

**INAUGURATION SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE PREMIER OF KWAZULU-NATAL,
MR SIHLE ZIKALALA - 27 May 2019**

Madam Speaker;
Deputy Speaker;
Judge President;
Honourable Members of the Legislature;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Leaders of different sectors of society;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

We have descended to the KwaZulu-Natal Capital City to inaugurate and mark the beginning of the 6th provincial administration. It is with an esteem sense of humility to welcome all of you coming from different towns, farms, valleys, and hills of our beautiful province.

We welcome guests from every corner of our country just as we embrace members of our human family who have travelled far and wide from the four corners of the globe to be with us.

As we gather in this solemn occasion we cannot omit to thank the people of our province and our country who honoured the sacrifices of the architects of our democracy by voting on elections day to ensure that the will of the people triumphs.

We thank the people and all political parties for ensuring peaceful campaigning as well as free and fair elections. And so today, we raise our national flag to honour the victory of democracy and the promise of freedom, justice, and peace.

Today as we mark the beginning of the sixth provincial administration, we are acutely aware that all political parties that contested elections would have preferred to get more votes but the people of KwaZulu – Natal have expressed their choices unambiguously. Through their votes the people on whose shoulders we stand- have affirmed the future.

We are conscious that the people are yearning for a united, non-racial, non-sexist, just, and prosperous society, that is free of poverty, unemployment, crime and instability.

As the provincial government, we pledge to work and cooperate with all political parties in the legislature. We take a solemn vow that we will service the people of KwaZulu-Natal without regard to their political affiliation, creed, status, or location.

We are a creation of a people's movement, the African National Congress, which embodies and cherishes the best values of human civilisation.

We are tolerant to a multiplicity of divergent views, yet remain steadfastly principled and uncompromising on our goal to unite our nation and deliver a better life for all.

We shall never disregard any view, request, and proposal from individuals and organisations on the basis of their political affiliation or status in life. We are government for all KZN people and we shall serve dearly at all material times.

To the Speaker of the KZN Provincial Legislature and to all opposition parties, we commit that the provincial government will always be accountable at all material times. We remain guided and propelled by the revolutionary and wise counsel of Almirar Cabral that, "Tell no lies, claim no easy victories and mask nothing from the masses".

Compatriots, as we assume the responsibility of leading the Provincial Administration, we are acutely conscious of the immediate needs from our people who have entrusted us with a solemn mandate to change their lives for the better.

As Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, I fully concur with President Cyril Ramaphosa when, during his inauguration, said:

"South Africans want action and not just words and promise. And there will be action. It is through our actions now that we will give form to the society for which so many have fought and sacrificed and for which all of us yearn. All South Africans yearn for a society defined by equality, by solidarity, by a shared humanity. They yearn for a society in which our worth is determined by how we value others."

Over the next weeks flowing from the priorities of the people, the National Development Plan, and the KZN Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, the incoming administration will consolidate and begin to implement a comprehensive plan to ensure growth and development of our province.

Priority No.1 – Basic Services

We are humbled by progress made in the provision of basic services in KZN. However, people are clear that their immediate challenge is access to clean potable water. Water is life and access to it is an important human right enshrined in our Constitution.

Our province had made progress in many areas on the provision of water. However, due to factors like climate change, environmental degradation, ageing and dilapidated infrastructure, the progress has been reversed.

The provincial government will coordinate with District Councils to assess their status on provision of water and develop a comprehensive plan to ensure we meet this demand as a key and urgent deliverable amongst the basic needs of our citizens.

Priority No.2 – Job Creation

We know that one of the major challenges facing our country is the unacceptably high level of unemployment. This is a major challenge which is ruining lives of our people, especially the youth.

We will strengthen the coordination of all skills development programmes to better equip our people with relevant skills. We will also be moving with speed to stimulate

economic industries that have the potential of creating more jobs; and these include the following:

- Developing a dedicated support mechanism and infrastructure to enhance manufacturing, given that most of the manufacturing activities create more jobs.
- Develop a dedicated support to clothing and textile through exploring possible incentives or establishing a dedicated Special Economic Zone for Textile.
- Provide a comprehensive support package to KZN farmers so that they can become more productive and profitable. This will include a dedicated mechanisation plan and access to market for small scale and subsistence farmers.
- We will further engage National Government in conducting assessment of all farms that have been returned back to communities. We must engage in a process of reactivation all those farms within a clear framework based on supporting those who work the land. It is high-time that the land that has been redistributed to our people is utilised productively, hence this support must focus on those who are committed to work the land.

