

SPEECH DELIVERED BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON, HON. WILLIES MCHUNU DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE BURSARY FOUNDATION IN DURBAN - 02 FEBRUARY 2012

Protocol Observed

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my comrades for allowing me to make some remarks tonight as we witness the official launch of the James Nxumalo Education Trust Fund that seeks to go a long in addressing some financial challenges that confront our learners, particularly at higher education level.

This gathering is one opportunity for us to celebrate and give honour to the work and dedication demonstrated by our comrades such as James Nxumalo, in ensuring that as individuals and as a collective, we help our education system to achieve its mandate of providing learners with proper education that addresses the diverse needs of our developing country as an important part of the developing countries of the world.

Education is without a shadow of doubt a lever to uplift individuals, their families and society at large. This is particularly true for South Africa, including KwaZulu-Natal, where education should serve as a weapon against the scourge of poverty and unemployment among our people.

I am saying this because it is true that our country is still characterized by inequalities which require redress, equity and reconstruction. We are all in agreement that education is an essential component of the reconstruction of our society.

Yes, the task is enormous and we are not suggesting that everything can be done overnight. But at least the beginning of the start of great things is being made.

Of course this initiative we are launching tonight is a formidable foundation on which we are building and making a clarion call to those who can afford to come out and assist our needy learners. There is nothing as painful as watching a bright and promising student not being able to afford paying for higher education.

As citizens of this province, I am of the opinion that our wish is that we develop a skilled and educated KwaZulu-Natal where a majority of citizens are able to actively participate in socio-economic processes that will contribute to reconstruction and economic development.

The James Nxumalo Education Trust Fund is aimed at advancing access to schooling and tertiary education to learners, scholars and students within eThekweni and KwaZulu-Natal.

It provides financial and other forms of material support to high performing but needy, deserving learners and students. Beneficiaries will be granted according to the stipulated criteria.

The Trust Fund strives to assist young people within the schooling and post secondary schooling education system to access learning opportunities, acquire relevant qualification and skills through the public schooling system of the Republic of South Africa.

As part of its related mandate, the Trust will assist scholars and students to utilise international study opportunities and link them with other resource systems within eThekweni and the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The vision of the Trust Fund is specifically to:-

- Improve life chances for the youth;
- Eliminate poverty ;
- Develop skills;

- Increase access and success in higher education and FET Colleges (from 7% to 25% and 17% to 30%), respectively;
- Increase access to, and the utilisation of global education opportunities;
- Reduce the unemployment rate (to 14% by 2020 & to 6% by 2030), and
- Advance the acquisition of relevant skills and competences.

Now, to the members of the Trust Fund, I want to hold you to this vision because it complements our vision as Government in addressing challenges in our education system. Yours, like ours, is a timeless mission to substantively transform the lives and livelihood chances of our people through education and training opportunities.

In all, what this means is that the vision and direction this Trust takes reflect the collective vision of the country and the will of all its stakeholders.

But, this will be realised only if students in turn attend classes regularly and actively participate in all teaching and learning programmes and perform well academically. Students should remember that opportunities come once and these must be used effectively.

As we always say, education is the most empowering and liberating asset that learners can acquire for themselves and an asset that can have multi-generational benefits, starting with the present generation.

Working together, we can change lives, alleviate poverty, ensure the education system full-fills its mandate of addressing the shortage of skills in South Africa and create jobs needed by the young people of our country.

I congratulate the Trustees of the James Nxumalo Education Trust, the beneficiaries and all who are involved to ensure that we build a culture of giving to those who are less fortunate than ourselves and in building the proper channels that will better position our communities.

And indeed through quality education and training, I am certain that we can achieve many of our goals to better the lives of our people, especially our youth.

I thank you.