

**Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of
the Nurse's Graduation ceremony at the City Hall in Durban**

15 September 2009

All protocol observed

On behalf of the KZN Government and all the inhabitants of KwaZulu Natal as well as the countries we share borders with, I would like to congratulate and welcome you for having successfully completed your nursing training programmes.

Our sincerest appreciation also goes to the Principal of the Nursing College, Dr Lulu Nkondo-Mthembu, all the Tutors as well as the Staff members who worked tirelessly to make it possible for us this year to have a Graduation ceremony in three batches, as we today confer accolades to:

- **351 Nurses** who have completed a 4 year nurse training programme
- **206 Nurses** who have completed a Post registration programme.

Tomorrow, September 16, in this very hall, again honouring:

- **715 Nurses**

On September 23, in Newcastle Show Hall we are concluding this series of graduation ceremonies with:

- **788 Nursing** graduates.

All in all, we are saying thank you to the management and leadership of the Nursing College for the sum total of **2055** qualified Nurses that are this year added to join the fight against disease in this province.

To all our nurses we want to say, this is a noble profession that is still regarded as a '*calling*' because here we are dealing with people's lives. In most developing countries where there is a scarcity of doctors, nurses are respected, appreciated and held in high esteem as they are the only hope for all the ailments afflicting the communities from within which reside. In the execution of your duties, make sure that you all live up to the standard of the distinguished nurses who made an indelible mark and giant footprints in the nursing care. Go on and walk on footprints of Florence Nightingale, Charlote Maxege, Cecelia Makiwane and Albertina Sisulu, among others.

We also appreciate the overarching role that you play as professionals because in this country the responsibilities of a nurse go far beyond the act of receiving people into the world and being the last ones to close their eyes when they pass on. Nurses are also expected to be:

- The patient's advocate
- The patient's physical care giver
- The one that deals with the mental, physical, social and emotional needs of the patients as well as their families
- The mother to the motherless
- The father to the fatherless, and
- The counselor to those in distress

Our noble profession will continue to be regarded as a noble one if we observe the following ethics:

- When we start practicing with honesty, integrity and respect
- When we report unscrupulous practices or professional misconduct that affects our patients
- When we advocate protecting and promoting a client's right to autonomy, respect, privacy, dignity and access to information
- When we assume the responsibility for ensuring that our relationships with patients are therapeutic and professional
- When we engage in compassionate care through our speech and body language and make efforts to understand and care about others' health-care needs.

Let us live up to the values of Florence Nightingale and accept that all people who present themselves in our health care institutions do so because they need help. They need to be treated with respect and dignity that their conditions deserve. *Ububele ngesiZulu.*

Remember, Health is a Human Right!

Our President, Hon Jacob Zuma is also taking a keen interest in the health status of the population as he commits the Government to work to:

'Improve the health status of the population and achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This will include measures to scale up HIV prevention, address the challenge of TB and reduce child HIV infection rates.'

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, the graduands, of the excellent work you have done through your diligence, dedication and focus. Take your commitment to another level by registering at institutions of higher for postgraduate studies, to continuously improve your intellectual and professional capacity. Nenze kahle bantami!

I THANK YOU!