



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PREMIER ARTHUR THAMSANQA NTULI, AT THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE IN PIETERMARITZBURG, ON 31 JULY 2024

Hlanga Lomhlabathi, Bayede!

Honourable Speaker, Ms Nontembeko Boyce;

Honourable Deputy Speaker, Ms Mmabatho Tembe;

Honourable Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Executive Council;

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Ndlunkulu yeSILO;

Abantwana baseNdlunkulu bonke;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Chairperson of the KZN Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Inkosi Shinga;

All traditional leaders;

Mayors and all Councillors

Religious Leaders;

Business leaders;

Special Advisors to the Premier;

Director-General, Dr Nonhlanhla Mkhize;

Provincial Commissioner of Police, Lieutenant General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi;

All Heads of Departments

CEOs of Public Entities;

People of KwaZulu-Natal;

Distinguished guests;

Members of the media;

Madam Speaker,

1. We wish to express our profound gratitude to His Majesty, the King for again honouring our province's unique and long-standing tradition of officiating at the opening of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature.

2. Sithokoza kakhulu SILO ngokuba usisingathe namuhla ekuvulweni kwesiShayamthetho. Ubukhona bakho Hlanga Lomhlabathi, kuletha isigqiki. Amagama akho SILO agcizelela ekutheni sisebenzele abantu bakho Silo, singazibeki thina phambili njengosopolitiki, ayasakha. Futhi siyethembisa ukuthi eloMdala, ngeke libuye lilambatha.
3. Hlanga Lwamakhosi, I feel honoured to have been elected the 10th Premier of our province. I was elected at a time when our country and province need leaders who can restore the trust of our people in a better tomorrow.
4. Sethula lenkulumo nje Hlanga Lomhlabathi ezinsukwini ezimbalwa ezedlule, eleNdlovukazi uMthaniya selihlonywe uphapse lwe gwalagwala iNhlango yeZizwe ngaphansi kophiko lwe UNESCO ngokukhomba imigede iSibhudu (Sibhudu Caves) ngaphansi kweSifunda iLembe kanye ne Dube House at Inanda where Dube family remains lie njengamanye wamafagugu ayinqabakutholwa emhlabeni. Lokhu sekwengeze isibalo sezindawo ezingamafagugu eNingizimu Afrika.
5. Our province's history is long and full of twists and turns. It starts with the arrival of the different races, including abeNguni, the Dutch, the English, and the Indians. As with all histories, the formation of the country, including the province of KwaZulu Natal, has notable epochs that boast heroes relevant to those specific times.

6. Through the different histories of nations neighbouring the province, our past, challenges, missteps, and achievements, we learnt a lot about creating miracles from despondency.
7. Through various tranches of history, told in various languages, from isiZulu, English, Afrikaans, Hindi, isiXhosa, and others, was born a great history that gave rise to a tapestry of communities, the sum of which we proudly call KwaZulu-Natal.
8. We are a generation that boasts and are students of this rich history, from that of IZilo, Amakhosi Ohlanga, aMafelankosi, writers, academics and intellectuals, teachers, artists, nurses, religious leaders, founders of political formations, unionists, entrepreneurs and legislators.
9. In all the history that involves the daughters and sons of KwaZulu-Natal, we can learn a lot and build on it.

Madame Speaker,

10. Njengoba sihlange lapha siyaqonda ukuthi likhona iva elingakabanguleki kwimiphakathi eminingi eyakhele lesi Sifundazwe.
11. We know that some families have not found closure because they could not bury their loved ones who disappeared during the floods. Eminye imindeni kuyimanje isakhalela ithambo labathandiweyo bayo abangakatholakali. Namanje sisesemanzini kanye nayo lemindeni ngenxa yalomuga.