Priority No 3 – Growing the Economy

We fully appreciate that economic growth is central to job creation. The provincial government commits to the following:

- Ensure acceleration of the investment drive that the Province led towards the Presidential Investment Conference to attract more investors to the province.
- Ensure the implementation of all catalytic investment projects by setting up a permanent coordination mechanism which will support project promoters to fast-track implementation.
- Ensure the implementation of District Industrial Hubs and comprehensive support for industrial parks such as KwaSithebe, Ladysmith and Newcastle. All our efforts on industrialisation will continue to feed and be linked to our two Special Economic Zones namely Dube Trade Port and Richards Bay Economic Development Zones.

Priority No.4 - Growing SMMEs and Cooperative

We want to declare poverty as a public enemy. We say so because poverty creates a vicious cycle of hunger, indignity, and insecurity. It contributes to social instability, crime, moral decay, and compounds the impact of under-development.

It is abundantly clear that a democracy can only survive if it is founded on a thriving, shared economy. A thriving economy, in a national democratic society, requires efficient markets that address the racial and gender exclusions of the apartheid past as well as address the peri-urban squalor and grinding rural poverty.

Experience and international research tells us that small and micro enterprises play a major role in fighting poverty, in particular, through small and localised business opportunities.

Therefore, our major focus over the next five years will be on pursuing the radical economic transformation programme – Operation Vula. We are going to ensure that government source its required products from local small and micro enterprises and cooperatives.

The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs will soon launch the Operation Vula Fund to provide financial support to feasible SMMEs and Cooperatives.

We want to lift millions of people out of poverty through a clear radical economic transformation programme.

We will focus on the development of rural areas and ensure that communities in these areas enjoy the fruits of democracy. We want to rebuild these local areas as engines of national and provincial economic development.

It is through the development of rural communities that we will ensure meaningful inclusive economic growth, redistribution of wealth and the creation of an equal society. We want to deliver a genuinely new South Africa where there is equal access to opportunities.

Priority No. 5 – Education and Skills Development

Education is central in national development. It is through education that the country's human resource gain capacity to be absorbed by industries. The provincial government will continue with plans to provide access to education, including ensuring that children at the age of three years attend Early Childhood Development.

We want to see our department of education moving with speed to ensure that secondary education fully embrace the provision of technical skills and the evolving technological development which is part of Fourth Industrial Revolution to ensure that there is a just transition and that no one is left behind.

Priority No. 6 – Human Settlement and sustainable livelihood

We will continue with the provision of houses and ensuring a sustainable livelihood to all our people. In the last financial year the department detailed mega housing projects which absorbed more people. These are:

- the building of 25 000 houses at Cornubia in eThekweni;
- 10 000 houses in uMhlatuze;
- 10 585 social/rental housing in eThekweni Inner City;
- 27 875 Urban Hub units in KwaMashu Bridge City;
- 18 000 Urban Regeneration units in Umlazi;
- 20 000 units in the Amaoti Greater Housing Project;
- 9 511 units in Johston, Blaaubosch Cavan; and
- 4 600 units Ilembe: KwaDukuza:Hyde Park.

In other words, over the next few years, the Province will deliver no less than 125 000 units. We will give progress when we present the State of the Province Address in June 2019.

One of the major focus of this administration will be to develop and implement a clear plan to provide houses to all people who stay in transit camps.

The department will embark on a vigorous approach through establishing war-rooms together with affected municipalities to ensure implementation, monitoring and delivery of projects targeting these communities living in transit camps.

Priority No. 7 – Build a Peaceful Province

It is an indisputable fact that KwaZulu–Natal is characterised as one of the violent provinces in the country. We need to take decisive action to address violence and crime in the province.

We will ensure the implementation of all recommendations of the Moerane Commission which was tasked to investigate factors behind the killing of political leaders and activists. This work will also include support by the National Task Team which is investigating cases related to the killing of political leaders.

