Address by Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Nomusa Dube-Ncube during the Taking the Parliament to the People held at UGU Sport and Leisure

15 November 2022

Honourable Speaker;

Honourable Members;

Introduction and Welcome

We wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Speaker and all members of the National Council of Provinces and the KZN Legislature for bringing the Taking Parliament to the People to this wonderful district of UGU.

UGU is known nationally and on the continent as one of the most popular holiday destinations where each Easter and Festive Season, thousands of visitors have for years tasted the tourism attractions of the South Coast and KwaZulu-Natal.

The presence of Members of the NCOP and the KZN Legislature at this time here in UGU, places a timely focus on the district and is an indication that indeed the holiday season here in the South Coast has already started

As indicated earlier, this Programme of Taking Parliament to the People will culminate in an Annual Address by the President of the Republic His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa on 18 November under the theme “Building an agile state, capabilities to improve service delivery outcomes”.

Hon. Speaker allow me on behalf of provincial government and the people of KwaZulu-Natal to take this opportunity to welcome Honourable Members of the NCOP some of whom have travelled from far and wide to be with us over the next couple of days.

We are indeed honoured to have you all in this part of our province.

By the same token, I wish to welcome all Hon. Members of the KZN Legislature, Mayors and Councillors, and our special guests the people of UGU and surroundings to this gathering.

Hon. Speaker the concept of taking the Legislature to the People in South Africa flows from social contract derived from one of the fundamental documents of the ANC the Freedom Charter, whose preamble is that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it” accompanied by the injunction that “the people shall govern”.

This essence was transferred to our country’s Constitution which we adopted in 1996 which declares

boldly, that “we the people of South Africa, recognise the injustices of our past; Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

This Constitution calls on us to work hard to:

Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.”

Calling on the community to take part in their development

As we gather here in the south of UGU over the coming days we will hear from the community not only about the challenges but also the suggested solutions. When Parliament comes to the people it is not like Father Christmas to deliver bags of gifts to the community. We also want to engage, and through consultation listen to the solutions from the community.

Throughout the district, one of the greatest challenges is water and also crime which is very high, mainly due to prevalent economic and social factors which include poverty and unemployment.

Challenges and Interventions in Ugu District

Honourable Chairperson, the National Development Plan makes it clear that “meeting our transformation agenda requires a much higher and more focused intergovernmental commitment towards functional municipalities and a capable machinery at a local level”

It is essential that programmatic support such as this Taking Parliament to the People is carried out more regularly to assist municipalities to realize their development goal.

As you will receive in the reports over the next coming days from various departments and the family of municipalities in uGU, you will notice that impressive progress has been made since 1994 in increasing access to services such as water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal and roads. However as is the case with many municipalities across the country the economic outcomes are still lagging behind especially around employment creation and economic growth.

Despite early gains, the provision of water slowed down, notably there has been some regression and challenges which have at times manifested themselves in protests. The District is persistently plagued by Water Supply Interruptions which are caused in the main by Burst pipes, Leaks, Vandalism, Illegal connections, Low pressure, Pump failures and Load shedding among other things. The Provincial Government and the National Department of Water and Sanitation have established a water war room which convenes daily to respond to the water challenges in a sustainable manner.

The war room has put a turnaround plan in place which include replacing old pipelines and Equipment through WSIG and MIG Grants. Some areas are complete and some are budgeted in the 2022/2024 financial year. There is insufficient Funding available to attend to all areas simultaneously.

To address the water challenge there are planned major bulk projects such as the KwaLembe WSS which may cost (± R370m) . The Vulamehlo Cross-Border WSS (± R1.1b) and the Harding-Weza WSS (± R1.3b)

The war room has identified a further two projects which still need the full engineering spectrum and legal and regulatory processes to be compiled for RBIG Funding application. These are Cwabeni Dam Bulk Infrastructure, including Umzimkhulu Bulk Augmentation (± R2.4b) and Umtamvuna Bulk Infrastructure (± R1.2b).

