

**State of the Province address by the honourable Mr J S Ndebele Premier of
KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg**

13 February 2008

His Majesty the King, Hlanga Lomhlabathi
Speaker
Deputy Speaker
Mr MJ Mahlangu, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP)
Members of the Provincial Executive Council
Abantwana baseNdlunkulu and all Amakhosi present
Members of the legislature
Mayors and councillors
Your Excellencies, members of diplomatic corps
Leaders of political parties
Dr FT Mdlalose, former Premier and Mrs E Mdlalose
Director General and Heads of Departments
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen
People of KwaZulu-Natal
Your aspirations are our inspiration!

Consolidating our identity

Mr Speaker, please allow me to commence this address by reading a poem by architect Paul Mikula. It illustrates colourfully that a country or province's natural endowment or heritage is only an advantage and bankable asset once its people take advantage of it.

Imagine

A long, hard hot trip from Durban up, up over the Hills into KwaZulu-Natal,
eThekweni, Uthukela, Eshowe, Nkwaleni, Mthonjaneni.
Endless fields of sugarcane and eucalyptus plantations
And then, not more than 20 minutes north of Melmoth
You burst out of those plantations
Reach the Crest of a Hill and see it spread out before you
A vast 360 degree Valley containing all the hills of Zululand

The Valley of the Kings
The birth place of all these who are part of this legacy
Work your way down slowly
And into the thorny veld below
Break your trip and feel the heat
As you climb to the top of the
Spirit of eMakhosini Monument,
And learn of its history.
Back on the Vryheid Road
Turn off at the symbolic gateway
On your left
And head straight into the depths of the bush.
Imagine away the enormous pre-cast
Concrete cross on your left.
And the derelict ruins at its feet.
Drive carefully
Around Retief's silent Memorial
Until you glimpse in the distance,
Mgungundlovu
Marked out against the hill at its feet
The Inqolobane
Now the lookout tower, the landmark

Of the eMakhosini
A golden mkhonto piercing the sky
For the people of Heaven,
AmaZulu
Slicing into the ground at its feet
Like a big Zululand Donga
Blood red, like the earth
A
The Ancestors
That is all there is,
And veld, and thorn trees
And sky.
As you work your way down the hillside
The markers disappear
Until
Just after crossing the wide Mkumbane Spruit
Under the arch of acacia trees
The red wall presents itself again.
Simple, Majestic
Emakhosini pierced right through it.
Drop a stone at the Isivivane
To recall your own amadlozi
And linger with the crafters
Sheltered against the dolorite wall
Reconstructed from deserted kraals and buildings
By stone masons from Isandlwana and Nquthu
Before entering the earth and proceeding slowly
Up the ramp and into the very
Bowl of it.
Burst out into KwaGogo,

The Navel.
The great circular meeting place
With the sky as its ceiling
Or drop off into the foyer to
Refresh yourself and to draw air
Then enter further into the earth
Into the Imbubu through a
Great arched Opening
Behind a woven reed screen
Shielded from all daylight
And into the place where the history
Is told;
Where the ancestors are with their
Vast herds of the finest Ngunis
A deep blue massive dry
Stacked angular and ancient
Dolorite Wall
Symbolises the Kings
Whose praise songs are engraved
Onto glass panels
Floated in front of the Rocks
Follow their praises
Or turn around
And study in the details the
Delicate archaeology of the Valley
Highlighted in crisp recesses in
The thick wall of the Auditorium
And then follow through to the
Gentle, soft, female part of the

Museum

Where, housed within deep recesses
All the most beautiful
Artefacts are displayed
Pots, izinkamba, amaphiso, amathunga
Headrests, beaded panels, baskets
The very Finest Only.
And opposite that the showcase of the

Royal things.

Then linger or go through to the Auditorium
Stepping down towards a grand
Extra wide, extra high screen
And sound to blow your mind
Where the stories are told
By the most skilled of our Movie Makers
Draw your breath and wander through
To the restaurant, filled with light
And an endless view over the hills
Of Babanango that Paton wrote about
And imagine all the
Graves in the Distance
As if you could embrace
The ancestors in your arms
There is a wonderful shop
Here on the way out
Showing only the best works
Of our indigenous artists
At KwaGogo a couple of musicians
Are playing their wonderful traditional

Instruments

Sit down and listen or go up the ramp
To the ground.
Then climb further into the Tower
The Inqolobane
The Spear
The Spirit
To get a bird's eye view of Mgungundlovu
The greatest of Military towns.
Spread out before you,
600 metres long
And that's only isibaya.
Come down after a while
And sit on the zig-zag wall
Of the ancestors;
And study the sacred
And special plants
Which grow nearby.
Or fight your way up
Through the bush
And stand there
In the largest
Cattle kraal ever.
Or wander between the
Archaeological remnants.
Or catch the bush taxi

Waiting

In the trees nearby.
Its time to collect the kids

Playing at the lower level
Where the seminar rooms are;
Where school kids do projects
And conferences are held.
Its time to get back into the car
It is time to reflect on the symbolism,
The Royal Equilateral Triangle, the male, female,
The dark, the light, sky and earth,
Soft and hard
To be or not to be
And about the future and the past;
and eMakhosini,
And finally, about yourself and your role in things
This State of the Province is about us as elected representatives of the people of
KwaZulu-Natal and our role in things.
On display in the hall is an architectural plan of how we concretely seek to build on our
rich heritage and make it a "must-see" destination.

