

3 November 2009

Mphathi wohlelo,
Umntwana wakwaPhindangene
Usihlalo weNdlu Yamakhosi
Usekela-sihlalo weNdlu yamakhosi
Amakhosi aseNdlunkulu wonkana,
U-nhloko yomnyango,
Ngiyabingelela nginihlonipha nonke

Ngizizwa nginokwenama ngethuba lokuba phakathi kwenu namuhla. Kubaluleke kakhulu ukuthi namuhla sihlalane budebuduze neSandlwana, lapho iNdlu yamandla eyaguqisa khona eyamaNgisi ngonyaka ka 1879.

Mphathi wohlelo, nakuba amaNgisi abuya azosizuma sisathi simatasa sithakasela ukunqoba qede afika ahlikiza iHlala-nkosi uNdi okwaze kwaholela ekuthenini abaningi balwethe ngokuthi uNdi olumahliki, kubalulekile kodwa ukuthi ngejozi nesihlangu nesibindi nokuzinikela kuphela, iMpi kaCetshwayo yamguqisa omhlophe ehlome ezingovolo ngalo lonke uhlobo lwenganono olwalukhona ngalesosikhathi. U-Zulu ngalesosikhathi wayebumbene eyimbumba emveni kokuthi iLembe eleqa amanye amalemba lakhe iSizwe esihlangene futhi esinamandla ngenhloso yokwakha uMbuso ongeke uthikamezwe yilutho inguna-phakade.

Programme Director, I am honoured to be standing a few paces away from iHlalankosi lasoNdini, in the hinterland of the Zulu kingdom and before amakhosi aseNdlunkulu. Just as it happened many centuries ago that our nation was build upon a solid foundation of ubukhosi bomdabu, as the MEC for Local Government and Traditional Affairs, I would like to use this esteemed platform to earnestly implore you to continue to focus our thoughts and energies each day towards rebuilding our nation.

It is critically imperative that in all our deliberations, we never lose sight of the very essence of leadership. Leadership is about holding the lantern through the fiercest of darkness, all the while holding the hand of those less privileged to walk solo.

As the province of KwaZulu-Natal, I would like to believe that we have faith in traditional leadership as having the potential to facilitate and speed up the truck of service delivery. It is for this reason that the government saw it important to ensure that in the age of democracy, we recognise and re-strengthen the Institution of Traditional Leadership. The government did this beyond simply standing up to talk about it, but we ensured that a firm legislative framework was established so that nothing could ever stand in the way of our revered leadership.

Programme Director, siyababona-ke nabazenza onqenqe belokhu bekhushuza bezama ukuthikameza uBungonyama bakithi. Kepha-ke, thina njengoHulumeni siqinisekile ukuthi uHlanga Lomhlabathi silumisa idolu ngaphandle kokuthi kuze kunengeke iSizwe ngokuthi sikhumbuze ngobukhona bomthetho i-Traditional Leadership and Governance Act. This Act spells out clearly that there is only one Isilo in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. There is no confusion over this fact.

While on this, we would also like to thank uMntwana wakwaPhindangene, uBaba uShenge. Sokalisa, your continued partnership with government on matters impacting on the sole of the nation is highly appreciated.

Local government is the sphere that is expected to implement an adequate supply of water, electricity, passageways and other infrastructure in areas where people live. But, ladies and gentlemen, so is the institution of traditional leadership. As government, we recognise the reality that in the amakhosi-led areas, councillors and municipal managers can never hope to make real strides in service delivery if the traditional leadership is not brought on board, both during planning processes as well as during implementation and monitoring.

I wish to indicate to the Members of the House the fact that as much as we are making inroads towards establishing a formidable Institution of Traditional Leadership, we are admittedly not yet there.

Nonetheless, it would only be fair of us to recognise the effort being made by government towards creating a fully fledged institution of this critical pillar of our African democracy.

Programme Director, allow me to share with you on some of the steps we have taken to walk the talk in respect of enhancing the Traditional Leadership Institution in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Secondment of Staff

We have seconded four officials to the Provincial House to assist in its operations. Those warm bodies will soon be with the House, assisting where necessary.