The reliability index for water services in this district remains a cause for concern and is a priority for us as government. We are concerned about the impact on the tourism economy which is an economic oxygen for this district.

There many positive gains and challenges experienced by municipalities in this district requires spheres of government to cooperate to provide support and interventions.

The long term solution require that we place emphasis on local economic development with a focus on producing goods and services which are internationally and locally competitive as well as enhance economic growth. The tourism dent induced by the water challenges in particular in this district is impacting on the investment attraction and the comparative advantages of this district.

Eastern Seaboard as symbol of a brighter future

We are also in UGU which is one of the Districts collaborating across borders to host the Eastern Seaboard Smart City together with Alfred Nzo and Harry Gwala Districts.

We are pleased this one project of the 6th Administration is a practical demonstration of the District Development Model (DDM) where governments and business collaborate across borders at municipal level. .

The DDM model ensure that government departments at national and provincial levels combine resources and work as one towards the implementation of a single plan. We are certain that the DDM will unlock investment in various sectors such as mining, agriculture, tourism and infrastructure development in our province.

The Eastern Seaboard Development and the envisaged Smart Coastal African City or cities are a league above the rest. We are taking the province to the stratosphere

And we want to take all the people of this province with us.

Future cities take into consideration the climate challenges and use the latest technology to build a new environment for all in inclusiveness, just transition and social justice.

We are heartened by the progress we are making in renovating regional airports, including Margate Airport which has already helped more than doubled the number of visitors coming to the South Coast during the festive season.

KwaZulu-Natal has also launched a signature annual cultural festival along the South Coast and the potential for tourism growth and business development for the communities of the Eastern Cape are massive.

We call on all, investors, government and the community to work together for a better KwaZulu-Natal

IMPACT OF FLOODS AND UPDATE IN UGU

The floods only compounded the challenge that faces this district and many parts of KwaZulu-Natal. As you know, the floods were the worst in our history and affected over 8500 people mostly in the coastal parts of our province. In terms of the estimated damage we are looking at over R25billion. Our province was declared a national state of disaster requiring the involvement of all spheres of government to attend the tragedy and help rebuild lives and livelihoods. Since then, our province has worked with local, provincial and national government to implement our economic recovery and reconstruction programme. Here in the Ugu District, water infrastructure in particular was among the most affected amounting to R19,4m. We have made tremendous progress and in this district we have been able to restore lives of victims back to normal all shelters in this district have been closed down. Attention is on infrastructure damage that now needs to be repaired and restored to normality.

Hon. Speaker, on the 09th of November 2022, we received the news that the Msunduzi Local Municipality had been affected by heavy rains which resulted in flooding at around 16h00.

Government’s first responder teams were despatched, and assessments of the damage was conducted in the areas of Ward 11 (Sinathing, Nhlazatshe), Ward 16 (KwaPata, Mabulala), Ward 17 (Imbali), Ward 21 (Dambuza), Ward 22 and Ward 23 (Peacevale, Ashdown).

We can report that there were seventy-eight (78) people affected, comprising of fifty-three (53) adults and twenty-five (25) children. It was further reported that there were thirty (30) families affected wherein nineteen (19) families were left homeless and they were sheltered in a Mosque area in ward 23 (Peacevale).

Fortunately, there were no fatalities and injuries reported.

We wish to also thank our Social partners such as Red Cross and the Al-Imdaad Foundation who have provided the necessary support to the displaced.

The recent flooding illustrates the continuing threat of climate change-induced weather in our province, and the challenges we will face as we deal with what is an unfolding global crisis.

Honourable Chairperson, as we present the water solutions our communities must recognise that it takes time to build new dams and to find permanent solutions to problems of water. We must also recognise that South Africa is a water scarce country with the situation now being worsened by climate change.

We wish therefore to urge the community to continue to work together with us to solve these problems and not to vandalise the very infrastructure that we are providing. At the same time, we also plead with the citizens of uGu District especially business to pay for basic services such as water and electricity, and to refrain from vandalising infrastructure and embarking on illegal connections as these acts derail and disrupt the delivery of services to the community.

