

MEDIA STATEMENT

08 AUGUST 2008

KWAZULU-NATAL LEGISLATURE – 2008 WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT

The KwaZulu-Natal Legislature will celebrate the women's month by hosting its annual Women's Parliament on 11- 12 August 2008 at the Sugar Ray Xulu stadium in Claremont outside Pinetown. This year's event marks the fourth session of the Women's Parliament which started in 2004 under the auspices of Speaker Willies Mchunu.

The Women's Parliament is a public participation programme initiated by Speaker Mchunu which is aimed at giving ordinary women a platform to engage with Members of the Legislature including the Provincial Cabinet in order to raise issues that affect women in their daily lives. The success of this event is phenomenal as close to 8000 women participate in the event annually. In 2005 the Legislature decided to host the event away from the legislative seat in order to reach out to more women including those living in rural areas. In keeping with the strategic direction of Taking Legislature to the People, the Women's Parliament has been held in several Districts such as Amajuba, Ilembe and Ugu.

Commenting on this year's Women's Parliament Speaker Mchunu said "since the launch of the Women's Parliament in 2004, issues such as poverty eradication, economic empowerment with a particular emphasis on access to funding, gender equity in the workplace, and rural development continue to dominate our issues of engagement. We have been able to get the Provincial Government and other public entities to address these issues with tangible results".

He further said that "as the KZN Legislature we have made every effort to put issues of women empowerment at the top of our agenda of social change. Our efforts, programmes and interventions have been guided by the strong conviction that if you empower women you empower the nation".

It is expected that more than 8000 people from the Durban Metro area will attend this year's Women's Parliament. Transport to the venue has been arranged.

On the first day of the Women's Parliament the Legislature will hold a special sitting to commemorate the 60th Birthday of the Monarch King Goodwill Zwelithin kaBhekuzulu. The special sitting will commence at 16h00 and will be attended by the King and members of the Royal family and senior government officials. All Parties will have an opportunity to convey their birthday messages to the King on reaching this important milestone in his life. The special sitting will

be followed by a gala dinner at the Durban ICC to be hosted by the Legislature in partnership with provincial government.