



MEDIA STATEMENT

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KWAZULU-NATAL TO PRIORITISE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

KwaZulu-Natal Premier Senzo Mchunu today announced that the Provincial government will soon announce new strategies to fast track youth empowerment issues.

Mchunu was speaking during the provincial commemoration of Youth Day which marks the sacrifice made by young people who rose up against the Apartheid government in 1976.

“Today we celebrate June 16 against the background of the 50th Anniversary of the Rivonia Trial Verdict. We celebrate these landmarks in our history not because they were happy events. We do so because they represented turning points in the struggle for freedom and democracy,” said Mchunu.

“The freedom and democracy we are enjoying is an indication that the past generations of young people, were successful in answering questions they faced at that time. I assert that the central question facing the youth today is deepening democracy and expanding opportunities to the previously disadvantaged communities that continue to be mired in the triangle of poverty, inequality and unemployment,” said Mchunu.

Mchunu said the challenges of unemployment, HIV and Aids, teenage pregnancy, drug and substance abuse are just some of the mine-fields that young people have to navigate today.

“It is for this reason that the provincial government is investing towards youth empowerment. There is great hope that with all the opportunities that have been made available by this democratic government, the youth of today will rise to the occasion.

“We are committed to ensuring that our programmes on skills and youth development are accessed by young people throughout all corners of this province. Starting from the early childhood development, there has been a strong focus on scarce skills such as engineering, science and technology, accounting, information technology, agriculture, health and social services,” he said.

Mchunu said over the past five years the provincial government has spent more than R1, 5 billion on bursaries awarded to needy students. The accumulative number of students that have benefited from the bursary programme over the past five years is more than 7000.



There were more than 1954 students from poor families who benefitted from financial support provided by the provincial government at a cost of R54 million during 2013 academic year alone.

The number of graduates provincially is 7,653 and some are still studying. The overall number of progressing students provincially is 2,990. For the centralized departments, only 539 students are progressing in 2014. The budget to fund these students in 2014/2015 is more than R20 million.

Off the progressing students, some belong to Health and education and they are getting financial support directly from the two departments. Over the past four years there are more than 4000 interns who have worked for various provincial government departments costing government more than R100 million.

“We have provided Social Work Scholarship to more than 1371 unemployed youth and experiential training for more than 75 unemployed graduates. Through the Premier’s Priority Projects (working with the Department of Education) students with disabilities have been recruited and given bursaries and trained. Some of these students with disabilities registered for BPaed Degree at Unizulu.

“Our learnership programme has already recruited more than 260 learners with disabilities and these have been distributed to Umkhanyakude, Inkandla, Umfolozi, Vulamehlo and Jozini municipalities,” Mchunu said.

Ends

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