

MESSAGE BY KZN HEALTH MEC, DR. SIBONGISENI DHLOMO ON THE OCCASION OF THE MIDWIFERY WORKSHOP FOR UTHUKELA DISTRICT ON 28 MAY 2009.

Programme Director: Mr Shabangu

Rev Xaba

Municipal Manager: Ms Maphalala

Dr Nambassi; Dr Nwokedi & Dr Zulu and all panelists

District Manager;

Hospital CEOs;

Medical Managers;

Nursing Tutors;

Midwives;

Ladies and Gentlemen

If it were not for the International Candlelight Memorial Ceremony being commemorated at Ixopo today, definitely I would have been here with you.

Midwives, you will agree, are the most important people in the world as they are instrumental in ensuring that mothers deliver safely and bring about healthy and bouncing babies into this world.

As a fellow Health Practitioner I fully appreciate the central role you play during all stages of pregnancy, labour and the early postnatal period. I know that your responsibilities go much further than delivering babies; that you are also involved in providing counselling,

offering support and education, and in helping mothers and their partners prepare for parenthood.

Truly, you are the hands that rock the cradle.

As you hold this all important workshop, I pray that you will deliberate and agree on ways and means that will assist midwifery to achieve the following outcomes:

- Promoting and maintaining a caring ethos within the nursing profession.
- Ensuring that National Health Priorities are addressed at all times.
- Creating a cadreship of nurses who are lifelong learners and critical thinkers.
- Promoting the ability in every midwife to evaluate and assure quality in his/her practice, i.e. pick up abnormalities like *spina bifida* before the mother is given the baby.

As professionals, you are one category that is fully entrusted with the responsibility of the attainment of one of the most important Millennium Development Goals - that of reducing the maternal and perinatal mortality rates in the country.

The HIV and AIDS pandemic has changed the disease and illness profile of the South African population. I fully-understand and appreciate that this has placed an enormous burden on you as giving

birth is no longer a normal process; but you also have to ensure that there is Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV in the Province that accounts for 28, 7% of all South Africa's HIV infections.

Beyond doubt, this continues to have adverse psychological effects on you as professionals.

We would also like you to know that this government is well aware of the challenges and problems that you as nurses are experiencing as well as the expectations that you have in terms of the betterment of your situations. We know that your challenges include:

- staffing levels,
- remuneration, including Occupational Specific Dispensation
- occupational health and safety risks,
- safety and security especially in rural clinics,
- lack of tools of production and many more, to mention a few.

Last week, our National Minister of Health Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi made an undertaking that your concerns will receive his attention. Please do trust him, I also do.

Also two days ago, our President, Honourable Jacob Zuma, acknowledged the important role that is played by the Public servants saying its on them that the nation's hopes of a better life is concentrated: *'We are proud of thousands of our public servants who*

work efficiently and diligently, going beyond the call of duty to serve our people....We must work hard, work smart, treat our people with respect and dignity and ensure that we create a caring and efficient public service.'

I also want to assure you of my unwavering support in the good work that you do for the mothers and babies of this beautiful Province.

I wish you wisdom in your deliberations and hope to be appraised of the recommendations and resolutions of this workshop.

I thank you.