Crime has equally become a vicious scourge in many areas. People live in fear as criminals embark on a reign of terror in communities. The situation gets compounded by the lack of effective response from law enforcement agencies because of apparent the lack of capacity, inadequate resources, or alleged lack of commitment from the police. We will monitor the functioning of all police stations which have high levels of crime and ensure that we take necessary interventions.

We will further ensure the functioning of community policing forums to help mobilise communities to work in support of the law enforcement agencies.

Working with the people and all sectors of society, we commit to building a peaceful province where no one will live in fear.

Priority No. 8 - Build a caring and incorruptible government

South Africans from all walks of life have spoken.

Through their votes, people have made a telling statement that they need a government that cares, listens, and responds to their concerns. We commit to move with an accelerated speed while providing services with care to all

We have undertaken to ensure that all departments are fully functional, effective, and strictly adhere to the public service principles of Batho-Pele.

We take this opportunity to call on all government employees to serve our people honestly, respectful and with diligence. There must be no excuse to selflessly and faithfully serve the public.

We are mindful that the conditions of some public servants require major improvements and we commit to spare no time in attending to their legitimate concerns so that all public servants are single-mindedly focused on serving the people.

The Premier's Office will embark on Operation Siyahlola which will focus on the functioning of the departments, government service centres and monitoring the implementation of government projects.

We will do this to ensure that we instil the culture of serving the people because ours is a National Democratic Revolution which seeks to attain human dignity and equality for all. The state as a pillar of human support must treat, care for, and protect all people, especially the weak, vulnerable, and the disabled.

We draw inspiration and courage from the ANC Strategy and Tactics which says: “If there were to be any single measure of the civilising mission of the NDR, it would be how it treats the most vulnerable in our society”.

This means we must create safe communities where vulnerable children, disabled persons, and the elderly will live and prosper in an environment free from harm, hunger, and discrimination.

It President Mandela who warned us in Long Walk to Freedom that, “a nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.”

Compatriots, this administration will tighten the fight against corruption which robs the vulnerable and poorest of the poor of services and opportunities.

We will ensure that all cases of corruption are dealt with expeditiously and further ensure transparency in the work of government especially the procurement processes. The abuse of political or administrative power must not, and will not, be tolerated.

The task of building an effective state machinery will include building the capacity of all department and municipalities. As such, the provincial government will strengthen its supervision, enhance support, and provide effective interventions where municipalities are not performing as expected.

We call on the private sector to make necessary sacrifices and lend a firm hand in the reconstruction and development of our country. We must choose to win together as patriots or perish together in pursuit of narrow selfish gains.

We also call for ethical, bold, and visionary leadership that cares about the wellbeing of all our people from our valued business community.

We also invite the private sector and law enforcement agencies to act decisively against private sector corruption which include business fronting, collusion, and price-fixing.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as Premier for all the people of KZN, I invite you all to partner with our government in forging a lasting social compact to drastically reduce the scourges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

It is in our hands to build and sustain a resilient partnership.

When we cast our mirror to reflect on our recent past, we can all appreciate the progress our country has achieved since 1994.

While we are still faced by a myriad of stubborn and persistent socio-economic challenges, we cannot underplay the achievements of the past 25 years of democracy.

The progress we have made cannot be solely claimed as the victory of political parties. In our province, we remain highly indebted to all sectors of society for the role they have played to improve the lives of many of our people. We know that for a fact:

