

MEDIA STATEMENT

28 AUGUST 2008

TOWARDS COMPLETE ERADICATION OF GENDER INEQUITY IN THE KZN LEGISLATURE AND BEYOND

Since the dawn of a new era in KwaZulu-Natal in 2004, the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature has made significant strides towards the attainment of gender equity and women empowerment in line with South Africa's Constitution. We have been very careful in our pursuit of women empowerment, by putting more emphasis on leadership qualities as opposed to quantity.

To achieve the above, the Legislature had to do many things, chief among these, was the appointment of the first ever female Secretary Ms Nerusha Naidoo to manage and drive the transformation process. We are happy to say that, since her arrival, there has been urgency in our quest to turn around the fortunes of the institution.

Some of the milestones we have achieved since I became a Speaker in 2004 are as follows: -

- The introduction of Women's Parliament, a platform which allows women in our province to articulate their dreams and aspirations thus shaping the future, completely unhindered by hitherto dominant male voices.
- More women in Management positions within the legislature.
- More women who are office bearers within the political arm of the legislature. Some of these great women are now holding positions in the provincial executive.

As you will recall, the KZN Legislature recently held a successful sitting of the

Women's Parliament in Clermont under eThekweni Metro. This was one of our many efforts aimed at putting issues affecting women on top of our agenda. The number of people who attended the event on both days exceeded the legislature's target number of 2500 per day. The tent was full to capacity and government departments were in attendance to provide on-the-site service to the public. The National Department of Home Affairs; and the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) were also offering their services on site. The presence of Home Affairs and Sassa helped to fast track the registration of ID and social grants to the needy people of the area. People in excess of 1 000 were able to apply for ID's and register for social grants. Other government departments recorded similar numbers of people who were attended to. To us this is the epitome of accelerated service delivery which has come as a result of our outreach programmes.

Our Public Participation and Communication Units in partnership with the Community Participation of eThekweni worked together to ensure that the community was made aware of the event. We are very grateful to the staff and councillors of eThekweni, who went all their way out to ensure that the Women's Parliament was a success.

Ladies and gentlemen, in celebrating the Women's Month in 2008, we have seen it appropriate to go beyond the normal activities of our legislature i.e. Women's parliament. We have done this by giving honour to women through documenting the lives and times of women leaders in our Legislature. We have decided to produce this booklet which recognizes the contribution and to showcase strides that the institution has achieved in meeting the national imperative i.e. women empowerment & women equity.

We hope it would give you insight into the lives of women in the KZN Legislature. We have aptly called this booklet "Beyond the Ceiling" to symbolize that women have the capacity to achieve greater things in life. We hope that it would

galvanise other women in KwaZulu-Natal to go beyond the ceiling and reach the sky in their respective fields.

As we celebrate Women's Month, we dip our banners in honour of our women. We have it in our power to improve the lot of women in our province; we have it in our power to improve the lot of women in our work environment. Their inspiring example challenges us all to work together to realise their noble ideals and build a truly non-sexist society. As the KZN Legislature we will not falter in our pursuit of full women empowerment.

LEGISLATURE PROGRAMME FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2008

The 2008 People's Assembly

I am pleased to announce that the 2008 sitting of the People's Assembly will take place on the 18th September 2008 in kwaDlangezwa, in Umhlathuze Local Municipality under Uthungulu District Municipality.

The theme for this sitting is "**Parliament empowering communities for poverty eradication**" We have embarked on a thorough consultation process with the political leadership of Umhlathuze Municipality in ensuring that this sitting is a resounding success. As our critical partners, you stand invited in this important event in our calendar.

Taking legislature to the People

Our innovative Programme of "Taking Legislature to the People" continues to grow from strength to strength despite our political distractors. The overwhelming enthusiasm which the people of this province have demonstrated towards this programme has given us an added impetus to press ahead with this programme.

I am happy to inform you that our second sitting of the programme of "Taking Legislature to the People" this year will be held on the 28th to 30th October 2008 at Newcastle in Amajuba District.

During this sitting, we are expecting, amongst other things to hear a briefing by the Department of Home Affairs on the State of readiness by Home Affairs in view of 2009 Elections. Other highlights of this sitting include the following: -

- Report by the Chairperson of Committees on the Multi Party Oversight visit to Amajuba District.
- Report by the MEC for Finance and Economic Development on the consolidated statement on municipalities budget (3rd quarter)
- Report by the Chairperson of Education Portfolio Committee on the Challenges of KZN Department of Education regarding Infrastructure.

Once again, we have had consultation with the political leadership of Amajuba district in preparing for this sitting.

I therefore like to take this opportunity to urge all the people of Uthungulu and Amajuba districts to attend these sitting in their numbers. All logistics including transport have been arranged and will be communicated to the people of these two districts as we approach the dates for the sitting.

I thank you