

**SPEECH
BY PREMIER OF KWAZULU NATAL MR TW MCHUNU
DURING CELEBRATION OF YOUTH DAY ON
IN ULUNDI ON
16 JUNE 2018**

Thank You Programme Director;

Members of the Provincial Executive Council;

Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Mayor of Zululand District;

Mayors and Councillors;

Distinguished Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I greet you all!

On Wednesday the 16th of June 1976, the police opened fire on a peaceful protest by Soweto students who were protesting against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in African schools.

By the end of the day, Soweto was in smoke, over 57 students and over 500 would be killed in the rest of the year during follow up protests. The first learner to be killed was 13-year old Hector Peterson, a student from Morris Isaacson High. On that day and during other incidents, the future of young people was smothered and their lives cut short. This event demonstrated what Nigerian poet and Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka was describing when he said, and I quote:

“The age of immunity is no defence during the reign of impunity”.

This day also galvanized the resistance movement against the regime, and drove thousands of young people to take up arms against apartheid. As Soyinka says, under apartheid, being young did not spare you from the worst atrocities committed by that government. In contrast, when we attained our liberation, we vowed to do the exact opposite of 16 June 1976. We vowed that in a democratic South Africa there will be freedom for all. There shall be freedom of speech, freedom of religion and a new human rights culture dignity for all

In honour of the fallen heroes of our struggle, we declared the entire June as Youth Month.

Programme Director,

Unfortunately, as we gather today on the 42nd anniversary of 16 June 1976, and towards 25years of freedom next year, the state of **youth unemployment in our country remains one of the greatest challenges** of our democracy. While government has made significant strides in meeting the basic needs of the people, the legacy of colonialism and apartheid remains deeply entrenched in our society.

Therefore, today more than ever, we require a programme of fundamental and **radical socio-economic transformation** to ensure in the words of President Mandela that “***political freedom goes side by side with the freedom from hunger, want and suffering.***’

Or as we said in the Reconstruction and Development Programme in 1994, I quote:

“No political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of our people remain in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation must therefore be the first priority of a democratic government.”

Programme Director,

In this light, our mission is to use the **National Development Plan and in KwaZulu Natal, the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy** to rebuild our economy into one where all citizens flourish, an economy which benefits the people as a whole, rather than a privileged few. To achieve these goals, we endeavor to run an open, dynamic economy that embraces **technological innovation, pursues higher productivity, creates better paying jobs** and improves the quality of life of our citizens.

We recognise the challenges of **modernisation and the imperatives of structural change in all sectors**, especially in the mining, manufacturing, agriculture and finance. Our vision is therefore an economy that encourages **investment**, offers policy certainty and addresses barriers that inhibit growth **and social inclusion**.

In essence, this means we must advance growth and development at the same time as we **work to achieve transformation**. We must also rekindle and strengthen our **relationships with social partners**, including business and labour, the non-governmental sector and civil society. Clearly, the aim of this social partnership must be to focus on youth unemployment, which has had a devastating impact on young people and by extension, on us all in our province.

We learn in our engagements with business that there is a **mismatch between the qualifications our tertiary system** produces, and the requirements of the work place today. Therefore government will be prioritizing skills education, **effective public employment programmes, internships, job placement, youth entrepreneurship and set-aside programmes**.

Aligned to this we are expanding **fee-free higher education for youth from poor and working class backgrounds**. This historic decision vindicates many decades of struggle for free education for the poor. It means that for the first time in our country, a child can start Grade 1 and progress until the first degree without paying at all. For the first time ever, poverty will not stand in the way of quality education. Knowing the challenges of unemployment, this decision will help in the skills revolution, which will modernize our economy, improve the beneficiation of our natural resources and prepare our workforce for the fourth industrial revolution.

In this regard, since 1994, the education system expanded to such an extent that the number of Africans aged 20 and older who had completed Grade 9 increased from only 48 per cent in 1994 to 64 per cent by 2011;

- Similarly, Africans in the same age group who had completed Grade 12 increased from 23 per cent in 1994 to 64 per cent in 2011;
- Since 2009, Grade 12 pass rates have been increasing from 61 per cent in 2009 to 75.1 per cent in 2017.

Under health we have made the following advances:

- The reduction of the under-five mortality rate has largely been attributed to the Prevention of Mother-to-Child HIV Transmission (PMTCT) programme, improved immunisation rates and vitamin A supplementation;
- We have the largest ARV programme in the world and recently reached the figure of 1 million in medical male circumcision;

Programme Director,

Sustainable societies have high levels of productive employment, low poverty and a narrow Gini coefficient. The contrary leads to the deepening of social ills, moral decay and an unstable population characterized by regular protest and dissent. We are making the point here that it is in the interest of us all to improve the social and economic conditions of the majority of our people.

