

## **STATEMENT BY PREMIER OF THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL SENZO MCHUNU ON THE MEETING HELD WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GLOBAL FUND ON HIV AND AIDS**

13 January 2015

In his State of the Province Address of 2014, Premier Senzo Mchunu made a commitment to pay special attention to improving the health status of the people of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal Province. He committed to continue the fight against HIV and AIDS, and to increase the number of people on Antiretroviral Treatment.

In this regard, Premier Mchunu together with the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) hosted the Executive Director of the Global Fund, Mark Dybul today on the 13th January 2015. The meeting took place at the Latitude Conference Centre in the Dube Trade Port, Durban.

Premier Mchunu was accompanied by the MEC for Social Development, Weziwe Thusi, MEC for Finance, Belinda Scott and other senior government officials. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss opportunities of collaboration, partnership as well as funding in South Africa and KwaZulu Natal in particular to continue the all-important fight against HIV and AIDS epidemic.

“On behalf of the KZN Provincial Government and the people of KwaZulu-Natal we take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Global Fund for the role they are playing in fighting HIV and AIDS epidemic. We call on you to continue partnering with us, because the journey towards defeating the scourge of HIV and AIDS is long but not insurmountable.” Mchunu said.

In his response, Mchunu expressed his appreciation to SANAC and the Global Fund for this continued commitment to fighting the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Mchunu said:

“The fight against HIV and AIDS will not be won in the boardrooms but out in the community through concerted mobilisation of communities to take this as their battle”.

“At 37%, the province still has the highest HIV prevalence amongst pregnant women visiting the ante natal clinics in the country, having maintained this position for several years.”

“It is in this regard that we are scaling up our efforts to fight HIV and AIDS, TB and other social ills that are main contributors to the stubborn presence of these infections. That is why we have taken an integrated approach that this is not just the issue of health but also involve the whole of the social cluster, including social development and education.” Mchunu said.

“Each of the municipalities particularly the district mayors and local mayors, must become champion at their level to lead the fight through visible awareness campaigns and implementation of effective programmes of government in the fight against HIV and AIDS.” Mchunu said.

The KZN government will be presenting its proposal entitled “FIGHTING HIV, TB AND STI --- ENHANCING COMMUNITY WELL BEING THROUGH COMMUNITY MOBILISATION.” This proposal and plan describes the strategy for implementation of community mobilisation campaign for the Province as part of responding to HIV & AIDS, TB and STIs prevention.

The province recognises that community mobilisation is key to containing the scourge. At the same time, the province is aware that community mobilisation is a key gap in the response. Premier Mchunu has on several occasions indicated the need to strengthen community mobilisation and to support the grassroots level with a view to contributing to improving community well-being particularly from the perspective of health and HIV & AIDS and services delivery.

The purpose of this campaign will be to contribute to shifting positively the provincial outcomes related to HIV and AIDS, STIs and TB through community mobilisation thereby improving community well-being.

In his statement, Mark Dybul said: “We thank you for your comprehensive programme as South African government and in particular KwaZulu-Natal, which has become a global example on comprehensive programme to fighting HIV and AIDS epidemic.”

“There is discernible improvement, but we continue to be concerned with new infections that are recorded.” Said Dybul

“It is in this regard that we are here to say we want to partner with you in your continued fight against this epidemic. This is your fight, but we are saying we are here to fight it with you.” Said Mr Dybul.

The meeting agreed on the need for this partnership. They noted the progress made, however, it was agreed that much more still has to be achieved given the existing challenges. In particular KwaZulu-Natal still faces challenges in the fight against social ills such as HIV and AIDS and TB, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, violence against women and children and crime. The Global Fund will thus work with the departments of health, treasury and social development to finalise the submission of the application for funding.

Ends

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Enquiries

Mr. Thamsanqa Ngwenya  
Spokesperson for the KZN Provincial Government  
0605729881