



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON

PO Box 15 Cape Town 8000 Republic of South Africa
Tel: 27 (21) 403 2321/3126 Fax: 27 (21) 461 9460
www.parliament.gov.za

ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, HONOURABLE N. A. MASONDO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE TAKING PARLIAMENT TO THE PEOPLE PROGRAMME IN KWAZULU-NATAL

VENUE: UGU DISTRICT **DATE:** 15 NOVEMBER 2022 **TIME:** 09H00

Sanibonani! Dumelang! Greetings to Everyone!

Programme Directors, the Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Honourable S. Lucas and Deputy Speaker of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature, Honourable R. Mthembu

Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Province, Honourable N. Dube-Ncube

Speaker of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature, Honourable N. Boyce

Executive Mayor of Ugu District Municipality, Cllr P. Mthiyane

NCOP House Chairpersons, Honourable J. Nyambi and Honourable W. Ngwenya

Chief Whip of the NCOP, Honourable S. Mohai

Honourable Permanent and Special Delegates and Members of the Executive

Provincial Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

Councillors, Traditional Leaders and Leaders of faith-based organisations

Ladies and gentlemen

1. INTRODUCTION

Programme Directors, allow me to start by thanking you for the opportunity to say a few words at this opening of the Taking Parliament to the People Programme here in KwaZulu-Natal.

Many would agree that it is fitting that after a hiatus of two years, which was occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme is held in this province after the devastation caused by public violence, destruction and looting during the July 2021 unrest and the damages triggered by the floods earlier this year.

The theme for this week is *“Working together to ensure faster improvement in the delivery of services to communities”*. We hope that through collaboration, we will unlock lasting solutions to the challenges experienced by the province, starting with Ugu District Municipality, which consists of Ray Nkonyeni, uMdoni, uMuziwabantu and uMzumbe local municipalities.

Sithi ke asisebenze simuntu munye sethule izinhlelo ezisheshayo ezisezingeni, eziphucula impilo emphakathini.

2. BACKGROUND

Programme Directors, as you will certainly agree with me, Parliament, the Provincial Legislatures and Municipal Councils are the organs of people’s power and critical instruments for the transformation of our society.

In this context, the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), which is one of the two Houses that constitute our national Parliament, has a constitutional responsibility to represent the interests of the provinces. It also provides for the representation of the different categories of municipalities in Parliament and plays an important role in overseeing co-operation among the different spheres of government, namely national, provincial and local government.

To carry out its mandate, the NCOP uses a number of mechanisms including the Taking Parliament to the People Programme. The programme, which was initiated in 2002, assists the NCOP to facilitate public involvement in legislative and other processes.

This is important because Parliament must serve the interests of the people by providing a national forum for public consideration of issues.

3. WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION FOR HOSTING THE PROGRAMME IN KWAZULU-NATAL?

The province faces a number of service delivery challenges. There is a need to drive a co-ordinated approach to improve the level of quality and efficient delivery of basic services. Service delivery was at the centre of the issues that were raised by the voters in the 2021 local government elections. As a province with a large rural community, it also faces challenges relating to rural development.

Following a series of engagements with our counterparts in the province, informed by the desire to facilitate collaboration towards ensuring faster improvement in the delivery of services to communities, we decided that this week's programme should be held in this municipality. Our knowledge of the issues and the research conducted, led us to conclude that we should focus on the provision of water and sanitation, development of water infrastructure, road infrastructure, safety and security, human settlements, agriculture, local economic development and the provision of social services to communities.

Programme Directors, the Bill of Rights in the Constitution provides that everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing, to health care services, sufficient food and water; and social security, among other things.

Umgwaqo-siseko uyasiza ukusihlahlela indlela uma uthi: Wonke umuntu unelungelo eligcwele lokuba athole uphahla noma indlu, ezempilo, ukudla namanzi acocekile kanye nenhlalakahle nokunye.

The public riots which took place in 2021 and the floods which hit some of our provinces earlier this year, destroyed people's lives and caused damage to the infrastructure for the provision of water, roads, electricity and even housing in this province. These risks, particularly those caused by the effects of climate change, remain with us.

To understand the negative impact of the July 2021 unrest to the economy we observe that in this district alone, which has large tracts of fertile land for agriculture, we saw more than 500 000 tons of sugarcane worth millions of rands in potential revenue being destroyed. The Ugu Fresh Produce Market was also destroyed. This directly impacted tens of thousands of jobs and many more indirectly.

We will be failing in our duty if we do not to reiterate the point made by the leaders in the province and nationally, during the time of the unrest and afterwards, that we must guard against destroying the very resources and the means we need for our own livelihoods and development.

We do understand that Parliament must oversee the work being done to rebuild and ensure that there is accountability by those charged with the provision of public services and goods. However, to succeed, we must all work together.

4. THE NATURE OF SOME OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY CHALLENGES IN THE PROVINCE

Programme Directors, the nature of some of the challenges in the province is as follows:

- 1) **In respect of housing**, various studies conducted indicate that KwaZulu-Natal is the second highest province in South Africa in terms of housing backlogs. And that the province has a high number of informal settlements surrounding primary economic hubs and secondary cities: eThekweni Metro, Ray Nkonyeni, Newcastle, Alfred Duma, KwaDukuza, uMhlathuze and uMsunduzi Municipalities.

