

**ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF THE PROVINCE OF KWA-ZULU-NATAL AND  
PROVINCIAL CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS  
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As I sit here listening to the speakers after me outlining the objectives of the Progressive Professionals Forum, I am reminded of this quote by Mother Teresa:

“At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas and degrees we have acquired, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by “I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in.”

Compatriots, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am greatly privileged to be accorded the opportunity to speak to the eminent members of our communities - the professionals.

I must commend you for summoning the courage to establish this forum - an organisation whose main task is to ensure that all professionals, across all categories, work together to change the character of our country.

This is a fitting tribute to many of our heroes and heroines who laid down their lives in their quest to liberate the people of our beautiful land from the yoke of apartheid.

Today we live in a free and democratic society because of the sacrifices of struggle stalwarts such as Anton Lembede, Krish Rabibal and A.P Mda. These are fallen heroes who belonged to the crop of young people who paid the highest price humanly possible for this freedom.

Solomon “Kalushi” Mahlangu left the country at the age of 19 to receive military training that prepared him to mount a fight against the apartheid machinery. Upon his return he was hanged by the apartheid government in Pretoria Central Prison in 1979. Solomon was one of 145 people sentenced to death during 1978 and among 133 people executed during 1979.

A dedicated and a disciplined young revolutionary until the end, Solomon’s last words before his execution:

“My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom.”

“Tell my people that I love them.”

“They must continue the fight.”

The big question that we must ask ourselves today is: Do we understand the true meaning of freedom?

Can we ever understand the true value and meaning of freedom unless we understand what it took to attain such freedom?

As professionals you should appreciate what you have inherited and seriously ponder what would you do if the freedom we have as the country was taken away.

The young professionals of today remain highly privileged because you to have lived so soon after the end of apartheid and seen the dawn of democracy and lived during

the days of Madiba through a once in a lifetime event such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Today's young professionals are privileged indeed to have also inherited the country led by the great liberation movement, the African National Congress. The ANC is a great school for leadership that has produced statesmen, intellectuals, thinkers and leaders of note, who have not just matured to be leaders of our struggle for freedom and democracy but had attained huge international recognition and respect amongst the world leaders.

I think this PPF needs to reflect on the question - what is expected of the professionals of today, living under a free and democratic dispensation as opposed to the professionals of our times who were thrust into the jaws of apartheid to rescue our country from oppression and create a new democratic society.

On the 27th April 1994 as it dawned all over South Africa, one saw extraordinary scenes. Across the landscape of that once god-forsaken country, men and women stood in lines waiting for hours so that they could cast their first vote. It was a moment that will remain vivid in my mind for the rest of my life. The masses of our people came with their unarticulated dreams of what *freedom* would bring to their tortured lives.

The first ever South Africa's general elections were beamed across the world and when Mr. Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the first President of a democratic South Africa, representatives from some eighty countries attended, including President Fidel Castro of Cuba and Yasir Arafat and many Heads of States. It was an extraordinary sight. Helicopters flew overhead trailing the new flag, and fighter planes painted the sky in the flag's six colours.

*Compatriots, Ladies and Gentlemen*, since 1994, KZN has positioned itself as an important venue for high profile national and international events that are hosted in South Africa. It is this province that has in the past hosted the inaugural and founding conference for the formation of the African Union, hosting all the heads of states from the African Continent.

Many other conferences of note such as the World Economic Forum, Non-Aligned Movement, the largest AIDS conference in year 2000, Commonwealth Conference, Corp 17, Climate Change Conference, BRICS Summit have been successfully hosted in this city.

I highlight these to contextualize the importance we attach in portraying this province as an important site for exchange of ideas, and finding solutions to many problems of different parts of the globe.

We must underline the fact that such events would never have been held in our country if apartheid was not overthrown.

Those of us who were involved in the freedom struggle in this country have really only one gospel song to sing. We may possibly sing it in different ways, but it is gospel of "democracy and freedom."

Freedom refers to a state of complete psycho-social and economic emancipation, to live free of oppression and prejudice based on social status, race, class, culture,

gender, religion, disability and political, legal, economic, cultural or other considerations.

We need to understand that true freedom without access to justice is impossible.

Freedom without access to quality healthcare is not what Solomon Mahlangu fought for. Freedom that coexists with under-development and deep poverty is not true freedom. Freedom is indivisible—there can be no freedom for some and not for all.

That is why the newly liberated African states put all their resources towards supporting the South African struggle for liberation and insisted that there as long as one part of Africa remains oppressed, the whole African Continent cannot be said to be free. Similarly the inequalities amongst our people mean that we have to utilize our political freedom to attain emancipation for the majority that remains side-lined and marginalized.

Ours has been defined as a National Democratic Revolution because it entailed more than just attainment of what has been defined in classical terms as 'bourgeoisie democracy', but is a fundamental programme of transformation of society led by the motive forces –which are the classes and social strata that stand to benefit most from the process of change.

