

Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the official opening of the outpatient wing of the KwaZulu Natal Children Hospital

16 July 2013

Hon Members of the KZN Legislature Health Portfolio Committee

EThekweni Metro Speaker – Cllr Logie Naidoo

Esteemed members of EXCO and Councillors

KZN Health Head of Dept – Dr Sibongile Zungu

Partners from MatCH represented by – Ms Arthi Ramkissoo

KZN Health MANCO members

Partners from all Media Houses

What an opportune time to partly realise Nelson Mandela's dream of building a Children's Hospital.

Today as he lay in his hospital bed, he will smile and be uplifted to know that we have made this remarkable progress for all the children of this beautiful Province and a continent at large based on principles he fought and sacrificed for.

Ladies and gentlemen, it remains a shame that small minded man in pursuit of Apartheid decided that Addington Children's hospital built in 1928 should be closed down in 1984 because it offered services to children of all races on a part of the beachfront that was reserved for 'white' people. As such, for more than 28 years, this facility has

remained closed and deteriorated into a state of this state of disrepair and dilapidation.

Today we pay tribute and say thank you to all the compatriots who have shared our dream and committed their time and resources to make the restoration and reconstruction of this facility a reality.

It being a week in which our revered leader, Tata Madiba, was born, with this official opening today, we reaffirm his words and say to all the children of Africa:

'Let freedom reign

The sun shall never set on so glorious achievement'

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the Maternal, Adolescent and Child Health of the WITS Health Consortium (MatCH), based in Durban, for all the zeal; support and belief that this is one necessary project that has to be done and completed.

We also salute all the members of the KwaZulu-Natal Children's Hospital Trust that was established to do the fundraising and provide project management and also drive infrastructure development. It is just unbelievable that so much has been accomplished since our official launch of this project in July 2010.

We are very thankful to all the benevolent South African individuals; conglomerates and Non-Governmental Organisations that have opened

and continue opening their purses to make a contribution aimed at taking this project to fruition.

We appeal to all our distractors to give us a chance to fulfil our dreams of creating a health precinct in this area that will comprise of an agglomeration of institutional health services that include Addington Hospital; Addington Nursing College; Addington 'gateway' primary health care clinic and the state of art KwaZulu-Natal Children's Hospital.

The KZN Children's hospital, once finished, will be a source of national pride and a particular achievement for KwaZulu-Natal. We are really grateful that the KwaZulu-Natal Cabinet unanimously gave approval in December 2009 that we carry out this task of renovating the Children's Hospital.

This Children's Hospital will be the only in the whole country apart from the Red Cross one in the Western Cape. Here we will be able to offer primary, community and specialist health care to patients from all over KwaZulu-Natal –an out-reach and in-reach system—and to deliver outstanding adult and child health services, including rehabilitation services and health care worker training, and to develop best practice models and world class research, all of which are relevant to South Africa and to the African continent.

We will offer specialized chronic and preventative care clinics; social and welfare services; nutrition support; community outreach; support services and psychological/counselling services.

We will be able to lessen the impact of known maladies since KwaZulu-Natal is known to have reported a total of 101 037 TB cases in 2012 of which 7884 (7.8%) are children under the age of 5 years.

In as far as HIV is concerned, it is also a known fact that KwaZulu-Natal carries the largest burden in the country with prevalence rate of 17 % in the general population and 37.4 % (2011 HIV Survey) in pregnant women and the TB/HIV co infection rate is at a staggering 70%.

As KwaZulu Natal Province, experiencing all the above, we are then saying this facility will be bastion for all the health problems affecting the under 14s.

Here we will ensure that all children infected and exposed to HIV are taken care of. We will also ensure that all child ailments afflicting children of all the race groups are managed; cured and eradicated.

In the preface of the **Millennium Development Goals: Country Report 2010, our President, Hon Jacob Zuma** says: *'Our health is our life and MDGs 3, 4 and 5 are our life. South Africa feels the burden of disease with the scourge of HIV and AIDS stubbornly reversing gains made in life expectancy. To address this, our priority is to improve the health profile of all South Africans.'*

We remain proud of what has been accomplished and wish everyone a happy and industrious Mandela Week.

I thank you