

**SPEECH NOTES FOR KZN TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY & LIAISON
MEC WILLIES MCHUNU AT THE LENNY NAIDU DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
FUND-RAISING DINNER ON SATURDAY 23 OCTOBER 2010 IN DURBAN.**

Protocol Observed.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Lenny Naidu Development Institute (LNDI) for inviting me to be part of this important occasion. It is always encouraging to see people who are committed to nation building contribute to the development of our society, particularly our youth.

It is just unfortunate that as we build our nation, we still have to refer to the bad history that has shaped our past. The Lenny Naidu Development Institute is one example of this. The fact that it was formed to honour Lenny Naidu and other great South Africans who sacrificed their lives in the anti-apartheid liberation struggle of South Africa, it also compels us to refer to the history we all hate.

The institute is named after Lenny Naidu, of Bayview, Chatsworth who was a student of the University of Durban-Westville when he joined the African National Congress' military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. He, together with three other cadres, was killed in 1988 at the Swaziland border in an ambush conducted by the former apartheid government's security forces. The three young women, Charity Lindiwe Mthembu, Makhosi Nyoka and Nontsikilelo Cotoza were from Kwa-Mashu and Lamontville respectively.

According to the apartheid regime, these youths were terrorists trying to gain illegal entry into the country. But what we knew was that all of them had at heart the sufferings of their communities and had been working towards alleviating that. After being hounded by the police, they left the country and joined the African National Congress. They had left in the spirit of fighting for freedom and came back in sealed coffins, having been tortured and mutilated at the hands of the police.

Lenny Naidu was a founder member of Helping Hands, a community youth organization formed in 1982, where he helped with education, sports and fundraising projects for local charities like the Cheshire Homes for the Disabled, Aryan Benevolent Homes for the Aged, Lakehaven Children's Home, Kwa Zulu Drought Fund, etc. He was also the Secretary of the Bayview Residents Association (BRA) where he played an active role in the campaign against the water fines. His role in the campaign against unfair water fines will always be remembered by the people.

He was a member of the Chatsworth Housing Action Committee (CHAC) which was affiliated to the Durban Housing Action Committee (DHAC). He also participated in activities by collecting food items and making hampers for the unemployed and poor people of his community. He assisted in keeping the youth focused and occupied with constructive activities. Lenny's deep concern for the underprivileged people led him to work tirelessly for the improvement of his community.

He believed that apartheid was the cause of all the suffering that he saw around him. He therefore vigorously opposed the tricameral elections in 1984. He was an active member of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and participated in all of its campaigns for Equal Rights for All.

In December 1985, Lenny attended the launch of the giant Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). He was concerned about the plight of the workers who suffered low wages and a high cost of living. In 1986, Lenny was actively involved in raising funds for the dismissed workers from the BTR Sarmcol Factory.

In November 1986, he became a member of the African National Congress and then joined the underground struggle Umkhonto we Sizwe. He left home to go into exile after being hounded and harassed by the police. He was concerned about the safety of his family had he stayed back.

He was an active member of the armed wing of the ANC. His commander during this period was the late Phila Ndwandwe, who reported to the now Lieutenant General Vijay Ramlakhan of the SANDF under the overall commander Sihle Mbongwa.

In February 1986, he went to Lusaka and then to the headquarters for a debriefing and subsequently left for Angola to undergo military training. He spent more than a year in Camp Pango in Angola. Lenny's nom de guerre (alias) was Phillip Samuels. He was referred to by everyone very endearingly as Phil.

In May 1988, he left Angola for Zambia. He then proceeded to Mozambique where he boarded a plane to Swaziland. He stayed in Swaziland for a while awaiting infiltration into South Africa. On 08 June 1988, he attempted crossing the border with Nontsikelelo, Lindiwe and Makhosi in a Toyota Corolla but was gunned down in cold blood. He was only 24 years old at the time.

He is described as a very strong and disciplined cadre, a very honest and humble person who was always concerned about his community and the downtrodden people of his country. He would have done anything to ensure their liberation. His last words to his Mother were, "Ma, whatever I am doing, it is not for you, nor is it for me – it is for the people of this country". He believed wholeheartedly that he was fighting for a just cause and he did it with the utmost discipline.

Throughout his entire life, Lenny worked quietly but tirelessly to advance the cause of the people. Inspired by his vision of a free country, he sought to spare nothing in his commitment to realize a united, non-racial South Africa based on equality.

We relate this history because it all justifies why the LNDI should be supported in its campaign for non-racism, non-sexism, transparency and democratic practices which contributes to youth development through the awarding of scholarships and bursaries to deserving students in the Durban area. As the Government of KwaZulu-Natal led by the ANC, we commend the LNDI for providing a platform for everyone who wants to make a contribution and a difference to the lives of especially young people.

As I conclude, it is true that together we can achieve what is expected of us. When we come together as government, business, professionals and experts in various fields, NGOs, community members, the media, when we come together to face a challenge as one, we become a mighty force that cannot be stopped.

There is no amount of human suffering, poverty and joblessness that cannot be tackled, if we understand why our heroes and heroines fought against injustice. Some of these like Lenny Naidu sacrificed what could have been successful careers in pursuit of justice and freedom for their people.

Finally, to the Lenny Naidu Development Institute, we say organizing events like this one is an inspiration, and it is essential. In fact, the spirit of goodwill and charitable work must remain with us as a way of life, let it become embedded in our culture and lifestyle. The struggle continues!

I thank you