12. Siyakhalisana futhi nemindeni elahlekelwe abathandiweyo bayo ngenxa yemililo yequbula yakamuva. Laba bango Ntombikhona Nxele, Nonsikelelo Zuma, Khethiwe Ngcobo, Ntombifuthi Ngcobo, Vusi Radula, Mabongi Sishane, and Richard Dalmini.
13. Siyabonga amaqhawe asale enkundleni enza inkonzo yesizwe yokuvikela impilo, imfuyo nemvelo. Siyakhalisana nalabo abalahlekelwe ngezindlela ezahlukene.
14. We know that some businesses remain closed because they did not have resources to rebuild following the social unrest of July 2021. We will ensure that the Department of Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs provide financial and technical support in rebuilding those businesses that were affected.

We also know that some households are today headed by children because of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, which robbed them of their parents and breadwinners. As this government we will fastrack the profiling and mapping out of where these child-headed households are in all districts, municipality by municipality, ward by ward, working with you, our citizens to ensure social protection of our orphaned and vulnerable children.

15. We acknowledge that 1151 families are still living in Transitional Emergency Accommodations, the rented flats sourced in response to the 2022 Floods.

- 16.** In the Durban Metro the process of relocating flood victims from these facilities to their permanent homes will be expedited. To date, five land parcels for permanent housing have been rezoned to accommodate 400 units.
- 17.** I have directed the Director-General to follow up on the rezoning process of the outstanding five land parcels and to provide a progress report with an intention that the process is finalized.
- 18.** We want to finalize the placement of all families that were affected who are still living in the transitional facilities.
- 19.** In Pietermaritzburg we are already at top structure construction for those who were living in temporary shelters.
- 20.** As the broader community of KwaZulu-Natal, we carry a collective responsibility to return our fellow citizens' lives to normalcy and assist businesses to get back on their feet. As this Government, we will walk with all of you through this journey of rebuilding your lives. We will not stop until all of us have recovered.

Madame Speaker,

- 21.** The most important lesson from the founding fathers and mothers of our democracy, leaders such as former President Nelson Mandela and uMntwana wakwaPhindangene, whom I was lucky to grow up under, was the need to build where there is destruction, to heal where there is pain, and to put out the flames that threaten our very existence.

22. I mention these leaders because 30 years ago, they took our country over the proverbial river Jordan when there was political violence. It had been brother against brother. Through their leadership, the province obtained peace and the chance to rebuild.
23. The country had its first Government of National Unity in 1994. That unity stopped the violence. Roads and houses were built, and most importantly, there was reconciliation. Both Madiba and Shenge are no longer physically with us, but they bequeathed us the legacy of unity, which is important in facing challenges.

Madame Speaker,

24. When I delivered my inaugural speech about a month and a half ago, I made a commitment, personally and on behalf of the administration I lead. Collectively we pledged to deliver on the hope and revival that the people of this Province so desperately need.
25. Today's Address is about us spelling out what we will do, and do differently, to honour the undertaking we made during the inauguration ceremony, **that of inspiring new hope for our people.**

Honourable Speaker,

26. My address follows the President of the Republic's Opening of Parliament Address on the 18th of July, in which he painted a comprehensive picture of the country and what needs to be done.

Mine is to do likewise for KwaZulu-Natal, being frank about the province and our strategy to deal with the challenges.

- 27.** I do not intend to deliver a long-winded speech because I appreciate the legitimate impatience of our people, from all walks of life, who want to experience a KwaZulu-Natal that enables them to achieve their individual goals, raise their children in conditions of safety, and be masters of their destinies.
- 28.** As KwaZulu-Natal, we fully align to the three strategic priorities adopted by the Government of National Unity. These priorities act as both an anchor and a compass for this seventh administration's programme of action. They are:
- **Firstly, to drive inclusive economic growth and job creation.**
 - **Secondly, to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living.**
 - **Thirdly, to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.**

Madam Speaker,

- 29.** As a collective, arising out of negotiations through the national and provincial Cabinet lekgotla, we agreed that the 7th Administration, has a dual and urgent responsibility: to aid the province in rebuilding the post-pandemic and post-unrest, post-natural disasters economy and to strengthen direction and coordination at the heart of government.

