



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Pretoria

Dr. Horst Freitag

Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany

—
Esteemed mayors of the cities of Oldenburg and Buffalo City and your respective delegations,

representatives from the business community and civil society,

distinguished guests,

Thank you very much for your kind invitation to this year's "Grünkohlessen" – the Kale Dinner - in East London. I regret not being able to join you in person but my thoughts are with you....and the delicious food being served tonight.

Honourable Mayor Gerd Schwandner, I warmly welcome you and your delegation from Oldenburg to South Africa. His worship, Mayor Zukiswa Ncitha, I send my best regards to you and all the guests of this auspicious event.

2014 is a very special year for both our countries. South Africa celebrates 20 years of democracy and Germany celebrates 25 years Fall of the Berlin Wall. During his visit to Germany in 1996, President Nelson Mandela emphasized that South Africa and Germany shared and peacefully shaped a significant moment in history. Today, South Africa and Germany share a rich, vibrant and comprehensive partnership and enjoy a special bond of friendship that embraces the political, economic, cultural and social spheres

The partnership between Lower Saxony and the Eastern Cape is a very good example of our collaboration on a provincial level. It reaches back to 1995 focusing on vocational training in the fields of automotive, care workers for people suffering from HIV/AIDS, banking, production of handicraft and housing construction. The Land of Lower Saxony supports numerous projects which are implemented in the Eastern Cape and in Lower Saxony together with South African Partners, ranging from renewable energies to sports, police collaboration, the voluntary service "weltwärts", university collaboration and vocational training.

And I cannot think of a better representative of Lower Saxony than Mr. Lars Koenig. You deserve a wealth of credit for the accomplishments that have been achieved so far. Thank you for your support.

All politics is local. Our partnership would not function without the strong support of our communities. In this regard the city of Oldenburg stands out as an example of best practice. It is the flagship city of Lower Saxony's relations to South Africa just as Buffalo City is the standard bearer for Eastern Cape. Mayors Gerd Schwandner and Zukiswa Ncitha, your professional commitment and personal dedication are most impressive and highly appreciated. They are immensely important because it is the local cooperation between your communities which benefits people directly. Your cooperation is therefore at the heart of our partnership. Thank you and congratulations to you and all the participating stakeholders.

Traditionally, the "Grünkohlessen" - the Kale Dinner - reaches its climax in the proclamation of the "Kohlkönig" -the "cabbage king".

Various methods are used to award this royal title. Either the number of portions consumed is added up or the weight of the participants before and after the meal is measured. I will have to leave that up to you tonight. Whoever is proclaimed "Kohlkönig" is singled out as the last to leave the table. And he is responsible for organizing next year's "Grünkohlessen", which I hope I will be able to attend.

With warm regards

Horst Freitag