implementing partner but as a strategic facilitator and catalyst for change. The organisation is currently in the process of signing a structured MOU with Government, and in particular the Ministry of Police, to provide the framework and mandate for





the organisation going forward. The work to address the trio crimes, that is to say business robberies, house robberies and hijackings, continues. There are currently promising indications that this work is beginning to reap dividends, as house robberies and hijackings, in particular, appear to be stabilising.

Recent Developments and Successes in the Fight Against Crime

I would like to take a moment to share with you some of the recent results which help to underscore the fact that where there is concerted effort and partnership, crime is brought under control.

The challenge nonetheless remains to ensure that such results are sustained and shared among more vulnerable sectors. This is one of the reasons why SAIA's continued support is so important. Given the highly dynamic and evolving nature of crime in South Africa, without such support, gains made risk being reversed.

The Minister of Police in his budget vote last week (i.e., on the 6th of May) provided a positive briefing in terms of the crack down on organised crime and progress in arresting 28 of some of the country's top 50 criminals.

In relation to organised crime, the Minister highlighted that the recently established Directorate of Priority Crime Investigations (DPCI), otherwise known as the Hawks, under the leadership of General Dramat had made 3 850 arrests and secured 573 convictions. In relation to commercial crimes, 8 186 arrests had been made and 4 960 convictions secured. Other successes have included the closing down of illicit drug labs with an estimated value of well over R 1 billion. These results are heartening.

In addition, the Minister highlighted that Crime Intelligence would be rejuvenated by ensuring that visible policing would assist to provide crime intelligence officials with needed information for the identification of trends from the 'coal-face'.

Results as reported by the Minister last week in relation to Cash-In-Transits, armed robberies, house robberies/break-ins, business robberies, including mall robberies, were all down over the festive season from December 2009.

Aggravated robbery, car-jacking, as well as the theft of motor vehicles were also down in comparison to last year's festive season. The Minister attributed this to higher police visibility, focused, intelligence-led approaches, partnerships, planning and effective strategies.





BACSA adds to this the determination of the leadership within the Department of Police to address crime with renewed vigour and determination.

This commitment has been progressively supported by addressing resource constraints in a number of areas, building the morale of the police, rooting out corruption and putting in place plans to align the work of the law enforcement agencies and create a unified police force in the coming years.

The number of detectives from last year has increased by 22.4% for levels 1-7. The Minister reported last week that detective capacity comprised of some 22 175 detectives, with 2 153 of this number still completing training, had improved and was geared towards Criminal Justice System outcomes.

SAIA and its members, having previously supported detective training in Gauteng, will appreciate the importance of these increases for successful investigations and convictions.

The Minister reported that targets for cases referred to court (43.16%) was exceeded for contact crimes, property-related crimes, other serious crimes and crimes dependent on police detection. The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) also decreased its backlog by 14% in the 2009/2010 financial year, though much still needs to be done here.

In addition to the above, the firearm amnesty period, which ran from 11 January 2010 to 11 April 2010, brought in over 32,000 unused, obsolete and/or redundant firearms, with 53% of this number being voluntarily surrendered.

Search and seizure operations throughout the country during this period, and since, continue to address the proliferation of firearms in the country.

BACSA supported the amnesty from the perspective of responsible firearm ownership and formed part of national and provincial monitoring and evaluation teams at the level of civilian involvement and oversight.

The Minister has called 2010 a year of action with other areas of concern and address being legislation to give teeth to the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD), as well as legislation to support the smooth operation of the Civilian Secretariat for Police. Legislation on the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) is also anticipated this year.

Human resource capacity within the police currently stands at 190 283. In 2010/2011, this is anticipated to grow to 195 310. By international standards, the ratio of police officers to civilians is a positive one. However, the challenge of ensuring that South Africans are safe and *feel* safe





requires not just the efforts of the police, but Government working together with business, communities and others on a sustainable basis.

The Value and Importance of Partnerships

Organisations such as SAIA have understood this.

Last year, SAIA helped to launch in conjunction with BACSA an Alcohol-Testing Centre in Randburg. After a brief hiatus around the country due to a certification issue in relation to the use of the drager machines, the Randburg Centre continues to function in support of the JMPD.

The law enforcement agencies are aided by this technology as it assists them to efficiently test and charge drivers who have violated road traffic laws by driving under the influence. It is our hope that this centre and others around the country will help to instill a culture of compliance among South African citizens. The loss of life on our roads at an average of 36 a day is at once appalling and needless.

As Ronnie Napier has highlighted, it is unacceptable that a high number of accidents are preceded by one or more traffic offences. It is incumbent upon us to do what we can to change this.

I am confident that our efforts, which are enhanced by good corporate citizens such as SAIA working in partnership with us and building capacity of their own through their recently established the South African Insurance Crime Bureau (SAICB), will assist to progressively address these challenges and sustain positive outcomes.

BACSA is committed to working closely with Government and business partners at this time of renewal, re-commitment and action.

Concluding Remarks and Thanks

Our work with business associations, including SAIA, is ongoing.

The current emphasis remains on the sharing of information and assisting the business community to proactively ensure that its own 'house is in order'.

To this end, the organisation met recently with business associations affected by crime to discuss ongoing areas of partnership and intervention.

SAIA remains an important stakeholder within such business forums.





It is our hope that our joint efforts, effectively co-ordinated from one industry to another will serve to close down the space for criminals to illicitly trade in goods; steal cables disrupting needed services in communities; rob; murder; rape; hijack; de-fraud the country, businesses and individuals, and disrupt the lives of law-abiding citizens.

We believe that a holistic approach which relies on partnerships will help us to make the dent in crime and turn-around a general culture of non-compliance within the country. We all have a role to play on this front in support of Government efforts which are heartening.

SAIA, thank you for this contribution and for working with us to realise the vision of a South Africa in which people are safe and *feel* safe, progressively.

Thank you

Dr Graham Wright

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