DRIVING INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND JOB CREATION

Currently, the economy is in a low-growth trap, with average growth lagging behind population growth, leading to a regression in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This impact is felt most acutely by the youth and women.

As part of rebuilding the economy, in the 100 days since we assumed office, we are committing to this programme of action.

- 30.** We will leverage the capacity and collaborate with the provincial Public Entities in terms of their mandate, in growing and transforming the province's economy. In the coming days, we will hold high-level discussions with their leadership, including the Boards and Executive Management.
- 31.** As we restructure our economy, we will have ongoing discussions regarding the role of key economic institutions, such as the Growth Fund; Ithala Development Finance Corporation; Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal; Agri-Business Development Agency; Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone and the Dube Tradeport Corporation in relation to the employment impact of policy decisions.
- 32.** Madam Speaker, we are delighted to announce that major investment projects to the value of R1,4 billion are under construction in Trade Zone 2 at the Dube Tradeport. In the future we will be injecting R2 billion in local economic development by building a Agri-Hub at the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone. We will start by injecting R150 million in building the Fresh Produce Market at uMhlathuze Municipality.

- 33.** In addition, the State-Owned Entities will be engaged as they are operating in the province as drivers of contribution in the economic growth of the province.
- 34.** Amongst other initiatives, we will meet with the KwaZulu-Natal Growth Coalition and Economic Council, Chambers of Business to galvanise business and foster collaborations to increase business confidence, impacting growth and job creation. In this regard, the government aims to recalibrate its role as an enabler and catalyst for business to thrive.
- 35.** Economic transformation and inclusive growth remain key economic growth and development pillars. We will pay deliberate attention to the development of small, youth, and women-owned businesses through partnerships and incubation.
- 36.** The township and rural economies are important elements of socio-economic transformation. It cannot be, that our people in townships and rural areas are robbed of these opportunities.
- 37.** We are taking a closer look into the matter of businesses owned by illegal foreign nationals. Having said that, we are noting that even those that are in the country legally, some do not comply with environmental health and safety regulations. Some would go to an extent of selling expired products to our vulnerable communities. Working with all Municipalities and law enforcement agencies, we will enforce environmental health bylaws within the next 3 months from today.

- 38.** Agriculture is one of the sectors that is pivotal in addressing rural economy. The priority will be to identify all the farms owned by government that are lying fallow and ensure that we fund through the available allocated funds for youth and women SMME's to turn these farms around and produce to ensure food security. We will start with a minimum of 2 of these farms.
- 39.** We will ensure that uBukhosi play a pivotal role in programmes aimed at rural economic development. Rethinking rural development and land management is also key in our strategy. This will ensure improvement in agriculture efficiency and productivity
- 40.** Other sectors of the economy that will be catalysed and synergised for growth include the digital economy, green economy, high-value manufacturing, oceans economy, hemp and cannabis among others.
- 41.** During the inauguration, we announced the reconfiguration of the Department of Public Works, into the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. This was designed to expedite infrastructure development, ensure efficient use of internal resources, and achieve the broader economic growth and development goals set for the province.

- 42.** As part of this reconfiguration, we are repositioning the department as the “implementer of choice” for all infrastructure projects within provincial government departments.
- 43.** I wish to invite the construction industry to contribute positively in the projects done in our province. As this government, we must all work together to fight the construction mafia syndrome. There is no place for the construction mafia in our province. We will work with the construction industry to help the industry to grow.

Madam Speaker,

This Government prioritises the institutionalization of youth development. We are mindful of young people who are unemployed including those that are graduates.

- 44.** Following this approach, in August 2024, which is starting tomorrow, we are opening a new window for the R100 million Youth Empowerment Fund.
- 45.** Innovation is critical in creating a futuristic economy. In this area, we want to see new industries anchored on e-commerce, finance, information technology, e-hailing, and related services. For this reason, we will support new start-up industries in these fields.
- 46.** We will officially open the King Dinuzulu Innovation Valley at the Dube Tradeport. This valley will support creativity and innovation in the IT space. We have engaged the private sector so that we can create the Digital Fund, which will be accessed by young people.

