

DRAFT

**ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL SIHLE
ZIKALALA ON THE OCCASION OF THE SITTING OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT IN
ENDUMENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

15 JUNE 2019

Speaker

Members of Parliament

Members of the executive

Mayors and Councillors present

Youth Leaders – across all political parties

Honoured Guests

Good-day

We wish to express our appreciation to the leadership of both Umzinyathi District and eNdumeni Local Municipalities. We thank you for ensuring that we host this youth parliament.

Importantly, we have been informed about challenges and hiccups that have been experienced by the local community – especially local entrepreneurs. As government we have not changed our position that if there are any government events: local service providers must be prioritized. This is part of local economic development and radical economic transformation.

We are fully aware of concerns raised by local entrepreneurs who feel undermined and convinced that the government of the day is failing to empower them. We wish to point out that this is the matter that is receiving the attention of the provincial executive council (cabinet).

We undertake to interact with the Office of the Speaker of the KZN Legislature to ensure that we are able to report back to the community of eNdumeni of what went wrong. Having said that, we reiterate the approach of the ruling party (ANC) – that at all times, if there are government events – services must be procured from the local community.

Critically, we have noted reports in the media that suggests that in order to express their dissatisfaction, certain local communities bombed the local electricity substation. This has resulted in the electricity blackout with many ratepayers – local communities not having access to electricity.

As the provincial government we are attending to this matter as a matter of urgency. We wish to assure the community of eNdumeni that a task team has been assigned to look into all these issues.

Honourable members, having said that, the 2019 Youth Parliament has as special significance as it coincides with the 25th celebrations of our freedom and democracy.

On this important sitting, we need to pause and remember the young and energetic intellectuals, who fought for this freedom under the banner of the African National Congress (ANC), the premier African Liberation Movement.

Most countries in Africa today have been free from colonialism for at more than three decades. Some are celebrating their jubilee as independent states. Our country, the last to achieve independence has completed the first two decades of democratic rule.

Honoured Guests and youth leaders - We have to ask ourselves the question: where will South Africa be when it reaches its third decade of as a free and democratic nation? Primarily this will be determined by what the youth do today and for the next five years.

Youth development has been at the centre of Government programmes since the ascension to power of the African National Congress which was formed by Pixley ka Isaka Seme as the Parliament of the African People, standing against the Parliament of the racist Union Government established in 1910.

In KwaZulu-Natal the ANC has been involved in the governance of the Province. In 1994 it displayed maturity and restraint when it participated in the Government of Provincial Unity as a junior partner rather than fan the flames of internecine violence by insisting that the will of the majority determine the character of the government.

Madam Speaker, we are happy to say that the ANC-led Government of South Africa and the Government of KwaZulu-Natal have prioritized youth programmes.

We have Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Arts and Culture, Community Safety and Liaison, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Education, Health, Human Settlements and Public Works, and Sports and Recreation.

Each of the departments has programmes that focus directly on youth development. The programmes focus on developing critical capabilities that enable the youth to participate productively in the development and transformation of the country. The programmes address the routine public services in education, health, and so on, as evident above. However each department also has internship, learnership, apprenticeship, and economic development programmes.

Madam Speaker, yesterday - Members of the Executive Council reflected on what line function departments are doing to ensure youth empowerment.

We wish to report today that over the past few years the provincial government has been implementing programmes to drive youth empowerment including more than R2, 5 billion towards bursaries for needy students.

In particular, we have more than 22 students who were awarded R350 000 each to pursue studies in the aviation sector. We have pointed out in many platforms that this investment should be viewed within the context of our programmes on “Skills Revolution.”

The skills revolution is our long-term plan aimed at ensuring that KZN becomes a “Skills Capital” of South Africa. We are skilling our young people to become drivers of job creation in various sectors of our economy as projected through Provincial Growth and Development Strategy.

As you all know, South Africa faces a major challenge in producing the required number of skills needed by the various sectors of our economy to sustain and indeed improve our current growth rates.

The skills shortage in South Africa relates not only to the high-end professionals such as engineers, scientists, IT specialists, doctors and teachers etc, but also to the millions of semi-skilled and unskilled, often illiterate workers, who either cannot find work because they lack the required skills, or who cannot advance up the employment ladder owing to lack of technical skills.

As KZN Government, we must hasten to point out that our partnership with SETAs and National Skills Fund has benefited more than 5000 learners who have received apprentices training in the fields of manufacturing, engineering and construction.

More than R112 million has been used for this programme with more than 40 companies training young people as electricians, millwrights, fitters and turners, petrol mechanics, diesel mechanics, Spray Painters, Auto Body Repairers, Boilermakers, Welders, Bricklaying, Carpentry, Plumbing and Painting.

The Public Service Internship Programme has allocated more than R52.5 million on thousands of interns, with the Departments of Health, Education, and Transport having the highest number of interns and corresponding funds allocation.

More than R5.4 million has been allocated to the Rural Youth Skills Development Programme, of which R3 million is allocated to Rural Youth Skills Development Learnerships, R1.5 million to Rural Youth Skills Development Internship, and R1 million to Rural Youth Skills Development Apprenticeship, all targeted at this point in the Msinga, Nkandla, and Ntambanana areas, but planned to be extended to the whole province as budget permits.