Today on 13 February 2008, we pause to reflect on the legacy of eMakhosini, the
Valley of the Kings: where for the past 600 years a modern African civilisation has
evolved, giving birth to the best that we have today. Today on 13 February we pause to
reflect on the legacies of KwaBulawayo, KwaDukuza, eMkhadini, eMgungundlovu
ondukuzibomvu, kwaNodwengu, oNdzini, eMkhontweni, oSuthu: where for many years
our forebears led this region to a Renaissance from these capitals.

We stand here to salute iLemb'eleqamany'amalembé ngokukhalipha together with
uVez'uNonyanda, uMgabadelé, - together with uMsimud'ovele ngesiluba, Phakathi
kwaMaNgisi namaQadasi. We stand here to salute UHlamvana bhul'umlilo, Ubaswe
uMantshonga beno Gqelebana and we salute UMamonga woSuthu, and our present king
UBhejane phum'siqiwini.

We reflect on the legacies of our Kings because the year ends with the number eight.
The past 180 years has created a very rich heritage for the Zulu people and the people
of KwaZulu-Natal. In 1828, 180 years ago King Shaka passed on, leaving a legacy and
identity which today is known throughout the world.
Today the name of King Shaka is an international icon. In commemorating this legacy
we shall enhance the iconic status of the site in KwaDukuza.

One of the distinctive features of the Moses Mabhida Stadium now under construction in
Durban is the Multi-Media Centre which will tell the story of the Zulu people and the
people of KwaZulu-Natal. This multi-media centre will be an information hub about other
economic and cultural activities that KwaZulu-Natal has to offer. The plans for the multi-
media interpretation centre at uMgungundlovu, Palace of King Dingane, have now been
completed.

As we intensify this journey to understand our past present and future and prioritise
reconciliation, we should recall that it is a journey that started with the polarised
relationship between King Dingane and Piet Retief, each representing a different world,
but both marching into an uncertain future. It is a journey that took us to the battle of
eNcome on 16 December 1838, before taking us to the Ultimatum Tree Encounter on the
banks of the mighty uThukela River on 11 December 1878. The journey was to intensify
in the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War.

It was a journey of unresolved conflict, which was to climb up Ceza Mountain in 1888
before taking its long and windy strides across the seas to the Island of St. Helena. On
its return to our shores it was to show its ugly face with the arrest and incarceration of
King Dinuzulu in 1908. However, this journey of unresolved conflict was to express itself
in a reconciliatory tone when General Louis Botha released King Dinuzulu from Prison.
Today the Statue of King Dinuzulu stands side by side with that of General Louis Botha,
in a symbolic gesture to signify the reconciliation of 1910.

The unveiling of the statue will also be a fitting commemoration to 100 years of the King's trial and imprisonment. In the words of Nelson Mandela King Dinuzulu would have said: "I feel like a black man in a white man's court." As Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, I together with His Majesty the King, who was accompanied by Prince Reginald, uMntwana waseMahashini and uMntwana WakwaPhindangene and other senior members of our Royal House, visited the foundry in Balgowan where this statue was being crafted. It was a moving experience for all present.

The symbolic significance of the statue was clear to all. We have come to the conclusion that such a symbolically significant part of our heritage cannot be opened without rhyme or reason. We find rhyme and reason in the journey that starts from 1838 and goes through 1878, 1888, when King Dinuzulu became the first Zulu King to pray to a Christian God and the first King to be subjected to a trial under colonial laws in 1908. This year is the 40th anniversary of the passing on of the father of the present Monarch King Bhekuzulu Cyprian kaSolomon. We hope to have an appropriate commemoration in this regard.

I was invited at the beginning of this year to the 40th commemoration of the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King Junior in Atlanta where I shared the same platform with President Clinton. As we know Dr Martin Luther King Junior communicated regularly with Chief Albert Luthuli and he received the Nobel Peace Prize after the Chief. There have since been three other South Africans to be so honoured.

The heritage of KwaZulu-Natal presents us with an opportunity to understand our history, our identity and our existence. In 2006 we commenced with a project to honour the heroes of the 1906 Bhambata Poll Tax Uprising. Again in 2006 we commemorated Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha. The spirit of Peaceful resistance, started by Ghandi in 1906 has influenced many a liberation movement. It played a significant role in shaping the thoughts of both Chief Albert Luthuli, and Martin Luther King Junior. At the conclusion of 2006 we brought back home the remains of a hero of our struggle, Moses Mabhida.

In 2007, we commemorated 40 years since the death of Chief Albert Luthuli. We unveiled the newly constructed Grave of Princess Mkabayi kaJama at eBaqulusini. This year 2008 we shall complete the construction and unveil the Grave of the Queen Mother Nandi near KwaBulawayo in uThungulu District. Critical to our heritage is the story of the Zulu people and the story of the people of KwaZulu- Natal. To this end the pilot KwaZulu-Natal Family Roots Project, aimed at assisting families and individuals trace and confirm their roots and heritage, will be launched in the course of 2008.

