

Please note that this is just a draft speech and the Acting Premier can add and delete. Thank you

SPEECH BY ACTING PREMIER MR W MCHUNU
EVENT: 61st REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA
VENUE: KWAZULU NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA
DATE: 26 JANUARY 2010

(Protocol to be updated at the event)

Master of Ceremonies;

eThekwini Mayor, Cllr Obed Mlaba;

Consul General of India;

Representatives from various communities and the religious fraternity;

Honored guests;

Good evening

Allow me to express our warmest welcome to everyone present here this evening on behalf of the provincial government and the ruling party, the African National Congress.

First and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation to the newly appointed Consul General of India, His Excellency Anil K Sharan.

Thank you for extending an invitation to the provincial government.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your recent appointment. Your appointment is well merited, judging by your sterling accomplishments and distinguished performance on various countries where you were posted.

I was pleased to hear that you see your new role here in KwaZulu-Natal as one where you hope to work with government and the people of this province in areas such as the fighting against HIV/Aids, economic development and the strengthening of education.

More importantly, we are very optimistic about the future of this province because you have committed yourself to the creation of an environment that enables the provincial government to learn from your country.

India has moved from a relatively undeveloped economy just fifty years ago to a position in the top five economies of the world today.

India owes its economic growth and 21st century renaissance to its education system and the number of professionals graduating from Indian institutions every year.

In the 1950's and 1960's the Indian Government under Prime Minister Nehru, building on the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, invested heavily in education and skills development.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a passionate advocate of education, especially for India's children and youth, believing free and universal primary education was essential for India's progress.

At the tertiary level Nehru set up Institutes of Technology and higher learning across the country. The result was that when the economy was liberalized in the 1990's following India's balance of payments crisis, there were enough Indian graduates around the world who returned to India to drive the economic boom which followed.

Today India has a huge intellectual capital base to drive its impressive economic growth, currently averaging over 9% per annum. Consider that India has:

- Over 380 universities and 11, 200 colleges;
- 1500 research institutions;
- 800 000 science post graduates;
- More than 1 million graduate engineers;
- Today India turns out more than 50 000 computer professionals and 360 000 engineering graduates per year.

This is indeed very encouraging.

The provincial government is fully aware of the importance of education and it is for these reasons that we have prioritized education.

As a developmental state we have adopted an approach that seeks to mobilize multi-stakeholder participation in order to improve both access and the quality of our education in this province.

This is the surest way that would help this country achieve the Millennium Development Goal of “universal access to education”.

And what is more important for the future than quality education?

Quality education has reshaped life in most countries and made it possible for the millions of people to live a fulfilling life. Education is the engine of the economy. No doubt, without quality education, there can be no socio-economic development in this province.

It is very important to note that education in this province has come a long way in the past few years. Our efforts as government have always been aimed at improving access and quality.

His Excellency and honoured guests

Shortly after receiving an invitation to attend this important event, I reflected on the past years.

I was reminded that throughout the long years of oppression and discrimination with communities in this country being ripped apart by political violence, people from South Africa and India shared a vision of a brighter future.

Clearly, our shared interests, history and economic similarities have enabled us to build together a unique relationship that has benefited our people.

India has helped our country integrate with economies of the world.

We've seen inward investments; the flow of goods, services, knowledge and variety of skills in technology and engineering between the two countries.

Since 2004, the provincial government has hosted numerous business delegations from India. We have also undertaken fact-finding missions to India over the past few years.

In our interaction, we have reached broad agreements on developing KwaZulu-Natal and India relationship of all-round cooperation for mutual benefit.

We have acknowledged that a sound and rapidly growing South Africa/India economy serves the economic development of our region and that of the continent at large.

The bilateral trade between the two countries is now worth around R5 billion and we need to mount an ambitious programme to grow this trade to R10 billion at least before the end of 2010.

What is more encouraging is that synergies between the two countries have already been created following the successful implementation of the following projects: -

- Tata Steel has invested in KZN, creating thousands of jobs and also providing internships for learners;
- Taj Group has invested heavily in KwaZulu Natal;
- India's National Institute of Technological Information has established operations in the province following the signing of a contract with the Department of Economic Development. The focus is on Information, Communication and Technology; and training cooperatives and SMMEs.

