

**REPORT BY MEC FOR HEALTH MS N.P.NKONYENI TO THE
YOUTH PARLIAMENT – ILEMBE DISTRICT
14 JUNE 2007**

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Premier

Members of the executive council

Members of the Provincial Legislature

Members of the Youth Provincial Legislature

Distinguished Guests

Youth of our province

Ladies and Gentlemen

Noting that 2007 is the 31st Anniversary of the spirit and dedication demonstrated by the youth of 1976 who took it upon themselves to change a repressive white minority apartheid regime which was a challenge faced by the youth and the black community at large. Young people did not sit back and wait for someone to fight for them but they took up the spear and confronted the enemy.

The youth of today has a slightly different challenge, which however requires and demands of them the same zeal, energy and commitment as the one shown by the leadership of the youth of 1976. It is primarily because of that reason that we are gathered here today so as to account as government on how we have discharged our mandate pertaining to issues impacting on the growth and development of our young people in this province. The liberation

attained has ushered in the ability for the youth to have access to various hitherto closed opportunities in our country, to which I would like to address the honourable members. Youth Programme Management

As the Department of Health we currently do not have a person at a Provincial level that manages Youth programmes. However, we are in the process of appointing somebody responsible for Youth programmes.

Yazini ukuthi lesisikhundla sisivula ngoba sifuna ukuthi kube khona umuntu oyintsha omele izindaba zentsha eMnyangweni weZempilo.

We hope that in the future we will have coordinators at District level that will work closely with communities on Youth programmes. These people will be charged with the implementation of the policies, strategies and programmes of young people within their respective Districts.

Training Programmes in the department

In my Budget Speech in April, I appraised the province that we have doubled the numbers of nurses, from 1500 in 2002 to the current 2900 for the last financial year. In most instances, we have targeted the youth in our province and provided them with opportunities to study towards becoming nurses in a bid to both creating employment opportunities for our youth and at the same time deal with the burden of diseases in our province.

What we have done in order to ensure optimal services, we have delegated the recruitment of nurses to the districts so that we can ensure that the nurses that we recruit and train end up working in their own districts.

Bursary and scholarship assistance

The Department provides financial support to KwaZulu Natal born students who study in all recognised tertiary institutions in fields of study relevant to the Department of Health. The aim here is to have our own pool of qualified medical and clinical personnel servicing our people especially in the rural areas. Our target for 2008 is to provide for 800 students that would be selected from all our eleven Districts.

The fields that we provide sponsors for amongst others are the following:

- Dental Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Pharmacy
- Radiography
- Speech and Hearing
- Medical Technology, and
- Optometry

We are currently engaged in a recruitment programme that targets the unemployed youth from previously disadvantaged areas for training as Emergency Care practitioners. This programme is in its third year. More than 100 previously disadvantaged young people

have benefited from the programme and are currently employed by the Department of health as Emergency Care Practitioners.

We are working to recruit an additional 100 youth to be trained for the same service. With this, we are hoping and confident that we will be addressing the issue of skills shortage and at the same time improving service delivery and our response time when it comes to accidents and emergency care. This will also go a long way to increasing the number of personnel to deal with the 2010 World Cup.

Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

As part of our commitment and contribution to the EPWP, every year the Department of Health in KwaZulu-Natal employs 1000 Home-Community-Based Carers. Over and above that, Honourable Members, the Department has also decided to target the unemployed Youth especially those that have Grade 12 to venture into the following areas:

- Phlebotomists
- Pharmacy assistants

As part of the EPWP we want to see our CHC's and hospitals with an increased number of youth working as phlebotomists and Pharmacy Assistants. We are doing this to reduce waiting times at our facilities and to provide the youth with skills, and thus open new opportunities for young people. This should be in place by the end of the current financial year.

Learnership Programme

The Department is currently in the process of establishing various Learnerships to assist with skills development amongst our youth. Honourable Youth Members, you will be kept informed on what the Learnerships will be and what the programme will entail.

Progress report on HIV and AIDS in terms of youth initiatives

Comrades, various youth focused projects exist within the different HIV and AIDS programmes in the Department of Health. We have among others, the VCT programme, ARV treatment programme, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), and STI programmes. All these programmes employ a considerable number of young people.

Now to tell you an honest fact, our biggest concern is that we really do not know how many people are infected in this country and in this province in particular. The figures that we have tell us that nationally, only **1,7 million** people, out of a population of 45 million, made use of the Government's Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) programme between **April 2005 and March 2006**.

Now, out of a population of about 10 million in KwaZulu Natal, only **310 215** presented themselves for Voluntary Counseling and Testing under the period in question. We are still collating statistics for the first half of the current financial year. MaComrade we need you here and now to make relevant the theme of the VCT campaign this year: *"Knowledge is Power: Know Your Status!"* That is to say, you need to

go and test. Hambani niyohlola!!! Usizo esilukhiphayo mayelana nemishanguzo kanye nezeluleko angeke lufinyelele kini ningenzanga mizamo yokuhlola isimo senu segciwane lengculazi!

Economic opportunities available to the youth

At the Youth Parliament held in Greytown last year, Mr. Speaker, honourable members, the youth of our province wanted to find out what we were doing with regard to their economic opportunities in the Department of Health.

We are now saying to our young people, please go and organize yourselves into Cooperatives; establish Closed Corporations (CCs) and get into Joint Ventures (JVs) in order to partake in the under-mentioned economic opportunities that we have set aside for you as young people. The opportunities I am talking about are the following:

- Cleaning of buildings
- Manufacture and supply of Disposable Diapers
- Sewing of Hospital Linen
- Gardens and Grounds maintenance
- Manufacture and supply of Toilet Papers and Serviettes, as well as
- Minor renovations of our health facilities.

In addition, the following youth targeted projects are being planned for the current financial year:

- **Car Wash for government vehicles, starting with a pilot project at uThukela District.**

The Department will be contracting Youth owned Co-operatives to be responsible for the cleaning of its fleet in all Districts. We truly hold the firm view that this program will see a number of our youth earning a living by looking after the state of our vehicles.

- **Cleaning of Windows in our hospitals**

In partnership with established enterprises within this specialized field, the Department plans to roll out cleaning of window contracts to Youth owned enterprises. We have a number of hospitals requiring cleaning and we believe the youth with their agility and strength can manage this very important task.

- **Youth Ambassadors for TB**

Mr. Speaker, honourable members, we are currently faced with a huge challenge with regards to TB in our province.

To meet this challenge we are going to employ 1000 Youth Ambassadors who will be placed in clinics to assist us in dealing with this huge challenge.

These Ambassadors will be linked to the Strategic Health Unit in the department but will report to their respective Districts.

In conclusion Mr. Speaker, honourable members, we stand on a threshold of a period in time where all our efforts; economic, social

and cultural should be geared towards creating better living conditions for the youth of our province and indeed of our country.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to salute the youth of our province and of our country once again during this very important month in our calendar and wish them well in all of their efforts to reach for the stars. A nation that does not put the interest of its youth at the centre of its agenda is doomed to fail. At least, as a province and as this government, history will indeed judge us as having accepted that clarion call of putting our youth in the centre of our programs.

As the president noted, "Let us, together, help the young people of our country to defeat the idleness, boredom and absence of opportunities that lead to anti-social activities, and lives that amount to a future of hopelessness"

I thank you