In October this year South Africa will host the World Summit of People of African Origin. This Summit will include people from the African Continent and the Diaspora. The Summit aims at creating sustainable dialogue, partnerships and strengthening Pan African Solidarity for a better Africa. In this context the 10th Anniversary of the African Renaissance Festival to be held during May this year will act as a catalyst for local participation in the Diaspora Conference.

Imagine if, of the 2,7 million schoolchildren in KwaZulu-Natal, at least some 750 000 can know about King Dinuzulu's journey of courage, patriotism and determination. Imagine if our children can understand the reconciliatory spirit of General Louis Botha. Imagine if at least the 750 000 of our children could know about Mahatma Ghandi and Satyagraha. Imagine if all our children would instantly recognise the South African flag, whether at the African Cup of Nations, at the World Cup or anywhere else. Imagine if all our children could sing the national anthem. And imagine what it would mean in our struggle to inculcate new non-racial, non-sexist and democratic values.

If all our children would be able to recite the Preamble of our Constitution, especially where it says:

"We, the people of South Africa,
Recognise the injustices of our past;
Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;
Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country and
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity."
Indeed, in the United States of America or in France this is taken for granted – knowing the national anthem, the national flag, Coat of Arms and the basic tenets of our Constitution is what makes for national identity and social cohesion.

The Local Heritage Forums which will be strengthened by the soon to be passed Heritage Legislation will be taking this journey to local levels.

Mr Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, in 2004 we were privileged to form a government on behalf of the people of KwaZulu-Natal. This is a responsibility which we take seriously. In this regard we understood, as we do now, that with the privilege of responsibility comes the obligation of accountability.

Your aspirations are our inspiration!

Apex Priorities

The national Cabinet Lekgotla in July 2007 proposed 24 Apex Priorities of government. These have now been formalised by President Mbeki in his State of the Nation Address on Friday, 8 February. In response to the National Cabinet Lekgotla's July proposals, the Provincial Government at its Indaba held at Ugu District in October 2007 adopted the following Programme of Action:

- * implementation of Anti-Poverty Strategy and Second Economy interventions
- * fighting crime and eradicating corruption
- * integrated Approach to Basic Service Delivery
- * development of Human Capability and Quality Education
- * provincial Infrastructure and Investment Strategy
- * 2010 Fifa World Cup
- * enhancing key areas of International Relations
- * building the capacity of the State to deliver
- * Agrarian Revolution, Land & Food Security
- * accelerate the fight against HIV and AIDS, other communicable diseases and promote healthy lifestyle
- * patriotism and social cohesion.

It is to this plan that all our programmes as government, will speak and unfold henceforth. This is in order to determine the speed with which we hope to attain our goal to better the lives of all in our beautiful and vibrant province. These priorities indicate our firm commitment to advancing service delivery. But how do we go about achieving this?

We recognised the need to invest heavily in our education and training. We have also launched an offensive against crime, poverty and disease. But like all other programmes of government, these could and will not be successfully carried out without ensuring that the machinery of Government functions collectively with communities and implemented optimally, efficiently and effectively.

Allied to this we also intensified our international relations because we believe fervently that self-isolation and an insular existence is unsustainable in a globalising world.

Mr Speaker, ladies and gentleman, in 2004 we made major strides in settling the past and ensured that peace, democracy and development permeates every aspect of KwaZulu-Natal.

Basic services

In 2004 we declared war on poor service delivery, as reports, some commissioned by our predecessors, indicated that KwaZulu-Natal was the poorest performer in the

country, in the provision of piped water, sanitation, refuse removal and electricity. We have progressively eradicated the bucket toilet system in KwaZulu-Natal. In 2003 we had 13,605 households utilising the bucket sanitation system. We progressively eradicated the bucket system to 3,226 in 2004 and 101 in 2007.

Mr Speaker, I have the pleasure to announce that the last four units will be eradicated by 20 February 2008, in the Umzimkhulu Local Municipality. Your aspirations are our inspiration! Mr Speaker, much remains to be done:

* The total number of households in the province is 2,2 million. Approximately 700 000 or 31% of the households are without portable water nearby.

* In respect of sanitation, 1 million do not yet enjoy basic sanitation and therefore basic human dignity. The municipalities with the most backlogs of water and sanitation are Zululand, Ugu, Uthungulu, Umzinyathi, Umgungundlovu and Umkhanyakude.

* In respect of electricity, 773 644 (34,1%) households do not have an electricity connection; whilst 1 498 356 households are connected.

Following the Provincial Government Water Summit held in 2005, the Provincial Government is working closely with all Water Boards towards provisioning of bulk infrastructure. In this regard an amount of R1 billion will be spent by Umgeni Water on six major infrastructure projects. One of these projects has reached completion and others are to be rolled out between now and 2010.

Growth and Development

The KwaZulu-Natal government has embarked on a strategy to woo investors to the province. In the previous two years, government delegations went to the United Arab Emirates with the aim of influencing investors to come to KwaZulu-Natal. On the 8 January 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the KZN government and an international developer based in Dubai. On 20 February this year the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the investor group will be visiting our province to finalise the master plan that will be presented by the end of March 2008.