Last month we launched the 2022 KZN Multi-planting Season in uMziwabantu here in UGU and already the change in weather has become a new reality even in agriculture. The planting season programme has a potential to create 500 job opportunities through various services including but not limited to tractor operators, crop management and harvesting services, etc.

The programme further provides opportunities to SMMEs through the provision of mechanization services. The implementation of the programme is envisaged to reach approximately 10209 beneficiaries across the province in 2022. The majority of the beneficiaries comprises almost 65% of female beneficiaries represented by approximately 6644 people. Furthermore, approximately 962 youth and 84 disabled people involved in agriculture will also benefit from the support provided. A total budget of R55 524 million has been made available for 2022/23 Multi-Planting Season Programme to accommodate only the mechanisation services excluding two mechanization activities, namely first and second spraying. In this year’s planting season through the Department of Agriculture farmers are cultivating 22 310 hectares in the 11 municipal districts. A total of 2 000 hectares will be planted in uGu District during this multi-planting season.

The multi-planting season in uGu District has created job opportunities to 800 people: comprising of 650 females, 150 males, 50 young people and 10 people living with disabilities.

Marching towards a digital world

Hon. Speaker a few days ago on the 06 of November we addressed a gathering hosted by the Department of Public Service Administration looking at how far we have gone since we adopted the National Development Plan in improving the capacity of the state. In 2011 the province of KwaZulu-Natal conducted the first detailed analysis of the NDP implementation in KwaZulu-Natal was undertaken in 2011, under the guidance of the newly appointed Provincial Planning Commission.

One of the key findings of our review was that on a quantitative basis, education and training outputs have improved in KZN over the past 10 years. One of the factors we now recognise is that our learners are falling down the international benchmarks when it comes to maths and science and Information Communication Technology.

This is one of the factors that explains why many of our school leavers and graduates are struggling to find work especially as the world adopts the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

In this regard recently we started addressing this issue vigorously with the launch of the SMART Province which will see the roll out of the digital economy and 4IR skills and all its attendant technologies.

Last month the province launched the first Mobile Digital Analytics Skills Lab at Orient Heights in Pietermaritzburg. With this launch our learners are taking a giant leap to be part of new possibilities offered by digital technology.

This is part of the Connected Smart Province Project which will see especially young people being trained in various skills linked to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Youth will take advantage of this digital economy, working on Robotics, Drone Technology, Mechatronics and other technologies being experienced today.

As we announced, we intend to expose our learners from a young age Space Technology, Internet of Things, Data Analytics, Multimedia Production l and 4D Technology.

Already 20 young people are undergoing training in Digital Skills and Drone technology that will be used in a number of sectors including in smart technology and in intelligent transport systems to monitor and recover accidents and save lives.

Similar labs will be launched in the rest of the province, district by district.

We also want to use 4IR in enhancing policing and the fight against crime with drones being used to monitor high crime zones and capturing footage of criminal activity and also disaster-stricken areas.

Police will be able to deploy Smart Technology in facial recognition and to monitor crime scenes without necessary placing themselves in the line of danger.

Technology overall can reduce the crime rate, improve investigation and assist in locking up offenders. It can also be used as early warning signal to prevent the deaths in disasters and properly loss.

Conclusion

Honourable Chairperson, we will be the first to admit that in Ugu we need the support and resources to meet service delivery needs. Despite significant service delivery and development gains since 1994, apartheid spatial patterns largely remains unchanged. Most of our municipalities are faced with the challenge of constant economic and demographic changes that drive the demand for housing, infrastructure and transport services. Through the District Development Model we can improve planning and mitigate future crisis.

Ugu is among the most favourite tourist destinations in KZN. Tourism and agriculture are, amongst others, the key sectors in the economy of the district. However for these sectors to thrive they will rely on reliably provision of basic services such as water. This session of our NCOP focused on uGu District is a major step forward in a protracted process that should in time culminate in fulfilling our commitments towards a better life for all.

Together Building Better Communities while Growing South Africa Together!

I thank you.