47. We have concluded a partnership agreement with the Services Seta and Property Practitioner Regulatory Authority to implement a 12-month leadership programme in the Real Estate Sector. A total of 800 young people have been contracted and inducted in preparation for the programme's commencement.
48. The programme's objective is to transform the Property and Real Estate industry and include the previously marginalised youth, especially young women in the KZN province. The programme will start in Durban and Pietermaritzburg.
49. Today, 31 July is the Pan African Women's Day and tomorrow we begin the Women's Month. Unfortunately, women continue to be the face of poverty in the country and in the Province. The different government departments will be implementing programmes that empower women throughout the month and beyond.
50. Furthermore, in supporting women in business and those aspiring to be in business, within the 100 days we will announce the KwaZulu-Natal Women Advancement Fund. This will be done in partnership with the Private Sector.

SUPPORTING HERITAGE TOURISM

KwaZulu-Natal possesses key comparative and competitive advantages in tourism, and in this regard:

51. We will repurpose cultural and heritage tourism and revive heritage routes to contribute to the rural economy and also expose the potential of the rural towns.
52. SILO soMhlaba, as part of celebrating our diversity we will unveil the iconic King Shaka Statue which is at King Shaka International Airport and complete the construction of the 1860 Indentured Indian Labourers Monument.

ENHANCING MOBILITY AND TRANSFORMATION THROUGH TRANSPORT

53. Transport focus will be expanded to incorporate other modes of transportation in its interventions for enhancing mobility. This will include rail, maritime, pipeline and aviation role-players. This is to alleviate congestion on road network but also influence beneficiation in the value chain of these industries.
54. The Taxi industry continues to be a pillar of economic growth and it has to be prioritized and treated as a formal business. Within 100 days, there will be engagement of all stakeholders within the Transport Industry addressing access and expansion of public transport and continued peace within the sector. As a responsible and responsive government, we will look closely into the permit disputes and the process of issuing permits.

REDUCING POVERTY AND TACKLING HIGH COST OF LIVING

Despite many interventions, poverty levels remain unacceptably high. Structural features that perpetuate poverty and inequality have not been sufficiently transformed. This necessitates more effective economic empowerment and inclusion strategies.

- 55.** All social partners carry the responsibility of dealing with poverty. While government will continue to play a leading role in tackling poverty and provide a safety net for the most vulnerable, we invite all social partners to join hands with us.
- 56.** Ilima/Letsima Mechanisation programme remains one of the key interventions to address poverty. This is part of producer support interventions to drive food and nutritious security in the province.
- 57.** I have directed the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, to work with Amakhosi and all stakeholders in ensuring that KwaZulu-Natal is green with vegetable gardens, crop farming and grazing land. These endeavours will contribute to food security. SILO ezweni lakho akekho umuntu okumele alale engadlile sikhona sonke singumndeni.
- 58.** We will continue providing houses to communities to address the current significant housing backlog and to improve their dignity.
- 59.** Whenever compelling cases are found outside our normal project areas, we will implement Operation Sukuma Sakhe intervention for

vulnerable groups. Njengohulumeni wakho SILO singephumule manxa kusekhona uGogo uMaShezi oPhongolo olala endlini ewayo. Singephumule abantu abakhubazekile bengaka bonelelwa ngezindawo zokuhlala ezibalungele.

- 60.** In the first 100 days, we will monitor the delivery of the following human settlement interventions:
- 150 serviced sites.
 - 500 Breaking New Ground houses.
 - 99 households that received subsidies and purchased units under first home finance programme.
 - Five of the 10 land parcels for 2022 flood victims rezoned

BUILDING A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

Building capacity, capability and agility in the public service is of paramount importance in order to regain the trust of citizens.