We expect work to start soon thereafter. The project involves a multi-billion rand investment on the Northern side of uThukela River in the Macambini area. The project will be implemented in phases and will create tens of thousands of permanent jobs. This will be the fifth project of its kind in the world based on the concept of a "City within a City." As added value, an imposing statue of King Shaka will be erected as part of this project through private funding. Ingonyama Trust has made an in-principle agreement to this initiative.

Mr Speaker, this is an appropriate time to leverage this unique opportunity to implement a policy to encourage the development of integrated resort communities and tourism attractions that will create an economic and social multiplier on the investments made. The social and economic benefits to our people include skills training, employment, improvements to infrastructure, educational, health, vocational and commercial opportunities as well as specific economic benefits to the local community and the province from the revenues generated.

The project will be a fully integrated tourist destination located on approximately 7500 hectares of land. It will comprise a variety of market-segmented residential communities, entertainment attractions, hospitality, education, healthcare, leisure, retail and commercial offerings. We plan to make a detailed joint announcement in this regard in the coming weeks.

Your aspirations are our inspiration!

Economic Growth

The Gross Domestic Product per region (GDP-R) of the province of KwaZulu-Natal is now the second largest in the country, after Gauteng. The provincial government has

managed to reduce the unemployment rate from 33% in 2004 to 29, two percent in 2007. (Labour Force Survey, Stats SA 2007).

Mr Speaker the province's own economic development strategy which was developed over the last three years, aims to:

- * transform the structure of the provincial economy and narrow and eventually eliminate the gap between the first and second economies
- * increase investment in the province
- * build skills and capacity
- * broaden participation in the economy
- * increase competitiveness.

The Economic Development programme is vital as our society is undergoing rapid change that sees more and more people on the move having to adjust to new environments and new challenges. In this time of sometimes bewildering change, we need to create the conditions for interdependence and interconnectedness which is central for a caring society. In order to maximise the collective impact and synergy of government interventions in pursuit of the reduction of poverty and growing the economy, it is of critical importance to improve the spatial alignment and integration of resource allocation.

The Provincial Spatial Economic Development Strategy (PSEDS) database provides a mechanism to capture and reflect all capital projects spatially over the medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) period whilst the Provincial Nerve Centre is being used to obtain a single view of the province. The PSEDS database and the Provincial Nerve Centre are being used as cutting edge technological systems to assist our developmental decisions.

The KwaZulu-Natal Growth Fund provides medium to long-term funding in the form of senior and mezzanine debt for sustainable infrastructure and related projects within the KwaZulu-Natal province. The Fund's Investment Committee has approved projects with an estimated value of R414 million spread across key economic sectors such as manufacturing, transportation and logistics and agri-processing. This investment is set to yield an estimated 836 new and direct jobs.

Approximately 40% of these projects are in outlying areas within the province and through these 12 approved projects the Fund has also been able to promote significant black economic participation as a strategic imperative and requirement throughout all its current approved projects.

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)

Our government has correctly identified Black Economic Empowerment as a means to redress historical economic imbalances. When it comes to uplifting the social-economic profile of society, no government can be neutral. But what is business doing? Mr Speaker, meaningful participation of black people means in the context of the developmental province, the empowerment of particularly women, rural communities, youth, workers and the disabled. This participation can range from the creation of economic opportunity to ownership of businesses.

The essence of BEE is that it must benefit the majority of black South Africans, and do this by addressing all seven pillars of the generic BEE score card. These are ownership, control, skills development, employment equity, preferential procurement, enterprise development. We are finalising the establishment of a provincial BEE Advisory Council as an objective mechanism to monitor progress in BEE in the province.

Local Economic Development

Mr Speaker, it is essential that self-sustained financial development is fostered in government-facilitated local economic development (LED) and in the private sector. Our government is passionate about LED as a conduit to improve the quality of life of our people. To date just over R95 million in grants have been committed to 182 LED projects across the province. At least R41 million has been leveraged from the private and public sector in the form of co-funding, giving a total project value of R136 million. In the last five months 14 projects have been completed. In the pipeline and awaiting European Union approval are 23 projects valued at R70 million.

Growth of the KwaZulu-Natal co-operative movement

Co-operatives have been identified as an appropriate business form to drive development in the second economy and to help close the gap between the first and second economies in the province. Co-operatives are significant economic actors in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial economy. According to the indicator measurement, the province is on track with regard to the establishment and sustenance of co-operatives as social enterprises. The province has set a target of one million members to join various types of co-operatives by the end of 2009.

Support to our agricultural activities

We are continuing with our programme of Agrarian Reform, focusing on improved agricultural production and support to black entrepreneurs. The province of KwaZulu-Natal has huge agricultural potential, despite the fact that large tracts of land are underutilised, mainly in the previously disadvantaged areas where many of the unemployed people live. To address this problem, the Provincial Government through the Agrarian Revolution, has intensified funding to increase crop production in affected areas through commodity industry and supply chain management approach to agricultural products.

Government is assisting black farmers with mechanisation, irrigation and fencing in order to help them increase yields and secure year-round production of crops. We are also placing environment management issues high on the agenda. To this end a Provincial Action Committee on climate change is now fully operational.

