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Zikalala made the call at the first sitting of the newly appointed KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Executive Council sitting in Pietermaritzburg. The sitting which was extended to HODs was considered as an induction for the new members of the executive who were appointed by Zikalala on Monday.

The induction included among other things, a presentation by the Public Service Commission on Good Governance, the Code of Ethics, the Ministerial Handbook, the Public Finance Management Act and the Audit Improvement Plan.

In his opening remarks the Premier warned HODs in particular that his administration will not tolerate the excuse that wrong things happen within departments as a result of an instruction from MECs.

"I want to warn public servants, particularly Heads of Department that they should never take instructions that are not within the law. Once they do that, they should know they are on their own," Zikalala said, making reference to ongoing commissions of inquiry that are unfolding at a national level.

He said the provincial administration should strive to ensure gender parity in positions of authority and respect for accountability.

He emphasized the need of coordination of government programmes but insisted lead departments should play a more meaningful role in the implementation of programmes in line with the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP) and the National Development Plan (NDP). This, he said, meant the revitalisation of the cluster system of governance whereby departments are clustered according to the service delivery imperatives they are responsible for.

"Although cost cutting measures are here to stay, we must all ensure that programmes and projects are implemented. Our success will be measured by the impact we make," Zikalala said.

Zikalala re-emphasized the need by MECs to focus on key priority areas such as job creation, growing the economy, fighting crime and improving the lives of citizens.

The sitting also received a presentation by Public Service Commission's Dr Pearl Sithole which dealt with guidance on governance practice for executive authorities and Heads of Department. This included issues around Constitutional values and principles, role clarification and managing ethics in the public service among other things.

The Executive Council also received and approved reports on the commemoration of the Youth Day on 16 June, the hosting of the 9th South African Aids Conference from 11 to 14 June and the appointment of MEC Nomusa Dube-Ncube as the Leader of Government Business.

The Youth Day's theme is "25 Years of Democracy: A Celebration of Youth Activism" while that of the Aids conference is "Unprecedented Innovations and Technologies: HIV and change". Premier Zikalala said he would soon be introducing his Executive to His Majesty, the King, at a date yet to be determined.

Issued on behalf of the Executive Council by the Director-General, Dr Nonhlanhla Mkhize

Enquiries:  
C M Msomi  
082 378 2601