In addition, we wish to highlight the following:-

The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, for instance, has made available in excess of R94 million for skills development – covering around 3 425 youth for various technical capacities. The programme will run for three years.

I wish to report to this house that we have also recruited 375 jobless youth who are trained as plumbers and now involved in the War on Leaks Programme.

The **Transport Department**, has committed itself to the escalation of economic empowerment set-aside threshold for young people from 32% to 40% where funds had been ring-fenced for youth owned co-operatives and SMMEs, especially in the potholes patching projects to at least reach 35% this year. Moreover, youth co-operatives were enjoying preferential procurement with respect to the supply of protective gear for Zimbabwe contractors.

Career guidance is crucial for young people to make informed career choices hence **Department of Education** has put in place various career awareness initiatives like 'World of Work' earmarked for grade 7 – 9 learners while all schools were encouraged to conduct career information sharing and simulation sessions to empower our youth with necessary knowledge on career options before reaching FET phase.

The province is also investing in the provision of science laboratories to grow the pool of people with critical skills required for the advancement of the country's economy.

Education

In my inaugural address we spoke out very strongly about education, health and community mobilisation.

During the sitting of this youth parliament we wish to reiterate our commitment in making **education a 'societal issue'** through mass mobilization for quality education. We want to revive old African saying - **Your Child is My Child, My Child is Your Child**. This is what we stated in the inaugural address.

We must reach a point where we all agree that education of our children is sacrosanct and thus nothing should be allowed to get between learners and quality education.

The crime at school, alcohol abuse and the causes of dysfunctional schools need to be reversed as we all mobilize for the agreed set of basic non-negotiables: teacher in school in class on time teaching and the learner to be in class on time learning and respecting the teacher.

We probably need to interrogate the effectiveness of the participation of community structures in the maintenance of the functioning of schools in the face of social ills.

This is the year to build partnerships.

Ladies and Gentlemen – yesterday we concluded the South African Aids Conference.

In our address during the launch of the Human Rights Plan, as KZN we committed ourselves to intensify the program of mass mobilization to promote the prevention of HIV, AIDS and TB by promoting behavioural changes in society, promoting access to medication and sound nutrition. We want youth leaders to be at the forefront.

Next week, the KZN Government will host a Provincial Government Lekgotla. We will discuss programmes for the acceleration of programmes aimed at fighting HIV and AIDS across the province. Young people must be at the forefront.

Critically, we will discuss the role of communities and community healthcare workers in our quest to defeat AIDS in our society. The way strategy will be articulated in the State of the Province Address.

Despite challenges caused by burden of diseases on the healthcare system in this country, want to ensure that nurses and community healthcare workers are an integral part of efforts aimed at ensuring quality healthcare.

Importantly, we want to get more young people to be involved in healthcare management.

Social Cohesion

Madam Speaker, September is Heritage Month. We are calling upon the people of this province, especially young people to join hands and showcase the rich tapestry of our multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural composition. We might come from different backgrounds, but there is a need to forge unity and a sense of a common destiny for all.

In the upcoming Lekgotla next week, we will discuss programmes of Social Cohesion that will unite and rebuild the souls of our people and inculcate the best of human values.

It is of paramount importance to rekindle the vision of an ideal society which is respectfully, peaceful, compassionate, and imbued with the values of honour and integrity.

Youth leaders who are part of this youth parliament in eNdumeni must make a solid and clear presentation to be considered by Legkotla.

Human Settlement

Madam Speaker, as part of youth empowerment efforts, **Human Settlement** is running Graduate Mentorship programme to build a pool of highly skilled professionals especially in the engineering disciplines – with 58 youthful graduates having benefited from the department's bursary programme that is backed with experiential placement under the supervision of experienced and competent professionals within the department.

To help develop sustainable youth owned enterprises **COGTA** and in liaison with other developmental agencies, funded skills training initiatives with special emphasis on financial and enterprise management whilst at the same time making bursaries available for aspirant young people wishing to pursue careers in various fields essential for the performance of municipalities.

COGTA has also created hundreds of internship opportunities for young people who are placed in different units of the department. Skills development is has also been extended to more than 213 young councillors to arm them with critical skills they could use to fend for themselves in life after finishing their term of office.

Community Safety & Liaison has prioritised the filling of strategic positions with youthful candidates to create a formidable base for leadership capabilities in government and we are determined to achieve 40% in terms of recruiting young people in their leadership ranks while at the same time targeting youth owned businesses as their service providers.

All departments, including Social Department, Sports & Creation, Arts & Culture and as well as Agriculture are actively involved in various programmes directed at the empowerment of our young people, either through skills development, recruitment policies or creation of business opportunities that are biased towards young entrepreneurs.

Honourable Members, these are concrete programmes that will be sustained as we start this term of office.

Critically, as government we are encouraging young people to debate policy choices available in the manner we manage the economy and how to ensure that state resources are used to benefit more people – especially the youth.

Next week we will have Provincial Executive Council Lekgotla – and we are committing to discuss the resolutions of this Youth Parliament. These will also feature very strongly on the State of the Province Address – because this government understands that the future of this province is in the hands of young people.

With those words, I thank you