

**SPEAKING NOTES THE HONOURABLE KWAZULU NATAL PREMIER, MR ES  
MCHUNU DURING THE INTERNAL LAUNCH OF THE 2016 WORLD AIDS  
CONFERENCE**

Programme Director

Acting Director General

Colleagues and Distinguished Guests

We gather here this morning to officially launch, the Internal 2016 World AIDS Conference that will take place here in our province. We gather, with one commitment, to do more to ensure that we stop the spread of HIV and AIDS, and we stop the stigma to those who are living with the virus. I must thank the organizers and volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure that this significant step becomes a success.

But, there is more work that together as the office of the Premier and the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal still need to do to ensure a smooth and successful 2016 World AIDS Conference. This is an opportune moment for all of us to take stock and reflect on both our achievements and our failures, make sense of what works and move forward boldly in dealing with the challenges posed to us by the scourge of HIV and AIDS. This requires collective leadership from all of us. Whilst we applaud the confidence shown on us by the organizers of the 2016 World ADIS Conference, the work begins now for us, so that we do not disappoint. AIDS related stigma and discrimination unfortunately is pervasive and a real barrier to stopping the expansion of this disease. It begins with us, the office of the Premier and our partners. We must lead from the front in this fight. We

must lead, not only with the view to work towards the successful 2016 World AIDS Conference, but to create a heightened awareness about HIV and AIDS.

The vast majority of our people still live with HIV but are unaware of their status. This is due to fear of being stigmatized. To ensure that we support these people to take a positive step in this fight, we require bold and visible action by top leadership from you. At all levels of the workplace and in our society, we must root out this deadly demon of discrimination. The government of KwaZulu-Natal is pleased to be working with the International AIDS Council, National Department of Health, EThekweni Municipality, and the Provincial AIDS Council with all its partners of Civil Society and government in particular Department of Health, and Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs and many other partners.

It is important to mention that our government in the Province as part of the Provincial AIDS Council, continue to lead in the response against HIV and AIDS. I therefore invite you all, to be part of this campaign as we move towards 2016 World Aids Conference. We have long been the province that is most heavily affected by HIV and AIDS. HIV prevalence in our province is still very high, especially among adolescents and young adults. The amount of work that has been done in the fight against this disease is very encouraging, but there is still more that we need to do. Together we can make a significant impact in this fight. I urge each of you to make a personal contribution to this fight. Take a personal pledge of what you can do in pursuit of this common struggle.

I know that today, with the official Internal Launch of the 2016 World AIDS Conference, our preparations begin in earnest. And I look forward to working with all of you to ensure that the Conference is a resounding success.

I thank you