

**Presidents Address:
Coastlands Musgrave, 28th October 2022**

Bismillah irahman irahim

Our guest speaker Zunaid Bulbulia ex CEO of mtn, Imraan NoorBhai and Ameen Hassen from Standard bank, our major sponsors, directors Minara Chamber our independent judges Prof Shahida Cassim, Ebrahim Vawda, Atul Padalkar and Dr Dikshita Padalkar , our awardees, Mohamed Iqlaas of Capital group, media representatives, Muhammad Seedat Hilaal tv, members ,representatives of the NGO sector, Shabir Chohan CEO Albaraka bank, Neville Matjies CEO TIKZN, Zwakele Mgongo chair Action SA, KZN, viewers on hilaal tv / salaam media, listeners on the radio channels present Asalaam u Alaikum, sanbonani, vanakum, namaste, good evening.

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to this awards evening after a two-year hiatus. There have been substantial challenges in the past two years in our province with covid, looting, flooding, load shedding etc.

Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost and thousands of businesses are bankrupt. This combined with corruption, state capture, lack of expertise in sectors, exodus of skilled labour, exodus of funds, lack of foreign direct investment especially in our province, breakdown of infrastructure, ecoli in our rivers and beaches, pools closed for the past few years for renovations , safety and security issues , water front that has been in the pipeline for decades ,etc. I have just returned from turkey including Antalya and Istanbul where millions of tourists visit annually, where the transport system is second to none, beaches clean, security brilliant including tourism police which was an idea mooted years ago.

The irony is that KZN has many tourism attractions from mountains to beaches to game farms, golf courses but tourists shy away. Why??

My daughter friends are arriving in January from London and I offered for them to stay with me.

Not interested.

Domestic tourism has been our saving grace but that will also dry up especially when people swimming gets sick as in the case of last December and recently.

Now that i have mentioned all the negatives, I believe that there is tremendous opportunity to fix this province and country but it will depend on government being willing to form a joint task force which is able to drive change and make our province a sought-after tourist and investment destination.

We have participated in many forums with government and all i can say is that it has been talk shop with no progress in correcting the imbalances and challenges that we face.

I believe our current premier can make a difference with her background and expertise but she needs support from within her organisation as well as government departments.

all of us must be prepared to fold up our sleeves in both private and public sector and go the extra mile and work seven days a week till we fix the damage.

Private sector has to show profit or they will close shop.

This should also apply to the public sector, if employees don ' t deliver then they should be shown the door .

I was in Doha on Tuesday and I spent the morning at the legacy pavilion and headquarters of FIFA world cup Qatar 2022 as a guest of south Africans who are playing an important role in many areas most notably safety and security.

If anyone doesn't deliver or makes a mistake they are summarily dismissed, there is no room for errors since as was the case in south Africa many countries want the country to fail.

They employ the best, they headhunt from across the globe, they are intolerant with respect to poor performance and work continues 24/7.

The stadiums are state of the art and represent middle eastern culture and designs, They have considered green energy, environmental considerations, reusable structures linked to education, health care etc.

Some of the stadiums will be dismantled and donated to developing countries eg the one near the airport made with shipping containers and some will be reduced in size with their modular design.

Today is a day of celebration and recognition to all our awardees who have not asked to be recognised but the Minara chamber has hosted these dinners over the past 13 years to identify those who have played an important role and through trial and tribulations have excelled and been successful.

These are great role models.

There are a number of categories and 3 finalists per category, one of whom will be a winner but all are excellent examples for the youth of today.

The community builder awards will recognise all nominees considering their selfless characters, sacrifice and achievements before, during and after covid and their vision to better the conditions of fellow south Africans.

The Minara chamber has been in existence for the past 2 decades and is an integral part of the chamber movement and is well connected at various levels including with government, at political and departmental level, with foreign trade commissions, with NGO's across the country, with ulema bodies, educational institutions etc,

The greatest challenges to all chambers is the question what can you do for us?

Valid question but turning that around and the question is as professionals, businesses, NGO's' is what can you do, not for the chamber, but for our country and our people.

Minara is a vehicle to use to empower, educate, promote entrepreneurship, increase employment, etc.

In fact during the looting minara together with Albaraka bank, samct and other NGO's through a project called REHOP supported businesses in the Isipingo area to rebuild their businesses. Samct has offered to finance microloans for small businesses and this is where members and their businesses can also contribute,

During covid Minara created a business support platform open to all and it played an important role in advising and guiding businesses including legal advise from attorneys on the forum. There are many challenges facing businesses from red tape, lack of response from structures and government departments, facilitating visas , business to business connectivity and much more.

As individuals very few are in a position to get results and this is where you need a big brother, a vehicle like Minara.

We are hoping that the youth and women join us so that we ensure succession planning as well as grow our city, province and country.

If we all join hands and work together we can make a difference.
Our south african born experts are all over the world contributing to economies of foreign countries.

I was in London in July and met many south Africans working at all the major auditing firms in the UK.

We need to make it attractive for our people to stay and build this country of ours.
The only way is to create the opportunities , employ the best people for the jobs, give everyone an equal opportunity, provide funding, create a safe environment, safety and security, improve infrastructure include roads and railways, ports, improve work ethic amongst civil servants, efficient and quick turnaround times for planning and development and in government departments, ensure there are no forums blackmailing developers, improve service delivery, keep the lights on, ensure water and sanitation is of high standards, people pay for what they use, jobs are created, healthcare and education is of the highest quality, ensure we pay competitive prices for purchases in the government sector , get rid of tenderpreneurship and ensure we get bang for our buck after all it is the citizens money that is being spent .
Enough said .

I was reading a book by Justice Malala written in 2015 and i quote from a paragraph:
I am angry, I am furious, because I never thought that it would happen to us, the rainbow nation that defied doomsayers and suckled an nurtured a fragile democracy into life for it' s children. I never thought it would happen to us, this relentless decline, the flirtation with the leap over the cliff” close quote.

In this deeply personal reflection Malala's diagnosis is devastating, south Africa is on the brink of ruin.

Malala however believes that we have the where withal to turn things around and has lauded our constitution, the wealth of talent that still exists, our history of activism, and democratic trajectory that can still be used to stop the rot.

His warning that south Africans from all life need to wake up and act or else they will soon find that their country has been stolen.

This is why you need to join the Minara chamber.

United we can share our resources and expertise to contributing to save south Africa Insha Allah.

I would like to extend special thanks to our sponsors Standard bank, Capital group, AMKA Products and all table sponsors for making this evening possible and successful.

We were hoping to cater for 300 guests and the demand for tickets resulted in almost 450 guests here today.

Thank you

Solly suleman: Minara president