

MEDIA STATEMENT

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For Immediate Release

DR SIBONGISENI DHLOMO AND MEC NELISWA PEGGY NKONYENI EMPOWER YOUTH IN BUSINESS

ILEMBE DISTRICT: Young people in business descended on Ilembe Auditorium, KwaDukuza, in northern of KwaZulu-Natal to engage with KZN Provincial Treasury and various government partners on business opportunities, compliance, access to market and funding opportunities available for the youth within KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government.

The youth, coming from all corners on the district, received an opportunity to interact with KZN Provincial Treasury's supply chain management, Operation Vula Fund managers, KZN Film Commission, KwaZulu-Natal Sharks Board, Dube Trade Port, KZN Growth Fund, Moses Kotane Institute, Ithala, Enterprise Ilembe, KZN Gaming and Betting and various other stakeholders. The objective of the engagement is to empower young people in business with a package of interconnected business opportunities available with KwaZulu-Natal government and this will assist with fighting youth unemployment that is estimated at over 30 percent in Ilembe District.

The KwaZulu-Natal Government is committed to providing funding opportunities to the youth through Operation Vula Fund, Youth Fund, Transformation Fund as well as SMME Fund. As a matter of fact, over R3 million of Operation Vula Fund during window two has been spent on the youth, with 19 females, 14 males and 5 disabled people - all getting a piece of the "funding pie".

Speaking during the engagement, Yoliswa Nxumalo from Mandeni said "I am in farming and have 12 hectares of agricultural land. I need support to ensure that there is no piece of land that remains unused. I need Enterprise Ilembe and government to provide guidance and support".

Sibusiso Mthembu said it will be beneficial for them as the youth to continuously receive information on business opportunities, types of business and funding support that is available to the youth because some of them start businesses and get stuck along the way.

Mayor of Ilembe District Municipality, Cllr Thobani Shandu, said the youth in business engagement was critical for the youth of Ilembe.

"We want to give all the guidance and information that will assist our youth to start, run and grow their businesses. We want to have the type of the youth that is not only thinking about getting employed. Unemployment is rife and we need the type of the youth that wants to create employment and contribute in growing the economy of our district. Our youth must take advantage of these funding opportunities," said Cllr Shandu.

Champion of Ilembe District, MEC Nkonyeni said government is ready to assist the youth that owns businesses and those that want to start businesses.

"There are various business ideas that can assist in starting and successfully running businesses. The key element is innovation. The youth should be innovative and approach any government entity to request guidance and support. We have brought various strategic government entities so that they can present to you all their services and this will create an opportunity for a useful engagement that will assist in starting and running businesses," said MEC Nkonyeni.

National Champion of Ilembe District, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo who is also the Deputy Minister of Health, said the youth should not give up when their business ideas or businesses either do not get off the ground or collapse.

“We need the youth to stay focused, creative and always be looking for businesses opportunities. Government has availed funding schemes and we need to use these schemes to grow our businesses. As Champion of Ilembe District, we need to see the difference next year in the area of youth businesses,” he said.

Issued by KZN Provincial Treasury. For clarity, contact Thuba Vilane on 060 521 7319 or Musa Cebisa on 071 687 8777.