HIV, AIDS and tuberculosis (TB)

The Provincial Aids Council which is an advisory body is constituted by the following members:

Ms N Barnabas
Mr B Dlamini
Mr S Mdletshe
Inkosi MZN Madlala
Mrs D Buthelezi
Mr N Ntombela
Mr M Mabaso
Mrs TP Payo-Dlwati
Ms Y Spain
Mr Z Zwane
Ms Z Ndlovu
Dr M Gumede
Mr S Jwacu
Mr M Khuboni
Mr R Gobind
Mr S Mbokazi
Ms D Nkosi
Prof NC Gqaleni
Mr S Mahlaba

The council will later be joined by two representatives of faith-based organisations which the sector is yet to finalise. The government is represented in the Council by the Premier, members of the Executive Council, the Director-General, Heads of Provincial Departments, Chairpersons of the District and Metro Aids Councils, Chairpersons of the Premier's Portfolio Committee and the Health Portfolio Committee. The prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the province is still high with close to two million people living with HIV and AIDS.

Antenatal clinic survey prevalence by age group shows that women aged 25 to 29, at 34,5% constitute the highest percentage in the country. Recognising the fact that HIV and AIDS is still the greatest challenge of our time, the government in partnership with the community, and other stakeholders, has adopted a comprehensive approach in the control of HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis (TB). We have increased the testing of the number of pregnant women and infants for HIV, from 32% in 2000 to more than 95% in 2007.

Further, we have witnessed a 60% increase in access to medication whereby 100% eligible babies received Nevirapine dosage. We have succeeded in demystifying the use of a condom and promoted condom use in the fight against HIV and AIDS in our province. Significant progress has been made in the administration of Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART). Close to 70 ART service points are now fully accredited and operational. As result, the number of registered ART patients increased from 200 in 2004 to more than 110 000 in 2007 and projected to reach more than 152 000 in 2008. In 2008 at least 95 ART service sites will be registered.

The government has increased funding for HIV and AIDS Control Programme in KwaZulu-Natal province, from close to R14 million in 2001 to R85 million in 2003 and then to more than R361 million in 2007.

Education

The "no fees" policy is intended to benefit learners in the poorest 40% of schools, to improve access to learning opportunities, particularly in indigent communities. The policy will also assist government to meet the Constitutional obligations of providing access to basic education. The Provincial Government began implementing the policy in 20% of the poorest schools at the beginning of the school year 2006, benefiting a total of 1 342 schools. Last year, about 2 000 schools were direct beneficiaries of the "no-fees" school policy, resulting on an overall coverage of 3 341 schools and impacting on one million learners.

Mr Speaker, in 2004 we had a backlog of 14 667 classrooms and 1 300 schools without adequate sanitation facilities. Since 2004 the backlog of 14 667 classrooms has been reduced by a total of 3 830 classrooms to 9 300 in 2008 respectively. Similarly, a total of more than 9 440 toilets has been built since 2004, and schools without adequate sanitation facilities reduced from 1 300 to 690. At present 97% of the children of compulsory school-going age in the province have access to education. Through the National School Nutrition programme 1,4 million learners are receiving free meals. In 2008 the Department of Education will maintain its crucial role in infrastructure provision as to be able to provide learners a safe and stimulating learning environment.

We are rolling-out Grade R towards the realization of the 2010 goals. In this financial year we want to increase the number of Grade R classes by 600 to cater for a further 18 000 learners. In 2008 the Department of Education is to advance training in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) phase for children who fall in the age category 0 to four years.

An amount of R21,6 million has been set aside for early childhood development in 2008, increasing to R97 million in 2010. To address this high priority programme 333 ECD educators and caregivers shall be employed in 2008. The department has developed plans to increase patriotism in the following ways:

- * getting all schools to sing the National Anthem and/or recite the oath at least once a week
- * hold workshops for schools on National Symbols
- * get all participants of the Schools Choral Eisteddfod to sing our National Anthem
- * supply flags to every school.

Matric results 2007

Mr Speaker, last year 78 schools achieved a 100% Matric pass rate in the province while 42 schools had a pass rate of less than 20%. The Province had an overall pass rate of 63,8%. The Provincial Government is positive that with the support and commitment of all stakeholders in the Province, we will be increasing our matric pass rate in the years to come. The Provincial Government has approved a Senior Certificate Learner Attainment Improvement Plan for 2008. We will furthermore concentrate on the successful implementation of the National Curriculum Statement.

The province will focus more strongly on the schools that obtain a pass rate of 50% or less in the Senior Certificate Exam or National Senior Certificate (NSC) for two consecutive years as these schools will be categorised as special measures schools. From the beginning of this school year all under-performing schools will set learner achievement targets in regard to the NSC. Performance targets are set for Ward Managers whose schools are on average under-performing. The Department of Education will implement a special programme for unsuccessful matric learners.

Masifundisane Adult Literacy Project

Mr Speaker, on 11 September 2007, we stood here on this very ground and presented certificates to 8 000 formerly illiterate people, thanks to the Masifundisane Campaign. Among those people was a 16year-old girl. Yet among them, was also the 101-year old grandmother – Bonezinkulu Magubane. On that warm afternoon Magubane publicly declared that through this programme, she had re-gained her dignity. On that afternoon, we counted Magubane as one of the eldest people who had joined the many millions of our people whose lives this Government has made better. Magubane can now read and write.

