

**MEDIA STATEMENT  
11 JANUARY 2010**

**KWAZULU-NATAL LEGISLATURE'S SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY  
MONITORING PROGRAMME**

Hon. Deputy Speaker  
Hon. Chairperson of Committees  
Hon. Deputy Chairperson of Committees  
Hon. Deputy Chief Whip  
Hon. Chairperson of the Education Portfolio Committee  
Members of the media  
Staff of the KZN Legislature present

First of all, let me take this opportunity to greet you all in the New Year and wish you all the best during 2010. The New Year brings with it huge expectations for all South Africans as our country will finally hosts the biggest sport event the world over, the FIFA World Cup, for the first time on African soil. Indeed, history will be made in our country as thousands of visitors who will accompany their national teams descend on our shores to witness the biggest and most spectacular Soccer World Cup ever staged before.

Allow me to indulge briefly on the forthcoming Soccer World Cup. The moment has come and this calls upon all of us to unite and put our hands on deck to make the 2010 World Cup a huge success. You will agree with me when I say, we are ready to host all nations that will be coming to participate in the 2010 World Cup. Working together, we have put in place excellent infrastructure in the form of magnificent stadiums, roads, airports and accommodation facilities that will ensure that South Africa hosts the most spectacular African World Cup.

Let us give each and every visitor the best hospitality and warmth that will surpass their expectations during their stay in our country and dispel all wrong notions about Africa. I urge you members of the media to be the best ambassadors of our country and continent during the World Cup and beyond. Your role in making the 2010 World Cup a huge success in the eyes of the international community cannot be over-emphasised.

Now, let me address you on the matter which I want us to share together as partners as I consider it to be very vital for any nation that wishes to succeed on the global stage. You are all aware that our government led by President Zuma has prioritized education as one of the key focus areas during this term of office and beyond. I have invited you here today because of my firm belief that education is the pillar of any winning nation. As a former educator myself, education remains very close to my heart as I spent many years teaching in under-privileged communities.

Furthermore, the institution that I currently lead as Speaker, firmly believes that education is everybody's business. It cannot be left only in the hands of the government, educators and parents. For education to succeed, it needs the involvement of everybody including the media, the church and other structures of civil society. Hence, our Legislature will soon be engaging with everybody concerned to strengthen our oversight role to ensure delivery of quality education

in KwaZulu-Natal. In this respect, the role of the media as watchdog for the public becomes very critical to ensure that our education system in the province functions effectively.

We must together ensure that the issue of school infrastructure is speedily addressed in our province so that in 2010 and beyond, we do not have learners who still receive their education under appalling conditions. We are aware that there are certain schools in our province where children are still taught in makeshift and mud classrooms especially in rural areas. That makes learning and teaching to be extremely difficult and you cannot expect quality education in those circumstances.

Our government continues to make resources available year on year to address infrastructure backlogs especially in rural communities. The media should assist us as public representatives by reporting and exposing the backlogs where they are still prevalent. This will enable us as the Legislature to visit those schools so as to make immediate intervention and get the Education Department to address those backlogs.

Other areas which require the media to work with us to monitor in our schools include:

- Timeous provision of learning and teaching support material to all schools;
- Culture of teaching and learning in all schools;

- School safety including crime and violence;
- Social problems such as teenage pregnancy, poverty and child-headed households.

## **SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY MONITORING PROGRAMME**

The School Functionality Monitoring Programme forms part of our oversight tool to ensure delivery of quality education in KwaZulu-Natal. The objective of the programme is to ensure that teaching and learning takes place from the first day of the new academic school year until the last day.

This programme was formalized in 2006 when several templates to monitor the opening of schools were developed by the then Education Portfolio Committee for use by Members when visiting schools on the first day. The 2010 academic year will see more monitoring sessions by the Legislature to interrogate more carefully various aspects of school functionality such as provision of infrastructure, delivery of textbooks and stationery on the first day of schooling, safety in schools and so on.

In my Budget Policy Speech which I delivered as Speaker of the Legislature in August 2009, I stated that this electoral term will be characterized by our Members becoming more visible in the communities we serve. As part of ensuring the visibility of our Members, one of the projects I proposed was the Paint Fest Project. This project entails forming partnerships with the private

sector to identify needy schools in our province with a view to play a role and assist with the upgrading of infrastructure.

In this respect, we have approached the Independent Development Trust (IDT) to partner with the Legislature and contribute material such as paint and work gear that would allow the Members to go out and paint needy schools in our province. I further proposed that our Members would visit schools to promote civic education amongst learners. Our Legislators will teach learners on issues such as our Constitution, Bill of Rights and Responsibilities as well as National Symbols, to name but a few.

As part of ensuring visibility of our Legislators, we have enhanced and strengthened the School Functionality Monitoring programme to make it more effective throughout the year. As you are aware that all public schools in KwaZulu-Natal will open on January 13 for the 2010 academic year, as the Legislature, we have deployed all our Members to go out and monitor the opening of our schools. They will check various aspects of school functionality including academic readiness, infrastructure, provision of learning and teaching material, teacher and pupil attendance and so on. Our Members will come back and report to the Legislature on the challenges they would have observed in each and every school visited. We have provided them with templates which they will use as monitoring tools.

I would refer the media to the schedule that we have prepared indicating the deployment of our Members to various Districts of KwaZulu-Natal. I will further urge the media to accompany us during these monitoring visits so that you can report from an informed position.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to congratulate all our matriculants who passed their 2009 National Senior Certificate examination. The class of 2009 has made KwaZulu-Natal proud by achieving 61 % pass rate surpassing previous years. They have also obtained more distinctions in various subjects. I say to them, this is the beginning of a long journey to success. They must go and make it at tertiary level. Our government is ready to support our needy students financially in order to access tertiary education.

To those who did not make it, this is not the end of the world. They must put more effort to their studies and write their exams again. There are other opportunities available to them as many institutions such as FETs are ready to accommodate and assist them in order to acquire various skills. Our country needs those skills.

I thank you,