This basically entails that for the process to be taken forward we rely on constant mobilization of masses of our people to be the architects and masters of their own development and advancement. This means that we need to utilise the democracy, the political freedom that has been achieved to fight for equality and in particular economic power and emancipation.

The youth of today must arm themselves with the capacity to respond to the challenges that face society today. History has not imposed the same responsibility to the youth as was the case in 1960's, 1976 up to the nineties. There is no need to for the supreme sacrifice as it happened to the many young people whose lives were cut short.

The PPF must consider strategies and programmes that will ensure that we eradicate poverty and eliminate the legacy of apartheid, whereby those who are poor are mainly black, rural and peri-urban dwellers and largely uneducated and unskilled and unemployed.

The focus on food security, land and agrarian reform demand that we act together as government and professionals to boost capacity for our people to produce their own food and strengthen that sector of the economy.

Discussions of PPF must be focused on the policy choices available in the manner we manage the economy, how to ensure that resources are beneficial to more people. While the ANC-led government has adopted various policies to create a prosperous South Africa, it is correct that the professionals should table issues for discussions.

My understanding is that when professionals raise issues it won't mean that you are not patriotic. As professionals you must be seized with searching for solutions facing

society. We must not fear debates, even if we do not win the argument but we need more ideas to get solutions:

We must ask ourselves what freedom means to people who live in poverty, the unemployed, those afflicted with preventable diseases, the homeless and those who live in shacks. What is the role of professionals in addressing these challenges?

As professionals do you know how many district municipalities in this province?

Do you have a sense of figures regarding HIV prevalence in KZN?

As professionals do you know what is the contribution of this province towards the National Gross Domestic Product?

What are the interesting features of our economy and what contribution are different sectors of our economy making towards the provincial Gross Domestic Product?

Can you tell me the matric pass rates in KZN over the past three years?

What role are you playing as professionals in terms ensuring that education is treated as a priority in our communities?

Education is a basic human right. When that right in the context of educational growth and self-fulfilment is granted it is likely to be accompanied by improvement in the individual's and society's well-being as a whole. The inseparable themes of improving access and quality of education are at the heart of the millennium development goals of Education for All.

It is my view that professionals have a greater responsibility to be the engines of change by being at the forefront of all efforts aimed at ensuring that education becomes a societal issue. I expect professionals in the science field to assist our learners with subjects such as Science and mathematics. These subjects are increasingly important to any country that wishes to compete in the global economy.

Competitive economic activity for the 21st century will inevitably involve greater access to, and extensive application of new information and communication technologies that ultimately have their basis in mathematics and various branches of science. South Africa for example, cannot hope to develop and use these technologies without producing a critical mass of citizens with a sound mathematics and science education background.

Even more importantly, as the country we cannot hope to produce this core of specialists without highly committed teachers. It is said that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. In this regard, the teachers' pivotal role is recognized as being essential for the development of a modern society.

In his State of the Nation Address last year, President Jacob Zuma elaborated on the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality. He called on all of us to work together to respond decisively to bring about a better life for all our people. Our Government has always recognized the critical contribution that has to be made by KwaZulu-Natal for the whole of our country to move forward and, critically, meet

the Millennium Development Goals as we progress to realize our vision for South Africa by the year 2030.

The opening remarks in the introduction to the National Development Plan – Vision 2030 states:

“South Africa has the potential and capacity to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality over the next two decades. This requires a new approach – one that moves from a passive citizenry receiving services from the State to one that systematically includes the socially and economically excluded, where people are active champions of their own development, and where government works effectively to develop people’s capabilities to lead the lives they desire. The success of this approach is premised on:

- The active efforts and participation of all South Africans in their own development.
- Redressing injustices of the past effectively
- Faster economic growth and higher investment and employment
- Rising standards of education, a healthy population and effective social protection
- Strengthening the links between economic and social strategies
- An effective and capable government
- Collaboration between the private and public sectors
- Leadership from all sectors in society”

This bold initiative under the leadership of President Zuma has correctly been welcomed by South Africans from all walks of life, regardless of political affiliation, as a remarkable blueprint to chart the way forward for all of us as citizens of this beautiful land.

The National Development Plan seeks by 2030 to build a just, fair, prosperous and equitable country, most of all, a country that each and every South African can proudly call home.

*Compatriots*, as KZN we have created our own Provincial Growth and Development Plan and Strategy which is aligned to the NDP. In terms of our PGDS we aim to be a prosperous Province with a healthy, secure and skilled population, acting as a gateway to Africa and the World.

An underlying principle of PGDS is to ensure that we grow a shared economy which must benefit and improve the lives of all people of KwaZulu-Natal. It is acknowledged that our ability to grow this shared economy is directly related to our ability to ensure that our people are appropriately qualified and skilled to participate in this growing economy.