UGogo Magubane therefore personifies this government's commitment to making the lives of all our people young and old better than yesterday just like Gogo Magubane and millions of others. In the State of the Province address of 2005 we stated that 2,1 million people in KwaZulu-Natal were illiterate, they cannot read or write their own names. Others are functionally illiterate. History would judge us harshly if we did not do something to deal with illiteracy in a decisive manner.

In this regard we launched the revolutionary Masifundisane Adult Literacy Campaign. We set ourselves a target of 440 000 newly literate adults by the end of March this year and we are certain we will eradicate illiteracy in the province by the end of 2009.

Skills development through further education and training colleges (FET)

Our province has nine FET multi-campus colleges. Many of the colleges have skills centres located throughout the province. The Government has spent millions of rands recapitalising these colleges in the past three years. A short drive to the Umbilo Campus of Coastal FET College will land you in a state of the art Tool making Centre with machinery that would be the envy of many a factory. Just a few kilometres from here the Edendale Campus of Umgungundlovu FET College offers high quality construction skills that will make one a building contractor who can tender for small to medium construction jobs within a few months.

One can walk into the Nongoma Campus of Mthashana FET College and leave as a highly skilled producer of food – be it crop farming, fish farming and canned food production. Over and above the few skills I mentioned above, our FET colleges offer a wide range of

other skills programmes such as Information and Communications Technology, Mechanical Technology, Electrical Technology, Metallurgy, Maritime Studies, Tourism, Business Studies, Secretarial Courses, Clothing and Textiles, Hair Care, and many others.

We have to get our people in large numbers to enrol for either short (trimester) or yearlong programmes to gain skills that will make them economically active. We shall be launching a media campaign to publicize all our FET colleges and programmes.

KwaZulu-Natal: Building a learning province

Bunking school

Mr Speaker, I now want to address a few concerns regarding education in this province. The province has the largest schooling system in the Republic. There are 2, million children in just over 6 000 schools across the province. Our education budget is R20 billion, most of which is spent on schooling. By any standards, that is a substantial amount of money that is invested on our young people. The question we should ask ourselves is whether, at any one given hour, are all 2,7 million learners in class. Can we say with certainty that there will be 2,7 million learners in class at 10h30 tomorrow morning? I doubt it. My doubts come from personal experience as I travel around the province. I see schoolchildren in the streets and taxi ranks during school time. I get reports of schoolchildren going to shopping malls during school time. If the truth be told, the problem of children bunking school is largely a problem of black youth.

This problem seems to be an international phenomenon. From Harlem in the United States, through Brixton in the United Kingdom, to Soweto, Chatsworth and KwaMashu and Ngwelezane, many black children face a wasted future as a result of this problem. Essentially this reproduces Apartheid inequalities and represents a major challenge to our nation-building effort. I call on all our people to stand up and be counted – join our struggle to get all our children to be at school every minute of the school day.

This year we will launch a mass campaign to mobilise our communities to get our children back to school every hour of the school day. Every village, every township, every suburb, every religious community, every stokvel and every club should play a role in this campaign. To our children we should all say "Back to school, back to learning."

School pregnancies

Mr Speaker, another problem that has continued to plague us is the unacceptable number of teenage pregnancies. Every year about 5 000 pregnancies are reported to education officials in the province. This is truly tragic. In most of these cases, the future of the young mother is permanently compromised. The 5 000 babies who are born from these teenage pregnancies find themselves in rather unfortunate circumstances. The fact of the matter is that these babies are born to children for teenagers are children! Children are in no position to raise babies. They are not ready to do so. They have no time to do so. They have no knowledge of how babies are raised.

Teenage pregnancy is not only the responsibility of the girl who falls pregnant. This is not Immaculate Conception. We must ask the question what happens to the boy who impregnates this child. How do you know that your schoolboy son is not already an illegitimate teenage father?

We cannot look on and hope that this problem will automatically disappear. Teenagers do not belong in a maternity ward – they belong in school. Our communities should rise and fight the phenomenon of teenage pregnancies.

If we are to secure the future of our girl children and also protect them from sexually transmitted infections such as HIV and AIDS, we must work together to educate and

counsel our young people. Let every mother and every father play a role in guiding their children – boys and girls – away from engaging in sexual acts and towards learning.

Violence

Mr Speaker, I am very alarmed by the number of criminal incidents affecting some of our schools. Two weeks do not pass without an incident being reported. Either outsiders come into our schools to rob and assault teachers and learners, or children commit crimes with weapons they bring into some of our schools. In regard to the latter, I wish to appeal to parents and guardians to ensure that their children do not bring weapons to schools. It is important that parents talk to their children about the futility of violence and how violence harms not only the future of the victims of crime, but their own future as well.

I have instructed the Department of Education to adopt a stern approach to learners and teachers who bring weapons to schools. We will not stand helplessly while the life and limb is threatened by those who smuggle weapons to schools. The Departments of Education, Transport and Community Safety and Liaison have been working together and with the South African Police Service (SAPS) to ensure that our schools become safe centres of learning.

Scaling up National Youth Service (NYS)

As an apex priority, the NYS is a special government initiative that seeks to contribute to the enhancement of youth as present and future social capital. This is achieved through the involvement of young people in activities which provide benefits to the community while developing the abilities of young people through service and learning. The youth should be in the forefront in the process of reconciliation.

