

Speech by MEC Peggy Nkonyeni on the
occasion of Nursing Indaba
02 March 2006

All protocol observed

On behalf of the Nkonyeni and Mlambo families, I would like to extend our deepest appreciation for the support you gave us when I lost my son Monde. Let the spirit of camaraderie be extended to all the needing people. Thank you again.

My greatest gratitude to **Noel Phillips** for arranging this necessary gathering, as indeed we have issues of common interest to deliberate upon.

I am particularly pleased that today we are given an opportunity to explore ways that will enhance the improvement of our own personal growth as professionals, as well as that pertaining to the good comfort levels of our patients.

The depletion of health professionals places huge challenges on all our shoulders as we are confronted with the increase burden of complex diseases.

Last year I had a privilege of meeting some of the Province's nurses when we celebrated the **International Nurses Day**.

On that occasion I was able to express my appreciation to them for the sterling work performed under difficult and trying conditions especially in those institutions that are located in rural areas.

I am well aware of your concerns and problems that directly impact on the way you execute your duties and how these problems impact on the very people we have taken oaths to serve. Some of these being:

- **Shortage of Skilled nurses**
- **Ever increasing workload**
- **Imbalanced nurse -patient ratios resulting in burn out due to increasing workload**
- **Late deliveries of Essential drugs and equipment to the rural hospitals and clinics.**
- **Non existence of recreational facilities in some of our hospitals.**
- **Dissatisfaction about the allocation of rural allowance,**
- **Lack of decent accommodation for the staff and Professionals, especially those servicing rural areas.**

Amidst all the challenges, it is disheartening to see **provision of high quality services being recognised through service excellence awards by the Premier's Good Governance service excellence awards.**

In all the hospitals and clinics that we visit in the province, when I meet with the patients, I always tell them they are in good hands.

This conviction I have, members of the nursing fraternity, is derived from the Declaration that you gave us on the 3rd of June last year as we commemorated the Nurses Day.

All the time I draw strength from some of the undertakings that were made. For the benefit of those who could not attend, let me take the liberty in quoting from the pledge:

- *We solemnly pledge ourselves to the service of humanity and will endeavour to practice our profession with conscience and dignity.*
- *The total health of our patients will be our first consideration.*
- *We will hold in confidence all personal matters coming to our knowledge.*
- *We will not permit considerations of religion, nationality, race and social standing to intervene between our duty and our patients, and that,*
- *We will maintain the utmost respect for human life.*

Ladies and gentlemen, I take pride in members who commit themselves to such ethos. This **Nursing Indaba**, as proposed by the Health Services Cluster, will go a long way in restoring the human dignity of our patients.

Let this Indaba also come up with proposals of how we can best promote the notion of healthy lifestyle among our people.

Here, let us be guided the **World Health Organisation's** approach of looking at health "*as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just an absence of disease or infirmity.*"

Ladies and gentlemen, this definition applies to us as well. It will be foolhardy to expect you to perform to your best if you are also a troubled individual.

In this very Indaba, let us make recommendations on how best our **Employee Assistance Programme** can serve us.

This is the structure that is set to look at aspects that inhibit our **productivity**, partly being:

- **Alcohol and drug abuse**
- **Emotional problems**
- **Interpersonal relationships**
- **Marital difficulties**
- **Health problems**
- **Family and children difficulties**

- **Finances and or budgeting**

Let us give our utmost as we interrogate the objectives we are here to ponder upon, these being:

1. **To rekindle the fires of caring, compassion and professionalism**
2. **To re-establish linkages and communication between nurses in the Province.**
3. **To get input from nurses at all levels of service regarding what needs to be done to improve the quality of nursing care.**

Let our guide be the acceptance of the reality that Nursing Care is not only restricted to the sick but goes to encompass preventive, promotive, curative and **rehabilitative** aspects.

In the two days as you discuss the above, please find strength in the words of wisdom as pronounced by **Morakabi Seakhona** in his poem entitled ***LIFE AND LIVING***:

Life is a business of arriving, seeing

And conquering.

Of ever learning and acclimatising

Of always being sensitive and responsive

To the new and ever-changing

Conditions of life.

Let us further find strength in our former African nursing heroines in the persona of omama **Cecilia Makiwane**, omama **Albertina Luthuli**, omama **Dora Nginza** , and mama **Albertina Sisulu**.

These, being our own, always ready to sacrifice and continued serving the nation with pride, way beyond the call of duty-in those trying and difficult times.

I wish you success in your deliberations, giving you assurances that all recommendations made in this august Indaba will be fully considered and acted upon.

At Natalia, we now have a new crop of Managers, starting with a new Head of Department, assembled to deliver all the citizens of our province to the paradise of a better health for all.

Let the spirit of the **Age of Hope** prevail for us, and for those in the throngs of death, always believing that in our institutions they will survive.

I thank you.