

# **STATEMENT ON THE KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2014**

## **1. GOVERNMENT-WIDE PROGRAMMES**

### **1.1 Economy**

The KZN Provincial Executive Council ('Executive Council') meeting coincided with the Medium Term Budget Speech by the Minister of Finance. In its deliberations, the Executive Council reflected on the global economic environment, the state of economy of the Republic of South Africa, and the overall implication all this have on the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. The Executive Council noted the sluggish economic growth that has necessitated the lowering of economic growth forecast by National Treasury from 2, 7% to 1, 4% for this year. The Executive Council recognises the influence that these developments have on the broader objectives of the country to tackle the triple challenge of unemployment, inequality and poverty.

When faced with weak economic growth, falling tax revenues and increasing deficits, the country has a few options at its disposal. The most plausible and swift option is to reduce public spending and induce efficiencies by eliminating wasteful expenditure. The Executive Council further noted that the current state of the economy has direct impact on allocations to KwaZulu-Natal Province, thereby having negative impact on delivery of some government programmes. Nonetheless, the Executive Council noted that such structural constraints equally offer an opportunity to reflect and find new innovative measures. In this regard, the Executive Council was satisfied that decisive steps are being taken under the leadership of Premier Senzo Mchunu.

### **1.2 Financial Position of KZN Provincial Government**

The Executive Council affirmed that the financial position of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal Government remains in good health despite prevailing economic challenges. The Executive Council nonetheless, acknowledged that urgent and prudent measures must be taken in line with the call by National Treasury to exercise fiscal discipline.

In this regard, the Executive Council commended Premier Mchunu for his leadership in convening a special meeting of Heads of Departments, Chief Financial Officers and Supply Chain Managers held on 16-17 October 2014 in Cedara. This meeting, was convened to primarily find practical measures to ensure adherence to financial controls against irregular expenditures, fruitless expenditures, wasteful expenditures and general controlled spending of departmental budgets. The Executive Council, further directed the Director-General to convene a meeting of HODs and all senior managers responsible for human resources in Provincial Government Departments to explore further means of implementing cost

containment measures by amongst other establish what positions in the establishment may be paid for, yet incumbents are sitting at home either through suspensions or otherwise.

## **1.2 Adoption of the 2014 Provincial Growth and Development Plan**

The Provincial Executive Council adopted the 2014 version of the 2030 Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP). This version incorporated submissions made by the Commission for Gender Equality aimed at deepening interventions to advance women empowerment and people with disabilities.

## **1.3 The 365 Days Commitment**

During the inauguration of the Provincial Executive Council on 25 May 2014, the Premier made a commitment to the people of KwaZulu-Natal Province to implement a number of priority projects within the first 100 Days of this Administration. The Executive Council is encouraged by the exercise of heightened level of coordination that all departments responsible for the delivery of those commitments demonstrated during the first 100 Days of this Administration.

The Executive Council is satisfied as per its assessment report of the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014 that it had fully completed some of those commitments. It nonetheless, noted that some of these projects are of long term nature that remains work in progress. In this regard, the Executive Council resolved to escalate the 100 Days commitment to a 365 Days commitment, as a conscious effort to intensify the scale and speed of service delivery with clear target in a coordinated manner across all departments. The schedule of these new commitments once finalised, will be communicated to the public through a media briefing thus deepening transparency and accountability, which will be the hallmark of this Administration.

## **1.4 Operation Sukuma Sakhe**

The Executive Council was apprised on progress made on preparations for the Cabinet Operation Sukuma Sakhe Day to be held in UMzinyathi on 29 October 2014. This visit marks the 34<sup>th</sup> World Food Day, whose theme for 2014 is "Feeding the World". The aim of the World Food Day is to heighten public awareness of the world food problem and strengthen solidarity in the struggle against hunger, malnutrition and poverty. In this regard, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development selected eight food security projects to be visited. These projects are focused on vegetable production, animal and veld management, livestock water provision, child and youth care and chronic disease medication.

