

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY E.S. MCHUNU AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE
PREMIER OF KWAZULU NATAL
26 SEPTEMBER 2013**

Honourable speaker
Honourable Judge President of KZN
Honourable colleagues in the Executive Council
Honourable Members of the Legislature
Mayors
Members of my family
Comrades
Friends of the Progressive Movement

Kindly receive my greetings this afternoon in our great city of Pietermaritzburg, the city of choice uMgungudlovu oNdongazibomvu. May I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciations to all the Honorable members of the KwaZulu Natal legislature, iPhalamende lethu for electing me as Premier of KwaZulu Natal just a few minutes ago. I am humbled by your gesture; my special appreciations go to the African National Congress. I will rely on your leadership, guidance and support as we continue in the service of the people of KwaZulu Natal.

It is a gesture we, in the African National Congress welcome and would want to assure this legislature and the people of KwaZulu-Natal of my full loyalty, dedication and service to the Legislature and to all the people of KwaZulu Natal. I must also express my appreciation to the excellent service rendered by Honorable Judge President of KZN, Judge President Patel.

The people of KwaZulu Natal, like the rest of the people of South Africa are getting more and more used to the democratic practices of our country and this includes regular elections as prescribed by the Constitution of the Republic.

We are delighted at this development be it the elections in the Legislative arm of our Government or in the Judiciary or in the Executive – but elections. At all levels of governance nationally, provincially or locally including at community representative structures on the ground, elections are virtually a way of life in South Africa. Deepening this democracy in our country is indeed our call.

We owe it to King Cetshwayo, King Dinuzulu, Bhambhatha kaMancinza, Vuyisile Mini, Mkaba and Khanyinga – all sentenced to death for fighting for democracy in this country, Ahmed Timol, first Indian killed in police cells, Solomon Mahlangu, Rick Turner, Ruth First, Andrew Zondo, Dorothy Nyembe, iNkosi Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge and thousands more of our people who laid their lives for democracy in South Africa.

The critical issue is that after elections we perform our duties with honor, dignity, respect, honesty and in a manner that reinforces trust between those who are elected and those who elect them. We are elected to ensure that each one of the people of KwaZulu Natal get their space and improve their lives.

In this regard I want to acknowledge the world of difference between the South Africa and KwaZulu Natal of 1994 and that of 2013.

Where KwaZulu Natal of 1994 was impassable we now have a tarred or gravel road, where there was no drinkable water, we now have clean water, we now have houses, better schools, better clinics, public libraries, better social services, bigger pensions to the old and better security. More will come after the 2014 general elections.

Let me take this opportunity to say that Government is aware of the Public concern about the current situation around McCord Hospital. We are giving this matter our full attention and an announcement will be made tomorrow on the future of the hospital by the MECs for Health and Finance, Honourable Sbongiseni Dlomo and Honourable Ina Cronje.

My predecessor former Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize who was also our Provincial Chairperson in the African National Congress leaves behind a lot of remarkable achievements. I will mention just few. During his tenure the first challenge was the deficit the new provincial government had inherited from the previous term. Under his leadership this was completely turned around and today we are in a good financial position. The next challenge was HIV/AIDS which was becoming a huge threat in the province on a daily basis.

Former Premier Mkhize relentlessly made sterling efforts to turn the tide. We are not yet through but are turning the corner in this regard. Khabazela initiated a grassroots program called Sukuma Sakhe which seeks to bring all levels of government and services to communities. The full potential of this program is still to be realized but its impact is already being felt throughout the province.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him for the good work he did for this Province and on his new position as Treasurer General of the African National Congress. And once more thank him for the job well done in the past 19 years in the Provincial Government, first as MEC for Health, MEC for Finance and finally as Premier since 2009. We wish him well!

In the remaining seven months of our term, focus will be on ensuring peace and stability in the province which can only be achievable if all of us co-operate by putting a high premium on human life and prevent killings as we move towards general elections in 2014.

Another area of focus is greater delivery on the basic needs of our people. To this effect our government is ready to deliver more than before.

We will also continue to observe principles of good governance ensuring that government is there for the people all the time. We want to take this opportunity and urge all government employees to recommit themselves to good performance at work and to serve people with dedication, care and respect.

Most of what comes as criticism of government is in reality what government employees do and do not do, including poor or no implementation of government policies. Employees are often perceived as standing between what government wants to deliver to people and failure to do this.

Some five months ago we experienced a spate of violent criminal attacks on families leaving behind a trail of murders, rapes and break-ins especially around highway areas in the west of Durban. Communities sprang into action and police upped their efforts on fighting crime and we saw positive results. It is now our belief that

maximum co-operation between communities and police through various structures led by the Department of Community Safety and Liaison is the answer.

Our appreciations Ndabezitha, MEC T.W. Mchunu. We also want to take this opportunity to once more express our condolences to all victims of road accidents especially this month including those that involved a bus at Nkwalini and truck and taxis in Pinetown. Next month is transport month and we are calling upon all citizens of the province to heed the call from the Department of Transport on road safety measures. No reckless driving and all that is related to it and no drunken driving. We can only promise very tough measures against transgressors.

Of overall importance will be our focus on economic development. Some of our concerns in this regard are high unemployment, inadequate food production, poverty, corruption and under development in rural areas. In addition to this we have to continue on the efforts to provide opportunities for education and training for young people in our province. We will put a lot of emphasis on improving our education system and greater access to skills development.

Young people in the province should have hope and not despair especially those who are out of school but not employed – we will work together with them in finding solutions. We would like to express our appreciations to the business community of this province, big and small. We will continue engaging them especially in their organized formations throughout the province. We expect advices and leadership with regard to economic growth in our province which we so desperately need.

We will work with all parties in the legislature especially in areas where we have common purpose and where there is greater consensus. I also want to assure his Majesty the King of our preparedness to work together with the Royal House on all existing programs particularly social upliftment programs.

We appreciate the passion with which his Majesty is working on issues of culture, morality and Ubuntu. Good working relations have evolved over time between government and traditional leadership in our province. We appreciate and value the contribution that is being made by the traditional leadership on governance and stability in communities.

We want to assure amaKhosi of our commitment in working together with the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders and all amaKhosi throughout the province. We are worried about some areas where we continue to see so called faction fights, which often leave many people dead and social fabric disrupted.

In 2009 President Jacob Zuma decided to establish a Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities. Clear objectives and programs have been developed and the country as whole is showing greater focus on issues affecting people in the above categories. Indeed, government services in this regard are improving but still not enough, we need to continue making efforts that will change our mindset and ensure progress in this regard.

Over time we have also built good relations with the religious community both as government and the legislature. We will continue with efforts to strengthen these working relations. We would like to encourage the leadership of the religious community to continue to lead us and to strengthen our resolve to rid our province of

immorality and social ills. As government we will continue to seek God's guidance on our work, assured by prayers of our religious community to stay on course.

Compatriots may I take this opportunity to indicate that from now on, the Department of Education requires replacement. Within a week a new MEC will be appointed.

At this stage I do want to acknowledge the presence of Mrs Mchunu Snr, that is uMama wami umaNxumalo and Mrs Mchunu Jnr My wife, Thembeke, my four children, my sister in law and her children, my five sisters, my aunt, my cousins and all other relatives. All of them made the effort to be here today and my special appreciations to all of you. I also acknowledge the presence of the people of KwaZulu Natal in their numbers, it is a gesture that I value very much and that you will always be with us and we pledge that we will always be with you.

Thank You
Ngiyabonga
Ndiyabulela.