Importantly, the strategy directs us as government to pay attention to Human Resource Development with a greater focus to on the early childhood development, preschool learning, the quality of education in both primary and secondary schools, technical, vocational and academic tertiary training, as well as lifelong learning.

A key enabler of the development for skills development is found in our third focus of the PGDS which is the Human and Community Development. This is where we are focusing on matters related to the social welfare, health, food security, human settlement, and safety and security.

Without going into much details of the plan I want to invite members of this important organisation to work with us to achieve the objectives articulated in PGDS.

Over the last 19 years, working together, we have built this country and KZN in particular into a land of harmony, a land of expanding opportunities. We have built a stable and growing KZN economy which attracts foreign direct investments.

Our goal as government has always been to create a province in which all can experience an improved quality of life, enjoying equal human rights with access to opportunities that freedom had brought us, and bound us together as a nation.

Launching this organization is timely and appropriate because it gives us the opportunity to promote the legacy and values of Tata Nelson Mandela.

During his years as a leader after his long period of imprisonment Madiba became a shining beacon of hope for not only the downtrodden of the world, but also a living symbol of the triumph of the human spirit against adversity.

A true professional, Tata Madiba deservedly won the Nobel Peace Prize and went on to lead South Africa as the country's first truly democratically-elected President with dignity, honesty and integrity.

He ushered in hope for a better future and became the champion of good governance.

- Mandela stood for equality for all;
- Mandela stood for the rule of law;
- Mandela stood for liberation of all people in South Africa black and white, men and women;
- Mandela stood for human dignity, human freedom (*speech, association, movement, expression and choice*) and human development;
- Mandela stood for transparency, accountability, integrity and respect among the peoples;

As we are gathered here this evening: we recommit ourselves as servants of the people, inspired by the values of Madiba, to intensify our efforts to provide services such as water and sanitation, health, electricity, housing and education to the people of this province who still need them.

We commit ourselves to radically reduce the levels of unemployment and poverty by combining the resources of various government departments at all levels. Our integrated departmental programmes today deliver jointly to the poorest of the poor on outcomes, since success depends on several departments cooperating.

Operation Sukuma Sakhe has ensured that services are brought together at the level of communities in the wards. We have succeeded in empowering communities to discuss with various government officials ways of improving service delivery.

Given the history of our country where non-participatory governance supported the logic of apartheid, it is important that the practice of community participation is promoted.

Community participation creates an environment of hope amongst all our people that their lives will get better. A generation of hope amongst all of our people is a first weapon against crime.

This evening we commit ourselves to improve the security of all the people of KwaZulu-Natal, and make life more and more difficult for criminals to live freely in our society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this evening we commit ourselves to creating a healthy nation with programmes to defeat TB and other diseases and turn the tide against HIV and Aids.

We must intensify our efforts to broaden access to the rights contained in our constitution, so that more and more people of KwaZulu-Natal - especially the poor, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities – can enjoy all the benefits of freedom.

We say each one of us in government and out of government has a role to play in the fight to achieve a better life for all. We will never achieve a better life for all if there is rampant corruption in government. Our objective to eradicate corruption is motivated by the fact that this scourge perpetuates an unequal distribution of income, asset ownership and it further causes unequal access to basic economic opportunities and basic services such as education and health.

Clearly, the poor are most vulnerable to corruption both in terms of not being educated enough to demand what rightfully belong to them and for being easy targets for intimidation, extortion and bribery. Ours is a democratic government and we are public representatives elected through a democratic process and we serve at the will of the people. We signed a Social contract with the people of this country and therefore any misconduct, ill-discipline and the lack of integrity in the public service amounts to the breach of this social contract.

Government has no place for corrupt civil servants whose sole interests are to enrich themselves at the expense of our people who need basic services. We need to remind ourselves that having a democratic government is a privilege we should never take for granted because many people paid with their lives for it.

The democratic government is a fulfilment of a dream that was cherished by pioneers of our liberation struggle such as Dr John Langalibalele Dube, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Mahatma Gandhi, Inkosi Albert Luthuli and many others who planted the seeds of resistance and took the first few steps towards our freedom, knowing fully well that they would not live to see its dawn.

It is for these reasons that this evening we call upon all civil servants to emulate the forbearers of our democracy. We need to work together to create responsive government administration with civil servants who are sensitive to people's needs.

We must intensify our efforts to broaden access to the rights contained in our constitution, so that more and more people of KwaZulu-Natal - especially the poor, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities – can enjoy all the benefits of freedom.

We say each one of us in the private and public sectors has a role to play in the fight to achieve a better life for all. In order for all of us to change people's life we need determination and commitment.

In the words of Theodore Roosevelt

"...credit belongs to the person who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs – falls but picks up the pieces and try again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at worst, if [he/she] fails, at least fails while daring greatly".

I thank you