Several Provincial Departments are contributing to the National Youth Service programme by providing accredited skills to the youth. An amount of R5 million will be utilised for the National Youth Service which will target the training of 604 learners on skills programmes.

Community safety

Mr Speaker, in 2007 in the State of the Province Address we declared war on crime. We defeated apartheid and we will not allow ourselves to be defeated by crime and violence. To this effect we launched the Volunteer Social Crime Prevention Programme. I am pleased to report that the project is well in progress and we have in fact exceeded our target of 1000 volunteers.

This programme is a new concept in volunteer based community engagement aimed at social crime prevention. This effectively links these volunteers with law enforcement agencies, the community and other stakeholders in social crime prevention. As we speak, 1 200 volunteers are being trained by local experts as well as expert trainers from the United Kingdom (UK) using proven world-class crime reduction methods. The skills that are transferred to the volunteers will no doubt contribute towards the upliftment of not just those individuals but also the entire community in which they live and operate.

The Communities in Dialogue Programme was announced during the State of the Province address in 2006. In the Department of Community Safety and Liaison, a sustainable environment for dialogues in communities has been mobilised to assume responsibility in the struggle for peace, stability and safer places to live through Proactive Community Dialogue Sessions. Some of the dialogues in progress are at Steadville, Ezakheni (a rift over land invasions) and Charlestown (about cattle impounding and Trust Land dispute), including dealing with Isikebhe (an Illegal Crime Fighting Vigilante Group). Similar dialogues are taking place at Dundee/Nqutu, Manguzi, Port Edward and Umkomaas.

This programme has met with enormous success and is well received by communities. At this point I am pleased to announce another first for our country. On the 22 of February 2008, KwaZulu-Natal will be hosting the first ever MEC's Community Awards for Police Excellence. This is a unique occasion as it is the community themselves who have nominated their heroes and stations that best serve them. Besides it being a motivational factor for police themselves who often suffer low morale and who are vulnerable recently to taking their own lives, it will make communities conscious of those excellent officers who serve our province with distinction. We will also be recognising CPF veterans who have served our province as volunteers for more than five years in the field of community policing.

Good governance

On 2 July 2007 we launched the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Public Service Training Academy. Through the Academy we have trained 1 917 public servants. The target for next year is to train 8 000 public servants. The training will focus on orientation and reorientation, performance management, project management, financial management, leadership and management development. The Academy will also continue to facilitate.

Adult Basic Education and Training (Abet) in the workplace

The next phase of the academy will entail entering into strategic partnerships with Higher Education Institutions in the province to jointly deliver leadership and management development programmes at middle and senior management level. Key programmes will be presented by Heads of Departments and members of the Senior Management Service.

Anti-Corruption Campaign

The province has embarked on a comprehensive risk assessment exercise. One of the areas of focus has been the area of security and access to computer systems. Accordingly we implemented a comprehensive biometric access system to combat computer password fraud. The province of KwaZulu-Natal has made significant progress in establishing inter-agency co-operation with national departments, such as Crime Intelligence and Commercial Crimes Unit and other law enforcement agencies.

The Office of the Premier has appointed a new Director-General and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to improve internal control measures especially in Supply Chain Management to eradicate fraud and corruption. To this effect the CFO is directly in charge of all our procurement which means its business unusual. I would appeal to the public to assist in this drive by utilising the National Fraud Hotline 0800 701 701.

Since the inception of the investigation of more than 500 000 grants late last year, more than 200 000 of them have either been cancelled or lapsed due to non-collection. In addition, the Special Investigating Unit has identified more than 10 000 cases for prosecution and civil recovery, and more than 60 000 child support grants in this category are to be suspended. This process has managed to save the taxpayer approximately R520 million.

Each of the provincial Departments have undertaken a detailed Risk Assessment and my office will ensure that all Departments comply with the requirements of the PFMA. The intention is to root out fraud and corruption in Government in all its forms.

Traditional leadership

Mr Speaker, at the outset we have undertaken in 2004 to give appropriate recognition to His Majesty the King and also to ensure that traditional leadership continues to play a pivotal part in governance of our communities. In 2006 all eleven District Houses of Traditional Leaders were inaugurated and two key legislations passed by the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature: The KwaZulu-Natal Traditional

Leadership and Governance Amendment Act and the KwaZulu-Natal Royal Household Trust Act. I am happy to report that after consultation with His Majesty the King, the Royal Household Trust is now in place and functional.

The following Trustees have been appointed:

Prof OEHM Nxumalo

Mr Thabo Mpama

Mr Robert Mthethwa

Mr Basil Sikhakhane

Dr Vusi Shongwe

The remaining trustees will be appointed after further consultation.

Human rights

The year 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The rights based approach is a tool to enhance the human dimension of KwaZulu-Natal service delivery programmes. Our provincial strategies, among others, focus on eliminating poverty, empowering groups that require special protection and strengthening institutions of governance and democracy.

We are in the process of creating Local Human Rights Forums which will provide human rights education and awareness campaigns to communities in order to enable them to better exercise their rights and responsibilities.