Working with business, government is thus committed to change in the ownership structure in KwaZulu Natal. This means among others that there must be access to, and ownership of financial institutions by black people, youth and women.

Our development finance institutions and state banks have thus been directed to focus on employment creation, empowerment, industrial diversification, and the development of small businesses and cooperatives. We must use that which is in our span of control, state procurement and concessions to promote broad-based black economic empowerment, greater worker ownership and board representation.

The implementation of the **national minimum wage from 1 May 2018** means that as many as **6.6 million low paid** will change the lives of many people including youth.

Programme Director,

Land dispossession represents one of the greatest contributors to poverty in our province. We want land redress that promotes economic development, agricultural production and food security. At the same time, we are **opposed to land invasions** because they undermine the orderly resolution of a very sensitive issue in our democracy.

Programme Director,

We are also rolling out strategies to promote **township and rural economies**, transforming our places from being reservoirs of labour to small medium and large businesses, and light industries. I believe that tourism and service industries, together with **information communication technology-based businesses**, can help the township and rural economies leapfrog into the fourth industrial revolution. One familiar example is the use of ICT to produce music. Today a person working from his/her bedroom can produce music from a computer and beam it to the whole world.

Thereafter, thousands of people can be employed during live performances, marketing or the creation of marketing collateral such as t-shirts, caps or sneakers. As is well known, our province has **vast agricultural resources which we can use to promote industrialisation**, create employment and transform our economy. Modern agricultural production can develop skills through agro-processing, with the manufacture of agricultural inputs and exports as its base.

Programme Director,

All government departments have been tasked to introduce internship programmes and to employ interns equal to 5 per cent of the total employment of the department. In this regard, since 2014, the **Expanded Public Works Programme** created more than a million work opportunities for the youth.

We have allocated **40 per cent of EPWP** projects to young people, while as a country our infrastructure programme should earmark at least **60 per cent youth employment** for new projects and activities. Nationally, the **Youth Employment Service (YES)** in partnership with business and organised labour will see a further 1million young people receiving paid work experience over the next three years.

Sukuma Ten thousand

As announced during the State of the Province Address, the Premier has initiated **Sukuma 10 000**, in terms of which young people in KwaZulu Natal will be placed in employment, while others are trained in various artisan fields. An amount of **R30m has been set aside for this programme**.

The Office of the Premier also spent **R25m on bursaries** for deserving and destitute young people. Through this programme young people are currently being trained in the aerospace industry **as Pilots and technicians (16) on Project Sukuma (15) and International Scholarships (10)**. **Project Sukuma** targets young people for integration into the South African National Defence Force, Department of Education, Department of Health as paramedics with a very clear exit strategy. These learners receive a stipend of R 7 000 monthly, while the Office of the Premier covers their educational costs.

With regard to skills development, the Office of The Premier will soon embark in district-based consultation with all stakeholders including chambers of commerce, to forge partnership for the **Provincial Youth Skills Development Coordinating Forum**. Amongst other things this forum will organize the revamp and conversion of old government buildings to training centers and places of commerce to prevent those buildings not to be vandalized.

The Premier will this year also host **a Provincial Youth Economic Empowerment Summit with delegates** sharing with delegates ideas on our province's future and the role of young people. Under the **Youth Economic Empowerment Fund** at least R50m has been allocated to funding SMME's, Scholarships and training that changes young people from employees to entrepreneurs.

Moral Regeneration and Provincial Prayer

I cannot end without saying a few words about social ills. Corruption, collusion and other criminal activities must be fought with diligence and determination. These undermine the progress we are making in improving the lives of our people. We must intensify the war against social ills and work for social cohesion and moral regeneration.

We are shocked that non-communicable or lifestyle diseases have rocketed recently in our province. We must therefore speak out against the levels of alcohol consumption, the taking of drugs, rape and many other crimes that in the main, are carried out by young people. We must speak out against car hijacking, home robberies and the invasion and extortion of business by our people.

While we have deployed our best resources from the police and intelligence to address the above challenges, we have also called for a **Month of Prayer** which ends on 07 July 2018. We will have the main event on 06 July in Ugu.

May I again quote President Nelson Mandela who in 1994 addressed the first June 16 commemoration in a democratic South Africa, and I quote:

“Let us all rise to the challenge of the freedom that we have won. That challenge is to create a better life for all South Africans: to create jobs, to provide free quality education and open up opportunities for skills training, to build houses, to provide health facilities and other basic services. The country thirsts for your talents and energy. Together, let us get South Africa working.”

I Thank You!