Office space

In regards to office space, we have undertaken as follows:

Ulundi offices were recently re-painted

Process to install blinds, security gates, replace kitchen sink and procure the couches, laptops and data cards is in progress

Pietermaritzburg(uMsekeli) offices are soon to be furnished. Progress to do this is under way.

The Pinetown office is still in the process of getting finalized. The Chair may in the meantime use the Pietermaritzburg offices.

Vehicles

Two single cabs are available at present for the chairperson and the deputy chair to use. The Department is in the process of procuring 4x4 vehicles.

Mobile Phones

The CFO is negotiating a contract with MTN. The contract is to be finalized soon.

Ministerial Houses (Ulundi)

The Department of Public Works indicated that their houses are now on sale. An alternative option is to explore the availability of B-North houses or Flats through the departmental housing committee. This process is under way, and a report will be made available soon.

Programme Director, a lot needs to be done to ensure that we truly demonstrate our determination to restore ubukhosi bakithi into its original status where it was in the beginning of times when it was at the centrefold of social development. By our own admission, our resources are not allowing us as government to achieve everything that we wish for in terms of traditional leadership during this financial year.

For example, the opening of the House can only take place next year. Even with regards to the installation of amakhosi. We can only install three this year. The rest will be put in place next year. Much is under way in terms of enhancing this very important block of our society. I would implore my respected amakhosi to ensure that we avoid confusing ubuholi ngeqiniso with the politics.

So many times, politics will misdirect our focus from the real issues that are affecting our nation.

As we are gathered here today, the Department is working around the clock to ensure that the number of disputes that are threatening to make a mockery of ubuholi bakithi are resolved accordingly.

In some instances these disputes emanate from confusion and failure to understand the law.

But in other cases, these are influenced by greed and a lack of respect for ubuholi bomdabu. And this is where the government through this Department has to step in.

We are constantly advising clashing factions about the law – the Traditional Leadership and Governance Act. Mind you, this is the law that has protected ubuholi bomdabu, especially so in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Programme Director, the most important thing that we need to remind ourselves of as we interface today is the fact that we are NOT working tirelessly to strengthen Traditional Leadership simply for ceremonious purposes. We are doing so because we believe that ubuholi bakithi has the traditional capacity to help facilitate community development and growth.

Programme Director, I am certain that amakhosi aseNdlunkulu are well aware of the weaknesses in our local government in as far as service delivery is concerned. Several municipalities have appeared before the KwaZulu-Natal legislature. It is now a matter of public consumption that in some corners of our province, our people are not getting the services that they deserve, largely because of a lack of capacity on the part of municipalities to deliver.

In terms of our recent Assessment of Local Government, some of the issues that have emerged as weaknesses in local government include:

- Huge service delivery & backlog challenges, e.g. housing, water and sanitation
- Poor communication and accountability relationships with communities
- Problems with the political administrative interface
- Corruption and fraud
- Poor financial management, e.g. negative audit opinions
- Number of (violent) service delivery protests
- Weak civil society formations
- Intra- and inter-political party issues negatively affecting governance and delivery

- Uneven and fragmented municipal capacity building programmes

While Zululand may have its own issues, in terms of the afore-mentioned Assessment, this municipality is not the worse-off. This is commendable and should give all of us gathered here today a beamer of hope that tomorrow will be better than today. In conclusion, I would like to call for unity of all stakeholders as we attempt to find the light.

Programme Director, the voices of our poor people are crying out loud. Our people are saying, for too long we have been talking, and very little is being done to turn the situation around. Hence, we need to respond to this outcry through some drastic steps that may sometimes not settle down well with some of us as individuals.

Nevertheless, the onus is upon us as leadership, to really begin to decide whether we want to lead ourselves or we are elected to lead the people and create a better life for them.

This exercise of meeting with you is significant in that it will assist us as government and traditional leadership to go forward in unison, for the good of our people. Indeed it is through working together that we can achieve much more.

I thank you