## **2. UPDATES**

### **2.1 State of Taxi Industry – Ezakheni and KwaDukuza/Maphumulo**

The Executive Council noted the re-emergence of pockets of violence associated with the taxi industry, which notably was marked by incidents of shootings on 11 October 2014 in eZakheni, Ladysmith. In this regard, the Executive Council expressed its condolences to the families who lost their loved ones in these unfortunate and senseless incidents, which resulted to the death of fifteen (15) people.

The Executive Council commended the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison for moving with speed in dealing with this matter. The intervention has been aimed at bringing stability in the affected area of EZakheni and to provide necessary assistance to all affected families. The Executive Council strongly condemned the use of violence as means of resolving conflict, and resolved to act harshly against these criminal elements for the sustenance of peace and stability of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. The Executive Council thus noted the report by South African Police Services (SAPS), which indicate that the source of these incidents of violence, is conflict in the taxi industry seemingly over taxi routes in certain parts of Gauteng Province. The Executive Council calls on the police to intensify their investigation into these murders, and any other related criminal matters. To stem any further potential violence, the Executive Council resolved to engage with counterparts in the Gauteng Provincial Government to jointly explore necessary collaborative action to curb violence in the taxi industry and eliminate these criminal acts.

Lastly, the Executive Council commended Premier Mchunu for his bold leadership on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014, assisted by the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison and the Director-General. They intervened in ILembe District by facilitating a dialogue amongst various stakeholders in the taxi industry, following acts of violence that had led to senseless loss of innocent lives.

### **2.2 Nigerian Church Disaster**

The Executive Council was apprised on latest developments regarding repatriation of the mortal remains of the victims of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014 tragic disaster in Nigeria, wherein South Africans lost their lives during the collapse of the guesthouse of the Synagogue of All Nations of Bishop TB Joshua. The Executive Council was apprised that the post-mortem on all mortal remains has been completed and are now awaiting verification of DNA samples. The Executive Council noted that out of the eighty four (84) victims, five (5) are from the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. In this regard, the Executive Council resolved that an Inter-Ministerial Committee of MECs will form part of the Provincial Joints Operations Committee to oversee the process.

The Executive Council was encouraged by active support the Department of Social Development of the KZN Provincial Government has provided to all affected families.

Amongst the interventions, has been the assigning of two (2) Social Workers to each of the four affected families to provide on continuous basis, psycho-social services during this period of grief. The Executive Council resolved to assign further fifty (50) Social Workers to provide psycho-social services during funeral ceremonies. To this end, the Provincial Government has reached out to the affected families and provided necessary emotional support through visits that have been undertaken by the Honourable Premier, Mr Senzo Mchunu, the MEC for Social Development, Mrs Weziwe Thusi and the MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo.

### **2.3 Launch of the 16 Days of Activism of No Violence against Women and Children Campaign**

The Executive Council noted that worldwide UN endorsed 16 Days Campaign on No Violence against Women and Children, begins on 25 November and runs through till 10 December of every year. Whereas this campaign has been decentralised to all eleven (11) District Municipalities, and affirming an unwavering commitment to promote and protect the rights of women and children as fundamental beyond these 16 days, the Executive Council resolved to intensify this campaign by hosting events in Wards that have registered recent incidents of gender based violence. The Executive Council further noted that 2014 marks the 16<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Campaign.

In this regard, the Executive Council resolved to evaluate and analyse the impact that this Campaign has had in advancing protection of women and children against gender based violence and produce report in this regard. The Executive Council further resolved to ensure that civil society, private sector and men, are mobilised to partner with government in its efforts to eliminate gender based violence in a sustained and impactful manner.

Ends.

***Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government***

**Enquires:**

Mr. Thamsanqa Ngwenya  
Head: Provincial Government Communication  
Office of the Premier  
Email: Thami.Ngwenya@kznpremier.gov.za