

Word of Greetings – Consul General Matthias Hansen
Ball of HOPE 2018 @ the Westin Hotel in Cape Town



Ladies & Gentlemen,
Dear Guests, all protocol observed –

I take pleasure and pride in joining you on this special occasion - the well-deserved celebration night of a proud & independent NGO, and its supporters, together looking back on the stretch of way you came forward over the year gone by, and at the same time together rewarding & honoring a wonderful staff for their craving & tough daily work in the field.

As I understand HOPE's philosophy, it is above & beyond all a marvelous humanitarian approach. At the same time, nonetheless, in practice and in the way it works, it implies a substantial German contribution to a better life for people in South Africa - maybe not in a formal legal sense, but both with a view to its founding father and founding history, to its team leaders, to the close and long-standing partnership with our fantastic Chamber of Commerce, as well as in terms of many of its donors and corporate partners both overseas and here. It is this contribution - based on voluntary commitment of citizens and companies! - that my country has a special reason to take pride in, and that the German Consul General has every reason to honor tonight.

All the more so since your work as an NGO is invaluable and irreplaceable. As a state institution, we can work hand in hand with you on a project basis, but we would never be able to bridge the gap we would face if you were not there. Because at the core of your work, as I perceive it, is decentralization & proximity to people: Developmental success in the highly sensitive field of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS outreach requires an extraordinarily deep cultural understanding. What does people's everyday life look like? What are people's core values &

how do these influence their behavior? How do people interact, what makes their communities & families work (& vice versa: what has a potential to threaten or undermine them?) What practical impact does all that have on the development of their children and teenagers? Understanding that complexity and building trust is a pre-condition i.o.t. identify & determine your leverage and hence make sure that you can have an impact, initiate change, and make a difference. To achieve that degree of understanding & trust is only possible by means of continuous grass-roots presence & work. As an NGO, this is precisely where your comparative advantage lies.

Ladies & Gentlemen, please allow me to conclude by four remarks. Even though I'll make them in my official capacity, let me assure you that I also speak from my own heart & mind & conviction.

To begin with, I want to bear witness to the work & integrity of HOPE as an organization. And at the same time: to the professionalism of their approach. It is by combining the two that you truly have achieved long-term sustainability. I am emphasizing this also with HOPE's German donors and partners in mind: Be confident that the resources you invest do serve their purpose!

Next, I would like to pay tribute to HOPE's wonderful team. I have been out there to see and - albeit tentatively - to grasp what you do. Your tireless commitment, your energy, your resilience deserves a tremendous measure of appraisal and - to add a personal remark - of deep respect.

Thirdly, let me give the credit they deserve to HOPE's long-standing institutional partners here in the Western Cape. Beyond the German-South African Chamber of Commerce, let me highlight Tygerberg Hospital and Stellenbosch University, as well as the Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town. By providing a constant, reliable institutional and academic framework, you have been ensuring maximum efficiency and scientific state-of-the-art quality of HOPE's work in-the-field.

Finally, let me conclude by saying thank you to all of you guests here tonight: be it for your very own personal commitment or for the commitment of HOPE's corporate sponsors represented here. You are all giving expression to a truly remarkable degree of social responsibility - something which, in my perception, is also of tremendous importance in a wider context: the social cohesion in this country. It is YOU whose investment in the good cause has been putting Stefan and his team in the position to do their work and can - and hopefully will - continue to do so.

Ladies and Gentlemen - be proud of those contributions and enjoy this festive evening!

Thank you.