**ADDRESS BY KWAZULU-NATAL PREMIER NOMUSA DUBE-NCUBE DURING THE ENERGY WEBINAR HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 08 MARCH 2023**

Good evening!

**Introduction**

We meet only a few weeks after presenting the State of the Province Address, which amongst other things, focused on the approach by the province in resolving the national energy challenges and the need to address load-shedding and its devastating impact on our economy.

On Monday, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa took an important and decisive step in our efforts to solve the energy crisis when he appointed the new Minister of Electricity. We wish to first and foremost congratulate all the new Ministers and Deputy Ministers that were appointed and also appreciate those who have served our country with dedication and have been redeployed to other areas of responsibility.

Relevant to the subject of our contemplation today, we singularly welcome Dr Kgotsientso Ramakgopa, as the new Minister of Electricity, we know him to be a seasoned bureaucrat as well as a tried and tested technocrat. We have no doubt that he will definitely be equal to the task. We look forward to engaging with him in resolving the energy crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen, due to load-shedding businesses and households have been suffering untold economic and financial damage, resulting in our overall Gross Domestic Product being reduced as our economy underperforms.

Every sector in our society agrees on one thing, which is that this situation cannot be allowed to continue in this manner any longer. There is no country in the world that can grow itself out of poverty, unemployment and inequality without energy.

As businesses close, people become unemployed, making it difficult to fend for their families. When load-shedding becomes a permanent feature there is only one consequence, which is to worsen the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

**Outlining the objective of the Energy Webinar**

We have therefore called this webinar in order to tap into the broader brains trust of the experts and practitioners in energy and many colleagues on this platform who have had time to think this matter through, and from your inputs we stand to benefit in finding a resolution to the crisis.

Importantly, by calling this digital gathering we recognise the need for close co-operation between government, the private sector and the public in working out solutions that will ease the pressure on the grid, and ensure our economy continues to tick for as long as possible.

To do this, we must end load-shedding, not reduce it, end it. This is our objective as we deal with what has now become a national emergency as declared by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Working in unison, we can take a variety of measures to address the energy crisis.

**Reflecting on KwaZulu-Natal’s proposed energy solutions**

In our State of the Province Address, we outlined various interventions to address the scourge of the electricity crisis.

The essence of our response is to be swift, but to consider short, medium and long- term approaches to the energy crisis. What are the measures within the span of control of households and business which can be implemented with immediate effect? What are the medium- to long-term measures which municipalities and the province, working with business and our communities can implement to deal with this issue on a sustainable basis so future generations will not have to face this crisis ever?

As KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government working with national government and municipalities, we can promote energy efficiency by encouraging businesses, industries, and households to reduce consumption through energy-efficient appliances and practices.

We must inculcate the culture of saving electricity and education and awareness can go a long way in teaching households and business to save electricity as implementing and promoting sustainable energy practices can lead to significant energy savings and reduce the burden on the power grid.

It is important to invest in renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and others.

This could be achieved by creating incentives for businesses and homeowners to install solar panels, establishing wind farms and bioenergy facilities, and partnering with private companies and investors to build and operate renewable energy projects.

We need to develop energy storage solutions such as batteries, pumped hydro storage, or compressed air storage can help balance the intermittent supply of renewable energy, ensuring a steady supply of electricity to the grid.

We need to collaborate with other provinces as we are all grappling with energy shortages. By so doing we can share expertise, resources, and technology to address the energy crisis.

**Energy saving plans from other countries**

Ladies and Gentlemen, South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal can learn a lot from countries like China in how they have responded to electricity challenges.

**China also faced** significant electricity challenges in the past and to alleviate the energy crisis, China diversified its energy mix, moving away from coal and toward renewable sources like solar and wind power. This has helped to reduce the country's reliance on coal and improve air quality. China implemented energy efficiency solutions aimed at reducing electricity demand during peak periods. This has helped avoid power shortages and reduce the strain on the electricity grid. China has invested heavily in its electricity infrastructure, including building new power plants and upgrading transmission and distribution networks. This has helped to improve the reliability of the electricity system.

China has also been a leader in developing and deploying new technologies related to electricity, such as smart grids and energy storage systems. These technologies can help to make the electricity system more flexible and resilient.

Overall, China's experience highlights the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to addressing electricity challenges, including diversifying the energy mix, improving energy efficiency, investing in infrastructure, and embracing new technologies. We can learn a lot from China’s mega projects which will create jobs and transform the energy industry in South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal.

From **Germany** we can learn the value of transitioning to renewable energy sources which has seen the country reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption significantly through a combination of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy deployment, and a strong policy framework. We could learn from this experience to incentivize clean energy investments and promote energy efficiency.

**Denmark** is known for its strong commitment to energy efficiency and renewables. The country has implemented a range of policies and programs to encourage energy savings, including a carbon tax, energy labelling of buildings, and financial incentives for energy efficiency upgrades.

**Japan** has implemented a successful energy-saving program called "Top Runner," which sets energy efficiency standards for various products and encourages manufacturers to improve their energy efficiency to meet or exceed these standards.

There are indeed several examples around the world that we can learn from or even emulate. This webinar is a start, and we could out of these engagements, find solutions through which we in KwaZulu-Natal could become leaders in the sector in Africa.

**Coal and the Just Transition**

Our solutions have never been about ditching coal immediately, but to look at the energy mix over the coming years. At the same time, it remains important to us that in implementing the Just Transition we are also fully inclusive of those who were previously disadvantaged and do not make the mistake of leaving anyone behind and not least the poor and vulnerable.

We are here because we are not comfortable with the rolling blackouts, we don’t accept it as normal that people get their food rotten while they have fridges, small scale farmers bury tons of dead chickens and close for good.

We have a monumental challenge that we must solve as opposed to wallowing in despair. We must dig deep into our well of wisdom and ingenuity. We must use the energy crisis to re-industrialize our province, we must be the province that generate more solutions and in a process change the economic architecture of our country and province. When load shedding become history, the new economic structure and players must include women, youth, township and rural industries. There is no crisis that must go to waste.

Let us emerge here with the immediate steps we must take as the province to change the situation for the economy, the creation of jobs and easing the pain of our citizens.

Working together, we can turn the energy crisis into opportunities which will benefit South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal.

With these few words may I welcome you all and we look forward to your input and ideas during this dialogue.

**Thank You!**