

**ADDRESS BY THE ACTING PREMIER OF KWAZULU-NATAL, MR
SIHLE ZIKALALA ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE
SOCIAL COHESION AND MORAL REGENERATION COUNCIL
PUBLIC WORKS CONFERENCE CENTRE
MAYVILLE
25 JULY 2018**

Programme Director,
Mayor of eThekweni Cllr Zandile Gumede,
Members of the Executive Council Present,
Members of the Legislature Present,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Members of the Social Cohesion and Moral Regeneration council,
Leaders of Faith,
Traditional Leaders,
Organized Labour,
Leaders of various sectors of civil society,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Members of the media present,

Good Morning.

Let me begin by expressing heartfelt gratitude to all our invited guests for setting aside time to lend weight and dignity to this important launch of the provincial Social Cohesion and Moral Regeneration Council.

We are encouraged by your commitment to the unity, peace, and development of the people of this province.

We must pause at this stage and pay a special tribute to Isilo SamaBandla.

It is a well-known fact that the unity of the people of this province and matters of moral regeneration are very close to His Majesty's heart.

We salute His Majesty for remaining an unwavering champion of moral regeneration and for his guidance, over the years, on matters of social cohesion.

On the 1st June 2017, when we had our first Social Cohesion and Moral Regeneration Summit in Kwa-Mashu, His Majesty sent representatives from the Royal Household.

His Majesty assured us of the co-operation from the Provincial House of Traditional Leadership led by Inkosi Chiliza.

We are grateful that uNdlunkulu P.T Zulu was assigned to work with the Provincial Government to roll out twinning programmes of social cohesion and moral regeneration.

We are relying on uNdlunkulu Zulu, in her capacity as the Convenor of Amakhosi Peace Committee, to ensure their sustained participation.

For our programmes to be effective and impactful, government officials must always involve ubukhosi in their conceptualisation and implementation of their programmes.

As government, we believe in the strong role for traditional leaders as custodians of culture and traditions.

We want to restore our national pride in our children.

We want to impart to them the values of ubuntu, integrity, honesty, respect, and national pride.

Working with ukhosi and faith-based organisations, we must rebuild the institution of the family which for many black communities was destroyed by colonialism and apartheid.

We want our children to grow appreciating the basis of African philosophy which says, “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”

And as adults, we must embody the African wisdom that “it takes a village to raise a child.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After a prolonged history of conflict, violence, trauma, and lawlessness, it soon became clear after 1994 that South Africa urgently needed what came to be known as the RDP of the soul.

Founding President Nelson Mandela and our church leaders were concerned about the spiritual sickness of our nation.

Madiba said this moral decay emanated from,

“the problems of greed and cruelty, of laziness and egotism, of personal and family failure.”

And so in 1998 at the first Moral Regeneration Summit, President Mandela lamented,

“corruption both in the public and private sector, where office and positions of responsibility are treated as opportunities for self-enrichment; the corruption that occurs within our justice system; violence in interpersonal relations and families, in particular the shameful record of abuse of women and children; and the extent of tax evasion and refusal to pay for services used.”

It was twenty years ago when President Nelson Mandela made this observation which continues to define us today.

The rate of crime and moral decay calls for a firm partnership amongst all compatriots, black and white, young and old, urban and rural.

Over the past few months, we have seen a spike in despicable crimes such as the rape and murder of young girls and women.

The murder of our beautiful and innocent children living with albinism speak volumes of a society that has lost its way.

Senior citizens have also been subjected to barbaric acts by young men, young enough to be grandchildren of the victims.

I wish at this stage to call on all our media - both commercial and community media - to place moral generation and social cohesion at the centre of their programming.

In this regard, I wish to commend uKhozi fm for their popular and ground-breaking show called, “Indoda emadodeni.”

This programme is demonstrating the power of the media in social cohesion and identity formation.

The message of the programme is clear – to be man is not an equivalent of power abuse, violence, and irresponsibility.

We hope that our youth will also use the power of social media to entrench a human-rights based culture and protection of the most vulnerable amongst us.

And we urge the media to assist us to correct distortions and perceptions.

KZN is not a murder-field where crimes like murder go unpunished.

The 2017 police crime statistics report shows that KZN is not a province that leads with murders.

South Africa as a whole is faced with the problem of high levels of crime and unacceptable murder rates.

If these perceptions are recycled and left unchallenged, they have the potential to start sounding like reality.

They have the potential of discouraging much scarce needed skills and investments into the province.

We urge communities to get involved in crime fighting initiatives.

They must rise and demand answers from police station commanders.

They must demand results in the reduction of crime in the areas where they live.

Programme Director,

The Council we are launching today will work hard and together with communities in building a united nation that works towards a common vision.

The Council will mobilize the people of KwaZulu-Natal to focus on overcoming prejudices and promoting positive values.

