

**Speech delivered by MEC Willies Mchunu on behalf of the Premier**

**Public Service Career Exhibition**

**Ladysmith, 30 July 2013**

- Programme director, Mrs P.D. Khumalo,
- MECs present,
- Members of the Office of the Premier and Royal House Hold Portfolio Committee,
- Traditional Leaders,
- District and Local Mayors,
- Councilors,
- Members of the KZN Planning Commission
- Acting DG of DPSA,
- Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training,
- Senior Managers from Government Departments,
- Representatives from Higher Education Institutions,
- Principals of FETs,
- CEOs of SETAs
- Senior Executives from Public Entities and State Owned Enterprises,
- Educators, Learners and the youth.

As a service delivery driven Government, we are very clear that our public service must serve people with diligence and humility. We are also acutely aware that to create a Public Service that puts people first at all time, as Batho Pele enjoins us; we need to make strategic investments. Among these, is the Public Service Career Exhibition, which we consider to be a critical intervention to ensure a deeper appreciation of the skills needed to take our country forward.

The focus on the youth is designed to ensure that young people consider careers in the public service. We all know too well that the youth is most affected by unemployment. Of the 10,4 million youth aged 15-24 years, approximately 3,5 million or 33,5 percent were unemployed or not involved in education or training in the first quarter of 2013.

The highest unemployment rate – at 32,1 percent - is observed among those who did not complete secondary education. Whereas, comparatively, those with tertiary education have the lowest unemployment rate at 9,8 percent.

Like the rest of the country, the Province of KwaZulu-Natal faces high levels of unemployment especially among the youth. In KZN, education and skills levels are low and unemployment is high. In 2011, only 6 percent of our adult population of KZN had an accredited tertiary qualification (degree or diploma). A little over 132,000 people passed matric, and only 26,000 earned university exemptions.

We find that many unemployed youth have some form of qualification but still cannot find jobs. Many have chosen fields of study that are not in high demand making it difficult to find employment. It is therefore important that learners receive the necessary guidance and support in choosing subjects that will assist them in getting into careers where there is demand.

The Public Service is the largest employer in the country. At national level, the public service employs 1.2 million workers and at provincial level it employs in the region of 180 000 workers. While the Public Service offers many career opportunities, it is also faced with the challenge of filling critical posts, which impacts negatively on service delivery. Our job is to educate young people on the opportunities that exist in the public service and advise them to consider the career paths less travelled.

You will also know that the National Development Plan also addresses itself to the question of **Building a Capable and Developmental State**. It directs us to take steps to make the Public Service and local Government Careers of Choice. Hence, the theme of this exhibition - **‘The Public Service, Your Career of Choice’**.

**The National Development Plan states that: “The public service should attract highly skilled people and cultivate a sense of professional common purpose and a commitment to developmental goals. To achieve this, South Africa needs a two-pronged approach to building a more professional public service from the top and the bottom.**

**“It needs to increase the pool of skilled people by ensuring that the public service and local government become careers of choice for graduates who wish to contribute to the development of the country, and ensure that high level staff is recruited on the basis of their suitability.”**

**Our Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP) under Goal 2 also addresses the important area of Human Resource Development. One of the critical interventions in the PGDP focuses on the development of counseling and vocational guidance services for schools and out of school youth. The Department of Education has a structured programme on career guidance and counseling which is part of Life orientation. It also works closely with partners in hosting career expos throughout the year.**

**Some career development interventions in the Province include the following:**

- 1. KZN DoE Career Guidance Advisory Committee held consultation meetings on the 16 May 2013 with SAQA for the establishment of the Provincial Forum.**
- 2. Grade 12 Career Exhibition were staged in 12 districts in partnership with districts and local municipalities.**
- 3. Learners participated in Focus Week in Energy Careers in partnership with the Department of Energy. Learners also participated in a one week camp organised by the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA) for students studying B.Com Accounting. Learners participated in a one day symposium held in districts by the partnered of SAICA, Eskom, and SANDF.**

4. Grade 9 Subject Selection Programme is scheduled to take place next month in partnership with Science Centres.

5. Provincial Career Day is also scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> of next month.

6. Learners exposed to computer based career programme in 28 full service schools equipped with 20 computers and installed with Career Guidance Programme.

The Office of the Premier is over the next three days hosting the 2013 Public Service Career Exhibition. In addition, it has compiled and is distributing the second edition of the **Public Service Scare and Critical Skills Careers Guide**.

The Department of Economic Development has also this year hosted a Career Exhibition and Job Expo.

The South Maritime Safety Authority also hosted a Maritime Careers expo and Job Summit at the ICC to support the Province's plans to grow the Maritime Sector

We would also like to use this opportunity to launch one of our Strategic Skills Development Projects, which is funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training. Through the National Skills Fund, 790 unemployed youth will be trained in construction, manufacturing and engineering fields as part of learnerships and apprenticeships.

On behalf of the province, I would like to thank the Department of Higher Education and Training for this initiative. A group of these learners has joined us here today and I would like them to stand.

The training offers occupationally directed programmes that include practical workplace training and contributes to the realisation of the Vision of the KZN province, which is to create:

***"A prosperous Province with a skilled population"***.

In this partnership 490 young people will benefit in various construction learnerships. This training has been linked to the housing and road construction projects in municipalities for the practical workplace training. 18 Local Municipalities are partners in the delivery of this training.

In addition to this, 170 learners will be trained through the NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE (NYS) as part of the Building and Civil Construction Learnership. The project is being implemented with the Department of Public Works. The project has been linked to the renovation and expansion of hospitals across the province.

A total of 130 young people will be trained in the various scarce skills in the manufacturing and engineering sector. As well, 50 learners and 80 apprentices will benefit in this project.

This training is linked to manufacturing and engineering business sector that will provide practical work place training to the learners and apprentices. For the country to develop its manufacturing and engineering sector it needs artisans such as electricians, plumbers, mechanics, panel beaters and welders. You will also find the exhibitors offering apprenticeship programmes.

When you choose a career in the Public Service you have opportunities to work anywhere in the country including the area you are living in, where you can serve the people of your town or village.

In KZN, for example, among the critical and scarce skills, we we require people in the following broad occupational categories:

- **Management** – Internal Auditor, Economist, Financial Manager, Actuarial Scientist, and Supply Chain Managers.
- **Health sciences** – Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, and Radiographers.
- **Science and Engineering** – Civil Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Architects, and Quantity Surveyors.

- **Agriculture** – Agricultural Engineers, Agricultural Technicians, and Agricultural Scientists.
- **Social Sciences** – Social Workers, Educators, Social Auxiliary Workers, Archivists, and Language Practitioners.

It is important that you see career development as a continuous process of obtaining and processing information about who you are and educational alternatives and options that are available. The process of educating young people about careers is a crucial responsibility for our youth and their future.

As young people you need to learn about, and get to know, what the public service is, what it does and what jobs are available in the public service. This exhibition offers you that opportunity. Many of you will be making choices about the careers you want to pursue. The exhibition will give you the chance to learn about careers in the Public Service. So it is important that you focus on what is being said and displayed.

In addition to the help you get from your life orientation teachers, you need to do your own research in libraries and the internet to learn about careers of interest. We urge you to take the issue of choosing a career very seriously.

Finally, I once again appeal to you to learn more about careers in the Public Service. Make the Public Service your career of choice.

**I thank you.**