Udaba lwamabobosi, phecelezi ama 'informal settlements', nokuswelakala kwezindlu, siyalwazi.

According to the 2016 community survey, KwaZulu-Natal has a combination of rural and urban settlements, with a housing backlog estimated at over 700 000. In eThekweni Municipality alone there was a backlog of more than 440 000 houses.

- 2) **In respect of water and sanitation**, the province has battled water shortages for years. Recent statistics indicate that the province has a water backlog of 65% and a sanitation backlog of more than 123 000 consumer units, as of March 2019. In most rural parts of KwaZulu-Natal people walk long distances to the nearest water source. This is a heavy burden, especially for women who bear the brunt of this challenge.
- 3) **In relation to electricity**, the province suffers from inadequate power supply. Power outages are rampant and part of this challenge is

attributed to the natural disasters which the province has suffered over the years. There are a number of human settlements without electricity in the province as Eskom is struggling to provide these settlements with electricity citing funding difficulties.

Isimo sikagesi okhanya ucime selwaba undaba mlonyeni.

- 4) **The recent floods** have had a severe impact on economic activity in the province as they brought business operations to a halt in several industries. The floods came at a time when the province was recovering from the effects of the 2021 riots, which cost the province over 20 billion rand and put over 150 000 jobs at risk.

They caused major destruction to private and public infrastructure, with an infrastructure repair bill of R17 billion as estimated by the provincial government. Being South Africa's second largest provincial economy in terms of the level of economic activity, the disruptive effects of flooding in KwaZulu-Natal had a notable impact on the country as a whole.

All this occurred on the back of the loss of lives and damage to the economy caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 5) **And lastly, with regard to crime**, we continually observe the stubbornness of the priority crimes which include violent crime. Crime categories, among them murder, attempted murder, common

robbery, robbery with aggravating circumstances, attempted and contact sexual offences, carjacking, robbery at residential premises and of cash in transit, continue to feature in the red zone.

Against this background, Programme Directors, it is important to note the work being done by government, especially the provincial government which is positioning itself to become a caring government by attending to the needs of the people.

Sithi asiphawule ke, kulesimo, umsebenzi oncomekayo owenziwa noma othulwa uhulumeni wesifunda. Yebo siyahlababa, kodwa sibuye sibuye nganeno.

This work is clear in the articulation of the areas of focus for this current year by the province, which include:

- 1) Economic recovery and creating jobs;
- 2) Improving access to water and sanitation;
- 3) Fighting crime and building safer communities;
- 4) Social protection and human development; and importantly,
- 5) Building the capacity of the state.

The Premier has provided some details in this regard. We may hear more on Friday during the debate on the annual address of the President of the Republic, under the theme “*Building Agile State Capacities to Improve Service Delivery Outcomes*”.

5. DEALING WITH ISSUES BEYOND THE HOST DISTRICT

Programme Directors, it is for good practical reasons that our activities this week are to be conducted here at Ugu District. It is not to say that we came to the province to listen only to the issues pertaining to the district.

For example, we know the challenges including those of poor governance in some of the municipalities in the province, such as uMkhanyakude District Municipality. As the NCOP, we have been examining the challenges faced by some of the municipalities and how they could be addressed.

During the Local Government Week which we hosted in September this year, we noted, among other things, the need for the creation of a favourable environment for public representatives to exercise oversight and accountability without fear and without favour.

Noting the recent increases of intimidation and killing of councillors and municipal officials, as well as the damage to municipal property during service delivery protests, as a matter of grave concern, we called on the South African Police Service and the National Prosecuting Authority to ensure that reported cases are investigated and prosecuted. And that the police should adopt a similar approach to other spheres of government in conducting risk assessments for councillors and municipal officials.

Isihlava sokubulawa kwamaKhansela enye yalezozinto eziphula umoya nezehlisa isithunzi somdabu ngokwethula umqondo othi ‘Siyehluleka ukuxazulula izinkinga esibhekene nazo’.

On the 22nd of this month, we will be having a debate in the NCOP on “*Waging a Concerted Battle Against the Killing of Councillors*”. We believe that this will go a long way in refocusing our minds and will help us to find relevant solutions to the strengthening of oversight and accountability, and by extension, ensuring that our communities get the attention and the services they deserve.

6. IN CONCLUSION

Programme Directors, we appreciate that the Taking Parliament to the People Programme has brought us to KwaZulu-Natal this time around, after a halt caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This programme complements the Provincial Week exercise which was conducted by the delegates from this province in March this year.

Together with the provincial leadership, we have prioritised key service areas which require government collaboration and coordination. These are matters that are on the current agenda of the province.

Unfortunately, the July 2021 unrest and the damages caused by the floods earlier this year, have somewhat reversed some of the gains made by the

province in respect of the areas we will be focusing on. But we must not tire, we should keep on keeping on. We should fight on to build back better.

We therefore welcome everybody from any part of the province to come and raise issues during the week, guided by the broad agenda as reflected on the programme. We do expect the members of the Executive to be able to deal with relevant issues pertaining to the district, the province and indeed beyond.

Our clarion call is that we must all work together, to ensure the faster improvement in the delivery of services to communities.

I thank you! Ngiyabonga!