



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

TREASURY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR
FINANCE AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS AMBSSR
NOMUSA DUBE-NCUBE ON THE OCCASION OF THE WOMEN IN
RESEARCH DIALOGUE HOSTED BY MOSES KOTANE INSTITUTE
AT DUBE TRADE PORT**

TUESDAY 31 AUGUST 2021



MS. NOMUSA DUBE-NCUBE

MEC: FINANCE

MS TEAMS

Programme Director – Ms Madonda

Moses Kotane Institute Chair – Ms Khomo

Deputy Chair of MKI – Prof Adam

Chief Executive Officer of MKI – Ms Ellenson

PANELIST AND FACILITATORS

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning,

Thank you for inviting me to be part of this ground-breaking dialogue which I am confident that its resulting impact will be a resounding trajectory in women in research.

I wish to pay tribute to the Moses Kotane Institute under the tutelage of Ms Thandeka Ellenson for their relentless pursuit of research excellence. MKI is always finding innovative and creative ways to inspire efforts towards research no matter how miniature.

This is a very important organisation which is shaping and steering the Province of KwaZulu-Natal towards a future driven by research. It has been said in the past that most of our developmental challenges could be solved if we were to invest more financial resources into research. However, most of the research output does not come from women which is a huge indictment because most of socio-economic and political challenges is confronting women on a daily basis.

These challenges is more prevalent face mostly women in the third world countries in general and in the sub-Saharan African in particular.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Perhaps let me premised my address before you today by reminding what the late Kenyan social, environmental and political activist Waangari Maathai, the first African woman Nobel Peace Prize winner said: “When I went back home, I was constantly being reminded I am an African women, and so there are certain things shouldn’t do, certain ambitions that I should not entertain. That was a problem for me because I had never thought of myself as an African woman, never thought of myself as a woman to begin with. For me the limit was my capacity, my capability,”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to talk about your own capacity, your capability, the ambitions you entertain, the limitations imposed on your path of developmental trajectory as an African woman. I wish to juxtapose all of that with the power of research. I will say this without fear of contradiction that the very limitations placed on our path of development is as a result of limitations placed upon women researchers.

It is upon women to equip our scholars with comprehensive skills, competencies and expertise to shape the landscape of our social structure both in politics and economy. I will challenge you to day to develop research skills tailor-made to advance the research capabilities of our women. I accepted the invite to address you after assessing that this was indeed not another talk-shop where women come to compete for superiority and pre-eminence over the others, but where great minds come to empower each other.

We come from a past where little or few women have graduated with PhDs. I must say though that the tide is turning on that front. However, most of the available women research is shelved and concealed from the public eye. I believe factors driving this are home truths contained in their research or because their research is viewed as upsetting and disrupting the establishment.

These hurdles placed before us as women some of it is done by the very same institutions of higher education that do not value the women research output. In this province we have four eminent institutions of higher education; namely the University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Zululand, Durban University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of Technology. Combined, these institutions have more African women in academia, but the question arises; how much of African women research input is shaping our society as we speak.

One is not standing here to cast aspersion on the academic work churned out by these institutions, but I am here to throw down the gauntlet and challenge the academic doctors and professors among us here to introspect when it comes to giving space to research done by women. Should we succeed to that, we will not ask these pertinent questions that Waangari Maathai is asking about our capability and capacity.

This brings me to the very critical aspect of my speech which now deals with how as a government, academia, industries and non-governmental organisations can we play our meaningful role. The dearth in research is intertwined with lack of research funding. It's one thing to call for more African women researchers and another to put the money where our mouths are.

Proper and life-changing research is expensive to conduct, it requires financial resources, support and critical input. The KwaZulu-Natal Government realised this gap and challenge which led to the birth of the Moses Kotane Institute. I am proud that such a glorious institution is led by a strong woman whose passion transcends the duty of her office.

I am well aware that the Department of Higher Education pumps funding to our institutes of higher learning, however, I am not happy that much of that funding does not go to research, if it were, we would not be having such acute lack of research produced by African women. Another trend we should be frowning upon is that research funding must not only go to a selected few individuals, but must be allocated equitably so that it beneficiates our women.

The government today, more than at any other period, is in serious need of research to drive up its programmes of action. Today, as a government, we are focusing on programmes to enhance the skills and knowledge of the not only of our public servants, but our stakeholders whose input to our daily work must be informed by thorough research. It should be a key strategy of this entity, MKI, that the scarce skills we have in research and digitally-driven programmes are prioritized. This is in particular if we want to ensure that the research programmes their impact are also taken to previously disadvantaged communities especially those residing in township and rural areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We will achieve this through a practical approach in research development, information sharing sessions and funding women especially those that belong to the designated groups throughout the province.

I am glad today because you are holding this important even at Dube Trade Port. Needless to say I should remind you that following extensive research in 2003, the national cabinet took a decision to relocate the old Durban International Airport to La Mercy. It was also decided to establish the Dube Trade Port which would incorporate the King Shaka International Airport. Importantly, one of the key strategic reasons for the relocation was to establish an integrated multi-modal logistics platform that would link the national road and rail systems to the seaports of Durban and Richards Bay, with an added value of air infrastructure to accommodate intercontinental-wide body aircraft.

This was the power of research and vision at the time and I am glad to state that the wider context and long-term strategic objective of the Dube Trade Port Project was the establishment of an Aerotropolis in the north of Durban, stretching from Umhlanga to Ballito. Critically, the basis of the decision to relocate the airport was a research which revealed that airports had a potential to shape business location and urban development in the 21st century, just as highways did in the 20th century.

I wish to end this dialogue by pointing out an array of other research areas that we should be redirecting our women to. These are areas of research to enhance economic growth. We need research by women that will support KZN priority sectors like agro-processing, ICT and innovation, industrial development, manufacturing, value addition and beneficiation. This should go with research on how to improve global competitiveness of KZN companies many of whom are led by our distinguished women.

Theirs is an urgent need to delve on research focusing on strategies to modernise the KwaZulu-Natal economy, how it can develop smart cities in the province while

increasing the depth of technology for value addition and beneficiation by women for women. Women-led research should grapple with empowerment models to deal with inequalities in societies while also rebuilding social cohesion in KwaZulu-Natal.

Just over a month ago, the province was confronted with one of the worst unrests that post-apartheid South Africa had seen. One needs to stop and pose the question; did we ignore existing research that pointed to the ticking time-bomb of inequality, poverty and unemployment?

Did we ignore existing research that shows how we can improve the efficacy of Social Corporate Investments (SCIs) as community empowerment models? In an age of malls, how about research that show that research strategies aimed at increasing circulation of township wealth to engender growth of townships and rural areas? To what extent are women participating in the economy and which sectors of the economy can fast track women empowerment. I believe research is there, but is it enough? I guess not. Do we need more, the answer is a resounding yes because the future of skills in KwaZulu-Natal against a backdrop of 4IR lies in the hands of women.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having gathered here today, it would be a missed opportunity if we do not confront the challenges we face as women in leadership. So much occupies our attention that we tend to take our eyes off the ball because elements intent of delaying women capabilities and capacity, real or perceived, derail us. We cannot be regurgitating the same research that does not yield results hence the urgent need to empower our women researchers.

Our approach should be multi-pronged and multi-facet so that our research as women is responsive to the sensitiveness that come with present challenges. We are duty-bound to accelerate our efforts in realising our capacity and capability of research benefits.

I thank you.

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