- 61.** Even as we operate under fiscal constraints, this government is committed to deliver services while adhering to prudent financial management.
- 62.** In line with national priorities, the KwaZulu-Natal Cabinet Lekgotla has resolved to strengthen the capacity and support for struggling municipalities to ensure that, first and foremost, they are capable of providing basic services to our people, ensure sound financial management and facilitate economic growth.

63. Provision of water, sanitation, electricity and road infrastructure remains central to the realization of basic human rights of our people.
64. We have resolved to make a call for the attainment of clean audits linked to service delivery and performance agreements across the board.
65. We must state that this government will implement a strict zero-tolerance approach to non-compliance, enforce accountability, and enforce consequence management. We want all departments, municipalities and public entities to improve their audit outcomes and strive for clean audits. That is non-negotiable!
66. Clean, ethical and good governance will be the order of the day. Fraud and corruption in this government will not be tolerated. We are committed to professionalising the public service.
67. The Premier's hotline is up and running. To show that we mean business, I wish to share the free hotline number and email today, which is **0801229040** and the email address is **complaints@kznpremier.gov.za**. I wish for every citizen, not just to see wrong-doing but to also report wrong-doing. I encourage you all to report acts of maladministration, corruption and poor service delivery.

68. To this end, we will refocus the Office of the Premier on research, policy development, planning, monitoring and evaluation as the glue that holds Government of Provincial Unity together.
69. Implementation of Anti-corruption Strategy and Plan to deal with corruption and service delivery failures at all levels.

OPERATION MBO

70. Operation MBO is an integrated, massified and focused service delivery model at local level, which ensures social accountability. As part of this new administration, we will embark on unannounced visits to frontline services.

Madam Speaker,

71. To this administration, people are not statistics. They are citizens with basic human rights as such we will continue to visit households to ascertain that services are delivered by all Departments during unannounced monitoring visits.
72. Sesilualile uhlelo lokungena umuzi ngomuzi sizobheka inhlalakahle nezidingo zabantu, bese siyaqinisekisa ukuthi bayazicosha lezozidingo. Sikhuluma nje laphaya eMpofana sithole uGogo uMchunu obenenkinga yamehlo. Sizokwelusa ukuthi nembala uyalucosha usizo.

- 73.** In addition, we will strengthen the monitoring and reporting on the District Development Model in line with the recently promulgated regulations.

MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

Madame Speaker,

- 74.** In KwaZulu-Natal, Climate Change is a lived reality. About two months ago, various district municipalities were hit by heavy storms and winds, with the town of uThongathi being the epicentre of that disaster. Progress made thus far in uThongathi is that building material and school uniforms as well as mobile classrooms have been delivered. We are grateful for the solidarity shown through generous donations coming from far and wide. We will continue rebuilding uThongathi.
- 75.** Just recently our Province was devastated by runaway veld fires that destroyed lives and livelihoods of our people.
- 76.** It is for this reason that we welcome recent signing of the Climate Change Bill into law by the President. This legislative regime is welcomed as a progressive step towards legalising the climate change response processes and actions that have been undertaken.

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL DIALOGUES

- 77.** One of the most important aspects of socio-political and economic reconstruction is the ability and willingness of communities to engage in dialogues to find meaningful and lasting solutions to existing problems.
- 78.** To this end, over the next 100 days of this administration, we will prioritize engagements with all sectors of society to enable them to contribute to the rebuilding of our province.
- 79.** We acknowledge that there are sections of society that may perceive themselves alienated from our government. We aim to remedy that. Furthermore, we acknowledge the need for the creation of effective platforms for citizens to engage with their government.
- 80.** The main goal of these sessions is to create neutral channels for the engagement of a broad array of stakeholders, including representatives from traditional leaders, Non-Governmental Organisations, Community-Based Organisations, academia, business, chapter nine institutions, the media, parliament as well as local and provincial government with the support of leading experts.
- 81.** These sessions are impartial and not tied to any political party or ideology. These will be driven by the Office of the Premier.

