

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY PREMIER-ELECT SENZO MCHUNU FOR  
NOMINATION AS PREMIER OF THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL AT THE  
KZN PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE**

**21 May 2014**

Speaker of the Legislature

Judge President Patel

Members of the House

We want to appreciate our appreciation to the Judge President for presiding over this sitting in a dignified manner. You have indeed strengthened this democratic institution.

It with great humility that I rise before you to accept my nomination as the Premier of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal over the next term of office of this democratic government.

At the outset, I want to express my appreciation to my party, the African National Congress for this expression of confidence in me.

Since 1912, the ANC has given responsibilities to many of its volunteers who have without fail acted as agents of change.

In any given situation, a true volunteer of this glorious movement understands that the task of transforming society and defeating poverty remains fundamental.

Accordingly, I want to assure my party and all members of this house that I will use all my energies to explore different strategies to speed up the transformation of society and eradicate poverty.

Importantly, the people of this province, irrespective of their political affiliation, will be made part of all efforts aimed at speeding up the transformation of KZN into a land of prosperity.

Ahead of the national general elections, we visited many parts of the province - rural and urban - and interacted with many citizens who finally voted overwhelmingly for a ***Better life for all.***

With the highest voter turnout of 75, 98 percent, the people of KwaZulu-Natal Province have demonstrated that they respect and understand all the processes of a democratic country.

They firmly believe that voting in a democratic election is one of the most crucial measures of a vibrant democracy. We can say without any shadow of doubt that democracy is alive in KZN. It's been demonstrated in this house. The DA knowing very well that they were going to be defeated but they forwarded a candidate for the position of the Premier. Better luck next time.

For this, I want to personally express my appreciation to the people of KwaZulu-Natal for embracing democracy and for ensuring free, fair and credible elections.

We congratulate the DA as the official opposition.

We congratulate the IFP, NFP, EFF and MF for having participated in the national general elections. Congratulations for the successes that you recorded. And the main winner is undoubtedly, our democracy.

Clearly, leaders and members of all political parties who have been voted into the provincial legislature must understand that they represent the aspirations of many of our people.

We dare not fail those who walked long distances and those who stood in long queues and voted us into office.

We must all consider ourselves as very privileged that we have been given this mammoth responsibility at the time when this country celebrates 20 years of our freedom and democracy.

When we ushered in democracy 20 years ago, we have used our constitution to ensure that parliament exercises its role of legislation and oversight. The democratic government has ensured that members of this house are accountable to their constituencies.

Therefore, as we start another 20 years of our freedom and democracy, we must together usher in a new era in which the work of government is conducted with a compelling sense of hard work, honesty and integrity.

We must work together to ensure that we strengthened relations with institutions of democracy and chapter nine institutions such as Auditor General, Human Rights Commission, Public Protector, and Independent Communications Authority of South Africa so as to improve citizen's exercise of their rights.

Apart from presiding over the first sitting of this House to elect the Premier, Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, Judge President Patel is here

to ensure that we commit ourselves as members of this house to a strong, united and vibrant provincial legislature.

Vibrancy is about being principled not to oppose for the sake of opposing. We must all desist from rejecting logical reasoning because of party and personal attitudes that have no bearing to the plight of the electorate and the subject matter under discussion.

This house must be characterized by robust debate with matters affecting the people of this province central to all discussions as opposed to elevating narrow political issues to the top of the agenda.

We must unite our people behind a common goal of creating a winning nation capable of dealing with any socio-economic challenge. As leaders of society, we must be exemplary in how we handle ourselves and how we discharge our responsibilities.

Admittedly, the trauma that was inflicted on us as the people of this country and KwaZulu-Natal in particular is still fresh in our souls. As leaders we therefore have a responsibility to inspire the people of this province to work together.

The next few months of the members of this house should be about promoting the spirit of brotherhood. Because our fate is bound together, we must strengthen the solidarity amongst the people of this province.

We must be closer to our people: African, Indian, Coloured and White and ensure that we remind them that we have a responsibility to deliver to the future generations, a stable KwaZulu-Natal which acts as a gateway to Africa and the rest of the world.

Importantly, in order to unlock the potential of KwaZulu-Natal, we must work with religious leaders, traditional leaders, professionals, organized labour, NGOs, different sectors of civil society and big business.

It is this unity and partnership that will propel this province to greater heights.

We must intensify the fight against HIV and Aids and other preventable diseases.

We must work towards improving our healthcare system in order to increase life expectancy in this province. Nobody must die because of weaknesses in our healthcare system or because of the lack of access to healthcare facilities.

We invite honourable members of this house to take an interest in the education of our children and ensure the functioning of schools because without a skilled population, we cannot leapfrog stages of socio-economic development.

The ANC as a ruling party and in charge of the education will continue to invest in school infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories and information communication and technology in order to produce learners who are capable of driving socio-economic development throughout the corners of this province.

As members of this house, our energies must be channelled towards ensuring an equitable distribution of economic opportunities in order to uplift our people who are leaving below the poverty line.

Government will lead all efforts aimed at mobilizing the private sector to invest across the corners of the province in a manner that serves the overall development imperatives.

Apart from creating much needed job opportunities, these efforts I have highlighted will assist in stimulating industrial development, reviving all the decaying rural towns and making them attractive for more investments.

I want to congratulate the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker for the election today.

***Honorable Members***, we are determined to improve service delivery and this will be achieved through the reconfiguration of government departments. Such details will be announced in due cause.

In addition, we want to strengthen municipalities through the deployment of the finest talent in the country that will assist in delivering services to the voting populace.

At this stage I want to express my appreciation once again to my party the African National Congress and the Leagues.

I want to pay tribute to the Alliance partners – SACP, COSATU and SANCO for ensuring the unprecedented success of the ANC in the elections.

We will continue to rely on the Alliance partners for the guidance and support in the execution of the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution.

Since we came into power, the Alliance and the branches of the ANC have supported the program of action of service delivery of the ANC-led government. This support has made this this government successful.

We will continue to build on the foundation that has been laid in terms of service delivery and we will forever rely on the structures of the ANC and the Alliance to ensure that government remains in touch with issues of service delivery.

I thank you

Ends

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