

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER CONNIE SEPTEMBER AT THE BLACK
CONVEYANCERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GALA DINNER AT THE
HILTON HOTEL IN DURBAN**

08 NOVEMBER 2013

Programme Director;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening. I am pleased that professionals such as yourselves, operating in a highly pressured environment have the opportunity to celebrate achievements, network and have time to reflect on your work and your contribution to the creation of a prosperous South Africa. (Well wishes for a successful AGM)

I noticed the press release mentioned that this event will draw together leaders in the property industry, government officials, property practitioners and the banking sector; in fact I might just decide to have that long overdue meeting with the banking sector after the main course!

Ladies and gentlemen, as we prepare to celebrate twenty years of our country's democracy in 2014, we do so with a sense of humility, knowing that we have, indeed come a long way but much more needs to be done.

A recurring theme in our country's narrative is the fact that we have a skills gap and a serious challenge of unemployment. Both these factors will impact on your sector. The recently released Goldman Sachs report on the review of the twenty years of our democracy reiterates the national Development Plan's call for a special focus on skills.

To do this, I quote that it is said we need a "Team South Africa" approach. I know that this gathering here definitely is an integral part of that team.

Ladies and gentlemen, my first call this evening to everyone gathered here is therefore a plea to contribute to the education and skills training of young people to become attorneys and conveyancers. I request that this organization actively encourages and assists young people through bursaries, internships and mentorship programmes.

Government's job is to create an enabling environment in which everyone, including professionals like yourselves can operate in. Admittedly, our department has not been very active in initiating legislation.

We do have one piece of legislation about to be presented to Cabinet that would have an effect on the retail housing sector. So, we would depend on organizations like the Black Conveyancers' Association to direct us to policy gaps that might exist.

The report I previously referred to does indicate difficulties regarding large sectors of our communities who are critically indebted and who have bad credit profiles. This has affected and will continue to affect your business

because of the domino effect. I therefore, as more food for thought, ask the association to put this matter on your agenda. People with bad credit records cannot buy houses. I know this matter has also affected our Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme, known as FLISP.

Ladies and gentlemen, with the Estate Agency Affairs Board, located in the Department of Human Settlements, I commit to strengthening our relationship with the Association. My presence here tonight is part of that commitment.

In this regard, I am aware of the active involvement of the Black Conveyancers Association in various advocacy and information sharing activities by some of our agencies. I would request that information sessions include civil society organizations as well.

Honoured guests one of the great challenges is the matter of the issuing of title deeds to the correct recipients. You might be aware of these difficulties, some of them very complex. Progress is being made but not as swift as one would like it to.

Lack of communication seems to be a major contributing factor. It is therefore important to have a healthy relationship between all spheres of government and the members of this organization.

The fact that the industry is in desperate need of transformation is unquestionable. This is a legacy of our past; this is a result of decades of a deliberate attempt to exclude certain sectors of our society.

I am pleased to see so many females here tonight, and I must applaud your efforts at increasing the number of female Conveyancers. I implore you to continue to provide them with support and capacity for improvement.

Notwithstanding our internal deficiencies, Conveyancers themselves have a significant role to play in effecting improvements in the industry.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know that Conveyancing is a bit of a mystery to many people, yet you perform such an essential task in the value chain of the transaction process for someone purchasing what is often the single most expensive item. Acquiring the title deed is final proof that one is the legitimate owner of a property. To a person who has never been allowed this privilege, it ranks close to having been able to vote for the first time in one's life at age 80.

Ladies and gentlemen I wish you a successful AGM and success, continue to serve with integrity.

I thank you