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

- 82.** We have set three primary targets for health systems, including emergency medical rescue service response times. This will ensure that our health care responses improve. These include;
- Quality services – short waiting time, communicating to patients whilst waiting, courtesy to citizens, all to improve quality to be experienced by our citizens at clinics and hospitals whilst strengthening primary health care focussing on health
 - Health promotion, mainly to lower the diseases of lifestyle that are on the increase – diabetes is the number one killer now in our Province. Attending to cancer prevention, mental health which has increased with all stressors we have faced in the past 3 years. Whilst, attending to prevention of TB, HIV and all other viral infections that are facing our people.
 - Whilst Primary Health care is a cornerstone of delivering healthier lives, this government will also pay attention to specialist services delivered in hospitals.

DELIVERING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

- 83.** We will prioritise monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, school infrastructure and the school nutrition programme to enhance foundational and secondary education.

84. By collaborating with communities we aim to identify and reintegrate children who have dropped out of school addressing the high drop-out rate and therefore illiteracy,
85. This administration is committed to enhance school sport and arts into mainstream education, promoting health and diversity in schools

IMPROVING COMMUNITY SAFETY

86. One of the key threats to accelerated and inclusive economic growth and development is instability.
87. An environment where safety and security are undermined breeds instability, which, in turn, chases away investments, threatens social fibre and impedes actualisation.
88. We acknowledge how crime is impacting on your lives. Starting in August, we will be convening engagements in all districts and the Metro that will culminate into a Provincial Crime Summit. These engagements will enable all the role-players, ranging from Amakhosi, Izinduna, South African Police Service, Mayors and councillors, religious leaders, crime prevention structures, business and broader communities to analyse the crime situation in the province and to come up with interventions that must be prioritised as part of their sector plan for crime fighting and crime prevention.

Hlanga Lomhlabathi,

- 89.** As this Government, we are committed to the safety and well-being of Amakhosi, iZinduna, Councillors and communities. With regard to this, plans are afoot to implement an integrated security programme.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE

- 90.** Gender-Based Violence and Femicide is a scourge that continues to put us to shame. The latest numbers of reported GBV&F incidents in Inanda, Umlazi and Empangeni are disturbingly high. Lokhu SILO SamaBandla kulichilo esizweni sakho. The Province will continue to fight this scourge through the Provincial Integrated Plan.

CONCLUSION

- 91.** Honourable Chairperson, history has given us a responsibility to leave our mark in the sands of time by making a difference in the lives of the people we serve.
- 92.** This is a task that is challenging and daunting and yet fulfilling at the same time. As this generation of leaders, we have a duty and mandate to ensure that we work together to harness the collective potential of every citizen of our province.

- 93.** This undertaking requires the grit and determination of all our leaders, united in their quest to change the economic fortunes of our province.
- 94.** As I conclude, I wish to state categorically that the provincial government I lead is equal to the task of opening a chapter of social stability, growth and development in the lives of the people of this province.
- 95.** As I advanced in my acceptance speech, as the Premier of this province, our enduring commitment is to be the servants of our people, to serve with dignity, honour, and integrity, and to ensure that there is value for money in every expenditure. This is a commitment we will not betray.
- 96.** Honourable Speaker allow me to take the opportunity to thank His Majesty the King, Hlanga Lezwe for your presence and support.

To yourself Hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker and honourable Members of the Legislature, thank you for giving us an opportunity to present these priorities to this august house for the betterment of the citizens of KwaZulu-Natal.

Honourable Members of the Executive Council I am grateful for your support and continuous guidance.

I would like to thank the leadership of political parties that are part of the Government of National and Provincial Unity for putting our people first. I would like to thank my political party for the opportunity to lead this government.

- 97.** Thank you to the Director-General for the technical and administrative support leading the Office of the Premier team. I would also like to express a word of appreciation to the Premier's Special Advisors for their input and support.

- 98.** Thank you to my Wife, Mahlase and my family for your unwavering support and love as we are tasked to lead the Province.

Thank you