These are few but important projects that we need to build upon.

As we celebrate 61st Republic Day of India we want to reiterate that the provincial government will continue to facilitate people-to-people contact between India and KZN.

We want to build KZN into a modernized province.

To achieve this, we are committed to expanding cooperation agreements and partnerships in key strategic sectors such as agriculture, agri-processing, biofuels, biochemicals, ITC and shipping.

More importantly, with the world currently undergoing profound changes fuelled by the collapse of the financial sector in the United States, to further KZN-India relations and cooperation serves the fundamental interests of both countries.

The leadership of the ANC has a vision for the African continent that offers equal development opportunities to all people irrespective of their race.

The ANC believes that a developing and stable Africa is the biggest contribution to world peace and prosperity.

Economic development brings peace and raises standards of living. People are afforded quality education and decent jobs.

Most importantly, economic freedom gives you the power to determine your destiny. In this way democracy is strengthened. Equally, economic exclusion and underdevelopment contributes to the despair that breeds hatred.

As the year 2015 draws nearer, it is my sincere wish that the relations between the two countries will move up to a new stage so that we may meet the targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

In 2005, the international community said the right to education will not be established in Africa until 2130. The eradication of hunger and poverty will not be met until 2150.

Going into the future we will be judged on what contribution we are making towards achieving MDG.

Certainly, the cross-century partnership should galvanize leaders from both countries to come up with creative solutions for the attainment of some MDG, namely: -

- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger
- Promotion of gender equality and empower women
- Combating disease
- Ensuring environmental sustainability
- Creating a Global Partnership for Development

His Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen

This province has always been very inviting to investments: -

- Shipping is a key industry where KZN could directly benefit because of two busiest ports – in Richards Bay and Durban.

- Dube Trade Port provides a good opportunity for direct flights to India
- India is a leader in key sectors and technologies such as ethanol production, wind energy and pharmaceuticals.

There are many lessons we will still learn from a prosperous country like India as we cement South Africa's and indeed KZN's position in the global economy.

Despite the population of more than 1,1 billion, India is now a net exporter of food.

KwaZulu-Natal in particular, can learn a great deal from the success of agricultural sector and agricultural cooperatives. The most successful cooperatives in India are those that are involved in milk and sugar production.

This year as we also mark the **150th year anniversary of the arrival of Indians in this country**, the provincial government would like to recognize and acknowledge the role you played in developing and strengthening the province's sugar industry.

Sugar production is now very huge here in this province and has the potential to grow and create thousands of jobs because it is labour intensive.

The success of the agricultural cooperatives in India, especially those that produces sugar is very amazing and encouraging. We want to continue to learn from you

Here in KwaZulu-Natal we are encouraging the merger of small scale growers and large scale growers. Currently we have about 45 300 registered sugarcane growers in the country predominantly from KZN.

Broadly speaking, our hope is that this merger will ensure the transfer of skills and sharing of resources for the sustainability of this sector.

Small scale farmers, especially those that have just received land through government's land restitution programme should be equipped with

knowledge to ensure an effective use of their land. This forms part of South African government's rural development strategy.

India's Rural Development Ministry has succeeded in its bid to develop rural areas. The \$35 billion investment in rural areas in over 600 000 villages has sparked unprecedented economic activity.

Therefore, we believe that India is better placed to assist as we want to ensure that small scale farmers understand: -

- issues around soil health and sustainable use of land for agriculture
- plant nutrition and elimination of crop disease
- improvement of productivity and quality products

His Excellency

As I conclude my remarks, I want to emphasize that KwaZulu Natal's trajectory to development would have been very impossible without good leadership.

The connection between leadership and governance on the one hand, and outcomes in terms of economic growth, development, and poverty reduction on the other hand, is not too difficult to distinguish.

It is therefore important that this evening we reiterate our resolve to provide sound leadership. We are resilient and firmly focusing on ensuring socio-economic growth and prosperity.

The 61st Republic Day of India provides a good opportunity for us to hold hands and develop our country. KwaZulu-Natal is a vast province with enormous potential.

We have committed and dedicated leadership both in government and in civil society.

I thank you,