- Without traditional leaders many areas would still be engulfed in violence, destruction, and underdevelopment. We salute the institution of traditional leadership for collaborating with government and other social actors to foster peace, democracy, and development.
- Without His Majesty, uHlanga Lomhlabathi, we could still be trapped in perpetual conflict and violence. We applaud also applaud iSilo for his exemplary and unparalleled leadership in the fight against the spread of the HIV epidemic. Thanks to His Majesty, today more than a million males have undergone medical male circumcision, many more men and women are constantly engaged in number of programme that seek to instil good human behaviour and ubuntu. Our King, who values education deeply, is also a champion of improving learning outcomes at our schools.
- We are blessed to work closely with religious leaders from all faith groups. Our religious leaders have never relegated the task of building moral values and social cohesion. Day by day, they have responded positively to our challenges and remain an integral part of the struggle for social and political stability for our people to live in peace and harmony.
- We convey a sincere word of gratitude to our Business sector. Even in the midst of global economic crisis, international trade wars, domestic economic downfall, and disruptions by some who call themselves business forums; they have not thrown the towel and surrendered to despair. Instead, they have remained steadfast in working with our government to turn the corner to grow the provincial economy and create jobs.
- Notwithstanding few occasions, the organised labour formations both in the private and public sectors have remained the backbone of stability and have placed themselves at the disposal of the country to protect jobs and ensure industrial stability without betraying their mandatory responsibility of representing workers.
- We also wish to thank the professional classes for choosing to work and live in KZN. We will continue to engage you and source you skills to create a truly vibrant and successful economy and successful society.
- KZN is also blessed with internationally renowned scholars and boasts reputable universities. We will continue to strengthen our partnership with academia because we want to excel in all fields of human endeavour.

We are highly indebted to all leaders of our social formations who have always been in the forefront of supporting the transformation programme and the creation of a better life for all.

Compatriots, it is 25 years since the first Premier of this Province, Dr Frank Mdlalose, addressed the first provincial legislature. Because of the Government of National Unity (GNU), he led a ten-member provincial cabinet formed by both Inkatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress.

He worked well with former President of the Republic of South Africa J.G Zuma when he was the MEC for Economic Development and Tourism in this province.

Both leaders, working with other leaders of both organisations, inculcated a culture of mutual respect and promoted a climate of co-existence amongst leaders of different political parties in the provincial legislature. I offer to maintain such an approach as we start this term of office.

Accordingly, we salute the first elected public representatives across all political parties who served the first post-apartheid provincial legislature. They all became a collective voice that represented the voters who fought for centuries to elect the government of their choice.

The lesson we must draw from the previous generations that served in the Legislature is that of working together and fostering peace amongst parties.

The Out-Going Premier - Willies Mchunu and myself had a honour to go and report the work done by the outgoing Provincial Administration that is exiting today. I thank you Macingwane for this critical and exemplary strengthened our relationship with the Royal Household and other stakeholders as we start this term of office.

We pause here to salute His Majesty for guiding us as our father. We thank His Majesty for his enduring role he has played in laying a solid foundation for a stable and solid provincial government. Bayede wena weSilo!!!!!!

Compatriots, we are determined to create an image of a government that listens and take seriously all matters placed for our attention.

We accept that for the good of our province and our country, all communities must be afforded space to make their contribution, utilizing the experience and expertise available to them to make ours a winning province.

We will strive to work tirelessly and great dedication. As revolutionaries, we are nothing but the servants of the people. There shall be no space to rest when our people suffers poverty, unemployment and poverty. There shall be no joy relation when lives of the people are still ruined by crime, violence, abuse and drugs.

We commit to attain fundamental and radical socio-economic development for betterment of all people. There is no humanity born to suffer injustices, indignity. We draw courage and wisdom from the holly bibles, the Psalm 9 verse 13 which says, "for the needy shall not always be forgotten. The expectations of the poor shall not perish forever".

Programme Director, I thank you!!

KWAZULU – NATAL PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

In line the Constitution of RSA sections 132, the Premier must appoint the Executive Councils, composed of no less than five and not more than ten members.

Members of the Executive Council of a province are accountable collectively and individually to the legislature for the exercise of their powers and the performance of their functions.

I hereby announce the following members of the Executive Council:

NO. DEPARTMENT PROPOSED NAMES

1. Agriculture Bongzi Sthole-Moloi
2. Art & Culture, sport & recreation - Hlengiwe Mavimbela
3. COGTA Sipho Hlomuka
4. Economic Dev., Tourism & Enviro. - Nomusa Dube-Ncube
5. Education - Kwazi Mshengu
6. Finance - Ravi Pillay
7. Health - Nomagugu Simelane Zulu
8. Public Works & Human Settlements - Peggy Nkonyeni
9. Transport, Comm Safety & Liaison - Mxolisi Kaunda
10. Social Development - Nonhlanhla Khoza