The "Taking Government Services to the People Programme" that we started in 2007 goes a long way towards the realisation of the human rights of the people of this province especially those in rural areas. These include right to social security and welfare services, right to basic health services, right to identity and access to legal advice. We shall continue with this programme as it has proved to be worthwhile for the needy people.

Older Persons

One of the pillars of our Bill of Rights is the Equality Clause and as a country we have to abide by it. In his State of the Nation Address President Mbeki announced that the qualifying age for the old age grant will be 60 years for both females and males. The establishment of the Provincial Senior Citizens Forum in 2006 was the creation of a voice for our senior citizens. It has served as a catalyst for the establishment of the District Senior Citizens Forums.

Persons with disabilities

While much effort has been made to meet the national quotas, the provincial government still needs to meet the national target of 2% of people with disabilities in its employ. Our work also involves that opportunities for those with disabilities are not thwarted because of things like, accessibility to buildings.

Children's Act

As government we need to deal with the misconceptions surrounding the Children's Act of 2005 especially the issue of rights versus culture. This is a piece of legislation intended for child protection. Workshops will be hosted across the province so that we can educate and empower our people to become custodians of the Act. We hope to also assist communities to channel opinions expressed at the workshops back into the legislative process.

Youth Commission

We are pleased to announce that the Youth Commission will begin operating as a public entity from 1 April 2008, as it would have fulfilled all the necessary requirements for

registration by then. This will help to capacitate the Youth Commission to fulfil its mandate to the youth of this province.

Moral Regeneration Movement

We have launched five district forums of the Moral Regeneration Movement. The Provincial Men's Forum was launched in October 2007 to create a platform for men (as partners) to take part in gender work and make a difference. Violence against women and children is still prevalent. Aggressive Campaigns on No violence against women and children in partnership with men and Faith Based Organisations are planned for 2008.

The strengthening of the Scout Movement and the Girl Guide Movements will help in the promotion and protection of the rights of the Moral Regeneration Movement.

International Relations

From 2004 to 2008 KwaZulu-Natal has witnessed an unprecedented growth in International Relations. Whereas before 2004, the province only had two active co-operation agreements, there are now more than 11 active co-operation arrangements spacing the globe.

To highlight a few:

- * KwaZulu-Natal has established no less than 3 partnerships in China, the emerging giant in the global economy: With the Fujian Province, Shanghai and Jiangsu province.
- * Carefully nurtured relations with Belgium have seen more than R200 million flowing to the province, primarily aimed at the Food Security Programme.
- * We are currently engaging France, Germany, Italy and Le Reunion Island as part of a strategic process leading us to 2010 and beyond.
- * Co-operation with India, a world leader on small farm techniques, is steadily increasing.
- * In line with the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, we had established links with Queensland, Australia on sustainable development and climate change, following an agreement signed in 2007.
- * Following a visit to Japan in 2007, the Governor of Shizonka province, one of the richest in that country will be paying an official visit to KwaZulu-Natal to engage the province on cutting edge technology in the automotive industry. We are also pursuing closer cooperation and trade links in the tea industry with Japan.

The relations built with Maputo and other neighbouring states will be strengthened, particularly in the areas of commerce, health and co-operation between security services. As we enter 2008 we would like to convey our deepest condolences to our Mozambican neighbours as the country faces the worst floods in 50 years. As announced by the President, South Africa is heavily involved in post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa. Under the guidance of national government, our province will be exploring cost-effective ways to support countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in re-establishing functioning government structures, using our own hard-won experience.

2010 World Cup

The President called "all hands on deck" for the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. The province has also moved into top gear in preparing for the 2010 World Football Cup. We had the 1 000 Day celebration and hosted the 2010 Indaba (7 and 8 November) and the Preliminary Draw (25 November) in November 2008. Mr Speaker, from today we just have more than 848 days left before 2010.

On 25 November 2007, the 2010 Fifa World Cup Preliminary Draw took place in Durban KwaZulu-Natal and was an overwhelming success. KwaZulu-Natal hosted representatives from 204 of the 208 soccer-playing nations of the world as well as a contingent of international media –the largest Fifa representation ever.

Update on Electricity

The Provincial Executive Council met with Eskom and we have formed a forum which will deliberate on the state of power security in the province. Subsequent to this meeting Eskom has proposed a partnership with provincial government in all community outreach programmes where communities would be educated, informed and advised about unplanned outages, load shedding and energy efficiency.

All the relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate in the Premier's Co-ordinating Forum. Specifically, we will engage each other on the provision of alternative forms of energy supply and also the launch of a massive energy saving campaign.

First and foremost we need to ensure continuity of supply 'keeping the lights burning'. In addition, focus is on successful execution of the capacity expansion programme.

Conclusion

In 2004 we said: "In the life of every society there comes a time when the door opens and lets in the future." In 2005, we committed to building and creating a "Normalised Society and creating a winning province".

In 2006, we committed to "social stability and economic growth." In 2007 we took the next step to "building the Economy through Partnerships." In 2008 we commit ourselves to "meeting your aspirations through accelerated service delivery."

We take pride in the fact that together we have created KwaZulu-Natal as a peaceful province with a vibrant economy, with a pride of ancestry and a clear vision for the future. Mr Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, like Gogo Bonezinkulu Magubane we should all strive and exert all our energies to make our lives better than yesterday.

I thank you.

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