

National Freedom Party Response to the State of the Province
Address 2015

Hon Premier

Hon Speaker

Hon Members

Distinguished Guests

People of KwaZulu-Natal

Ngithanda ukuphawula mayelana nenkhulumo kaNdunankulu ngesikathi edlulisa amazwi ngokundlula emhlabeni kwa mhlonishwa ongasekho uMtholephi Mthimkhulu. uNdunankulu waveza ngokusobala ukuthi unguNdunankulu weANC kuphela, hayi uNdunankulu wesifundazwe jikelele. Iqembu leNFP lazizwa lingamukelekile ngenxa yokuba uNdunankulu engashongo nelilodwa ngomunye umhlonishwa ongasekho emhlabeni uStanley Dladla obeyilunga leNFP. Akasibonanga isidingo sokuhlonipha leliqhawe akhulume ngegalelo lakhe kulelizwe. Njenge NFP sithanda ukudlulisa amazwi okuxolisa kumndeni wakwaDladla ngalendelelo engakha eyinzwe nguNdunankulu.

As we gather here today to provide our views on the State of the Province Address, one thing is clear: the Premier and his government live in a completely different province from the one we all know. His address last week was a whitewash that sought to paint a glowing picture of our province when the

reality is that all is not well. In contrast to what the Premier would have us believe, KwaZulu-Natal has a bad story to tell.

The nightmare begins in the department of basic education. Much has been said on this and other platforms about the decrease in the matric pass rate from 77.4% to 69.7% and while this is deeply alarming, we in the NFP believe that the lowered pass rate is only a symptom of a much bigger problem. To simply attribute the poor quality of results to learners and teachers not being accustomed to the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) as ANC KZN Provincial Secretary Sihle Zikalala did, is a sign of denialism. We believe the focus needs to be on quality, not just quantity. The conversation should be around the kind of learner our education and training system produces. Are we producing a learner who will be equipped not only to be a job seeker but also a job creator?

At the recent ANC 103 birthday celebrations, much was said about the Freedom Charter and how the party champions it. One of the things the Freedom charter says about education is: "Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for ALL children". In the South Africa we live in, this is not the case.

For example, the 2014 matric results show that 75.8% of learners in quintile 5 achieved averages of more than 80% while for learners in quintile 1 only 31.8 % achieved this. This is an

indictment on the ANC government which claims to be champions of the poor. In a province where 86% of the population is African, no African learner made it into the top ten achievers for the 2014 matric examinations. There can be no doubt that location, the quality of teaching and access to resources in these locations contribute to this; another indication of inequality. Ours is a province in which you are locked into a particular kind of life forever, simply because you were born into it.

Earlier this year, we witnessed the tragic deaths of school learners from Imbali here in Pietermaritzburg who died after the driver of the vehicle transporting them to school lost control of the vehicle. Similar incidents have occurred throughout the province even before this. None of us should use these kinds of tragedies for political gain but we should instead try to become part of the solution. It is for this reason, Honorable Premier that the NFP urges you and your executive to adopt a Provincial Scholar Transport Policy as a matter of urgency. This policy would be similar to the National Scholar Transport Policy which has been going up and down between members of the national Cabinet for years. It does not seem like they plan to make this document law any time soon. We believe having this policy in our province would make sure that we have a school transport system that is properly managed and regulated. Some of the interventions of this would include:

making sure that all vehicles transporting learners are roadworthy, transport operators would apply for a special license, they would also receive training in basic first aid, they would be registered with a relevant provincial entity and most importantly, there would be clear consequences to bear on those who would go against this policy. I believe we need to give it a chance and I see no reason why your administration would be against it Honorable Premier.

If we do not sort out the rot that exists in our education department, then we will fail in every other respect. Education is the foundation for any other plan that seeks to lift people out of poverty. The Apartheid government managed to provide even the poorest whites with quality education and yet we, in democratic South Africa cannot do that for the poorest black children. This is a sad story to tell.

Honorable Premier, during your State of the Province in June last year, you told this House how the ANC led government has declared the next five years and beyond as an era of radical economic transformation. You emphasised in your address last week that in this era you will tackle unemployment in particular. I am sorry to tell you that you have failed. Last week, Statistics South Africa revealed that KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo have the lowest official employment rates, with ours standing at 20.8%. This is a bad story to tell. The NDP has a

target of creating 11 million jobs by 2030 and this province has committed to creating 2.1 million of these jobs through the Provincial Growth and Development Plan. So far, the track record would suggest that this is wishful thinking. During the mid-term budget reviews, we all saw how departments are failing to spend their budgets as allocated and how wasteful expenditure has actually increased. We also witnessed departments returning certain budgets which were meant to create jobs and enable economic growth. You spoke about SMME's and how your government supports these. What good is your support when the same SMME's do not receive government tenders? As we all know, these go to people who are politically connected or related to ANC leaders. How is this going to change in future Honorable Premier?

During the past year, a full-scale water crisis hit KwaZulu-Natal and the worst hit areas were the poor and underdeveloped ones. In many parts of the province, people have been without water since the beginning of the year. During our oversight visits in health facilities last year, we saw how this impacted negatively on many hospitals and clinics. Small scale farmers have also suffered as a result of drought. The South African Cane Growers' Association had estimated that cane production went down by 8%. None have felt the impact of draughts harder than rural residents who rely on water for their crops and livestock. Premier, we would like to hear your governments plan to address this crisis urgently.

Honorable Members, we were further disappointed that no clear plan was presented on how to end taxi violence in the province. Abantu bayaphela la ngaphandle and the Premier are showing no sense of urgency regarding the matter. The Premier and his government need to show leadership and provide a concrete plan on how to turn this around.

When it comes to the public health service, there is a discomfoting occurrence in our province regarding the availability of ambulance services. Abantu abantulayo bayafa ngenxa yalesisimo. We find a situation where a person will see an ambulance and approach the drivers for assistance and they are turned away because the ambulance has not received instructions to attend to them from the call centres. This cannot be acceptable and I hope the Premier and this government will bring this to an end once and for all.

In his address, the Premier spoke about how this year; government will focus strongly on service delivery. This comes as no surprise as we are approaching an election year, we will no doubt see the rolling out of food parcels and izimbizo in the coming months. Ngesikathi ethula inkhulumo yakhe, Isilo sikhulume nawe ngqo Ndunankulu. Ubethi uhulumeni kufanele engabe usuyazi ukuthi abantu badingani ngoba yonke leminyaka edlule engu 21 bebekhuluma ngazo izidingo zabo. Unxuse uhulumeni ukuthi asebenzise imali ngendlela ezothuthukisa umphakathi kuhlukanwe nezimbizo ezingathi shu.

Ngiyabonga. Presented by Hon VR Mlotshwa