

**REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, REV. MUSA ZONDI**

**KZN–NAVIGO BOAT BUILDING AND YACHTING INDUSTRY ROUND TABLE
SESSION**

15 JULY 2025

UMHLANGA, COASTLANDS HOTEL

Programme Director;

The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Honourable Thami Ntuli;

Honourable Mayors;

The President of NAVIGO, Ms. Katia Balducci, and the entire NAVIGO Executive
Team;

Heads of Departments;

CEOs of Entities;

Captains of Industry;

Representatives of the Boat Building Sector;

Members of The Media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this important engagement, which marks the beginning of what we hope will be a transformative partnership between the Province of KwaZulu-Natal and NAVIGO, Italy's leading yachting industry cluster.

Today's round table session is more than just a meeting of minds, but it is a convergence of visions. A shared ambition to grow inclusive economies, to embrace innovation, and to position KwaZulu-Natal as a destination of choice not only for tourism, but also for investment and maritime excellence.

As a province, we are deeply proud of our natural endowments - especially our 600-kilometre stretch of coastline. But we are even more proud of our people, our institutions, and the potential that lies within our maritime sector. This potential finds its greatest expression in the boat building and yachting industry - an industry that combines advanced engineering, design innovation, luxury tourism, and meaningful job creation.

NAVIGO's interest in KwaZulu-Natal is a significant endorsement of our strategic vision. With over 400-member companies, NAVIGO is a powerhouse in Italy's maritime economy. Your presence here today signals confidence in KwaZulu-Natal's capacity to support, scale and sustain this sector. It is also aligned with the KZN Integrated Maritime Strategy, our blueprint for unlocking the ocean economy and ensuring our ports, shipyards, and skills pipelines are globally competitive.

Honourable guests, we are guided by six key pillars in our provincial economic strategy:

- Tourism, Culture and Heritage
- Infrastructure Investment
- The Green Economy
- Ocean Economy
- Rural and District Development
- Investor Funding and Support

This partnership with NAVIGO touches on all six. From infrastructure investment in boat yards and refit facilities, to rural development through community-based tourism, to youth training and skills transfer, it's a full-circle opportunity.

What we are envisioning together is not just economic growth, but growth with purpose. Growth that upskills young people. Growth that partners with local businesses. Growth that places KwaZulu-Natal on the global map as a yachting and refit destination - supported by our deep-water ports, our SEZs, our air connectivity through the King Shaka International Airport, and our investor-ready environment.

To our partners from NAVIGO, I thank you sincerely for seeing the opportunity in KwaZulu-Natal. We invite you not only to invest, but to co-create. To innovate with us. To bring your world-class expertise to bear on a sector that holds so much promise, not just for returns, but for impact.

Today's round table must be more than ceremonial. It must be catalytic. Let us use this moment to identify practical pathways forward, on infrastructure, skills development, aftersales service, and yachting tourism.

As government, we are ready. As a province, we are open. As leaders, we are committed.

Let us, together, set sail toward a new frontier of opportunity, for our people, for our economy, and for generations to come.

Grazie. Thank you.