

***Speech by MEC Neliswa Nkonyeni as the
Provincial Chairperson of the African Peer
Review Mechanism addressing delegates at the
Royal Hotel in Durban***

17 March 2006

All protocol observed.

I thought it wise for all of us to draw strength, for this task at hand, from the poet **William Wordsworth** in his *Ode to Duty* as he says:

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee.
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh let my weaknesses have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason, give.

It is always refreshing to find yourself among like-minded friends in this country especially immediately after the bruising elections that always change the political landscape of this province in particular.

The very act of you leaving the comfort of your homes, to come and deliberate on issues that impact on service delivery, is a testimony of the love that you have for

your Province, for your country and for Africa as a whole.

It actually tells the whole world that the assembled in this hall love humanity.

As a progressive country, South Africa has embraced and leads in the African Peer Review Mechanism which was introduced by the African Union because we know that it is intended to help countries of this continent to improve their governance.

As a province with close to **10 million** inhabitants, we have henceforth invited you, **the Youth, Business, the Disability sectors, NGO's and Labour** to come and assist in this process of self-introspection.

This process, fellow compatriots, has the support of the highest office in the province and is conducted under the leadership of the **Provincial Governing Council**.

As a young democracy, it is crucial for us to know whether we are in the correct path as in **1994** a commitment to **Better Life For All** was made.

It is only through the African Peer Review Mechanism that we will be able to measure our success in this regard.

As a province, we are than called upon to measure our performance and progress in these four [4] critical areas:

- **Democracy and good political governance**
- **Economic governance and management**
- **Corporate governance**
- **Socio-economic development**

As a guide, Socio-economic development, as explained in the NEPAD declaration, will entail continuous improvement and well-being in the living standards of the people. We now have to gauge how far this province has gone in setting in motion mechanisms that clearly show that we aim to:

- Promote self-reliance and build capacity for self-sustaining development.
- Accelerate socio-economic objectives to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication.
- Strengthen policies, delivery mechanisms and outputs in key social development areas

including education for all, combating HIV and AIDS and other communicable diseases.

- Ensuring affordable access to water, energy, finance (including micro finance), markets and ICT to all citizens, especially the poor.

- Progress towards gender equality, particularly equal access to education for girls at all levels.

In this regard, we do not have to look only at the progress made by various government departments, but at ourselves as well, as to how much we have moved in:

- Combating the spread of HIV and AIDS by abstaining, remaining faithful and condomising.

- Assisting child headed families in our neighbourhoods.

- Supporting women candidates for the past local government elections

- Seizing business opportunities offered by the Department of Finance and Economic Affairs.

- Setting up co-operatives that get tenders from the Department of Health.
- Partaking in Siyavuna initiatives as sponsored by the Department of Agriculture.
- Curbing illiteracy in communities we live in "each one teach one"

As constituted in this hall, from the youth to big business we all have role to play and we all have to be accountable, hence the questions we have to diligently answer.

The review process applies to all of us, its not about government bashing—there are no scapegoats.

Ladies and gentlemen, lets give out our utmost best in answering the set questions, remember the objective is to be assisted where we are found wanting.

Remain patriotic, this is our province, it is our country and our continent—lets make things right!!

I wish you wisdom in all your deliberations.

I thank you.