



MEDIA STATEMENT

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STATEMENT BY DR ZWELI MKHIZE FOLLOWING A MARCH BY THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE

KwaZulu-Natal Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize has called on political parties in the legislature to utilize this institution to engage constructively on issues of youth development instead of playing with emotions of vulnerable members of our society in order to advance narrow party-political interests.

“Last week we tabled a report in the legislature giving political parties including the Democratic Alliance the opportunity to debate these issues openly thereby show political maturity.

“We have long expressed our support for the youth wage subsidy which was initially announced by the Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan two years ago with an allocation of about R5-billion in the February Budget estimates.”

“We have expressed our hope that this matter which is currently before the National Economic Development and Labour Council will be resolved speedily and recommendations made to national and provincial cabinet. We can safely say that KwaZulu-Natal is readying itself for the implementation of this initiative.”

“The KZN Broad-based Black Economic Advisory Council has also endorsed this youth subsidy approach, a move that we welcome as the provincial government.”

“We want to assure young people and the people of this province and the whole country that our programmes on youth development are reaching many young people”.

“To support students from poor families the provincial government has awarded 2 743 students bursaries worth more than R 112, 2 million this year – 2012. Last year the accumulative total of students supported by the provincial government bursary programme was 4877 at the cost estimated above half a billion.

“There has been a strong focus on scarce skills such as engineering, science and technology, accounting, information technology, agriculture, health and social services. The total number of students training in our FET colleges in our province has increased to 61 589.”

“This financial year there are more than 1051 interns working for various provincial government departments costing government more than R52, 4 million.”



“For instance, we have provided Social Work Scholarship to 1371 unemployed youth and experiential training for 75 unemployed graduates.”

“Government has allocated R55m towards the Youth Ambassador Campaign in an attempt to deal with the challenges of social ills.”

“I wish to emphasize that this is not an employment scheme. It is a two-year placement initiative aimed at ensuring that we develop youth cadres who will work in their communities, amongst the youth to create and promote positive human values and behavioural changes that will result in the reduction of social ills.”

“Currently we have 4445 youth ambassadors recruited across the province in every district to act as peer educators for young people to reduce the spread of HIV and Aids, teenage pregnancies, drug and substance abuse, crime and suicide. The HIV and AIDS pandemic poses one of the greatest economic, social and political challenges of our time.”

“Since the rollout of Expanded Public Works Programme started we have seen many young people contributing towards the upkeep of their families. Through EPWP we have created employment for more than 32 118 across all sectors of the economy.”

“We are also putting young people at the forefront of greening revolution. Our belief as government is that a transition to a green economy should not be seen as a cost to the economy but rather as an economic opportunity, which requires intensive involvement of young people to ensure environmental protection. We have employed 1148 young people as part of KwaZulu-Natal Integrated Greening Programme.”

“KZN Unemployed Graduates Assistance Programme currently has about 450 unemployed graduates and we have set aside R1, 5million to assist them. About 250 unemployed graduates have been differed for employment. All the unemployed graduates within the province have a chance of registering their details in the provincial database so as to enable them to get assistance. The online database is www.kznemployedgrads.gov.za.”

“We also have a web-based information disseminating tool for youth economic empowerment in the province. It provides general information and useful links to youth entrepreneurs. It also profiles youth owned business and provides a database of youth owned companies in KZN. The website is www.kznyouthbiz.co.za”

KwaZulu-Natal has an incredible potential which needs a collective effort to harness and build a prosperous future for all. To our youth and South Africans from all walks of life we say let us have a fruitful Youth Month and let us engage constructively on issues of youth development issues.

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