We must be known for peace, democracy, hard work, and integrity.

Nelson Mandela, like Mahatma Gandhi, would have reminded us that the true measure of any society is how it treats its most vulnerable and its lowest citizens, not its highest or the privileged few citizens.

We must pursue moral regeneration because it is about the wellbeing of people.

And it is about their growth and the creation of necessary conditions for them to prosper.

In the case of South Africa, we want to be a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society.

But we know that high levels of poverty, joblessness, and inequality can provide the fertile ground for social conflict to thrive.

The skewed nature of the economy also provides a fertile ground for patriarchy, sexism, and racism to flourish.

The lack of access to economic opportunities, particularly by the majority blacks, is one of the biggest threats to social cohesion.

We, therefore, want to assure the people of KwaZulu-Natal that this government will tirelessly work towards ensuring that the downtrodden are given access to economic opportunities.

We will double our efforts to ensure that enterprises such as SMMEs and Co-operatives, owned by Africans in particular, women and the

youth benefit from Radical Economic Empowerment programmes as they remain excluded from the mainstream economy.

Programme Director,

There is another side to this story of social discord and the high levels of crime in our society.

There are many individuals in families and communities who are extremely poor, but they do not resort to crime.

These are people who still respect the humanity and dignity of others.

It means as a society, we must be unanimous in rejecting the idea that poverty necessarily results to crime.

When a man commits despicable crimes like raping and murdering children and women, we cannot use poverty as an excuse.

We can also not use poverty and unemployment to justify the burning of people's homes and destruction of public property during public protests.

The programme of moral regeneration must go deep at schools, churches, community halls to remind us – especially the black communities – that the country we are destroying belongs to us.

We need to create a patriotic consciousness that will frown against wastage.

It must be a new ethos that severely punishes crimes against the people like destroying essential community assets like libraries, schools, and clinics.

Programme Director,

We must also do more to consciously create a pan-African consciousness in our province.

We must refuse to be synonymous with such labels as “Afro-phobia” or “xenophobia.”

Our developmental agenda is linked with the future and development of the continent of Africa.

On the 5th April 2016 the provincial executive council received a report on the causes and impact of foreign nationals.

The focus was on attacks that took place between March and May in 2015.

Our research shows that the violent episodes that erupted contributed to huge economic losses for the province and the country as a whole.

The KZN Ethiopian community reported over R5 million in losses following extensive damages to their shops.

KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government and the eThekweni Municipality had to channel R30 million to manage the crisis.

International economic losses were incurred by South African corporations such as SASOL, operating in Mozambique.

It has been recommended that the provincial government through the should support the creation of co-operative platforms that can reduce tensions between local and foreign national communities operating in the small and informal trading sectors.

In May this year Our Premier and the Executive Mayor of eThekweni, and myself had a meeting with informal traders from Phoenix, Inanda and KwaMashu (PINK Area).

This was part of government's intervention in a conflict involving local informal traders and foreign nationals.

A few weeks ago we convened an event to hand over trading licenses to the informal traders as part of efforts to resolve the tension in the area.

It is regrettable that the function had to be postponed because of further tensions and disagreements amongst local informal traders and foreign nationals.

This Council must assist government in finding a long lasting solution to this problem in KwaMashu and other areas.

We would have failed in our collective duty to ensure economic prosperity and safety in our province if we allow the state of conflict to continue.

The migration of people in search of better opportunities is reality all over the world.

Nasemandulo babesho okhokho bethi, “unyawo alunampumulo”, reminding us of the importance of being hospitable to people from distant lands.

And so we can never condone the beating and killing of fellow Africans.

Anyone who is alleged to be committing a crime, irrespective of his or her nationality, must be reported to the police.

The Council must begin to urgently introduce concrete programmes to strengthen African solidarity in this province.

Again here, our media have a big role to play to unite the residents of KZN.

We want to hear all the accents and mannerism's from our continent.

We want to learn about our common history, heritage, and aspirations.

We must also learn about all other communities that have made the province their home.

Like the late author, Nat Nakasa, we must be able to say,

“My people are South Africans. Mine is the history of the Great Trek. Gandhi’s passive resistance in Johannesburg, the wars of Cetshwayo and the dawn raids which gave us the treason trials of 1956. All these are South African things. They are part of me.”

As blacks, as whites, we must also share a part in the history of Sheik Yusuf, the slaves brought by the Dutch in the Cape, and the Indian indentured labours brought by the British here in KZN.

No one must be left behind.

We must engage our Coloured communities and bring them on board as we craft the future of our dreams.

And we must always gather against the mobilisation of ethnicity and race to divide our people.

This council must begin implementing programmes aimed at improving race relations, deepening tolerance, and promoting social justice.

And our Social Cohesion and Moral Regeneration Council can count on our government’s unreserved support.

I thank you