

**Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the UKZN GALA held in memory of Tumelo Seliane**

**23 September 2016**

Malunga omndeni wakwa Tumelo Seliane

Malunga esonto ahloniphekile

Members of the UKZN Foundation

Members of the Medical Student Representative Council

Committee members of the Tumelo Seliane Education Fund [TuSEF]

Members of the Medical Students Christian Fellowship

The Class of 2015

Sinomusanothando representatives

Umthombo Youth Development Foundation representatives

Medical Students at large

Good evening,

When I was called upon to give a talk about Tumelo Seliane and Leadership at Universities, terms like solidarity; cooperation and self-reliance came to my mind.

The story of the late Tumelo Seliane is both heroic and tragic. We all have no choice but to learn from it and try our best to emulate him.

I have been made to understand that he was a member of the Medical School Representative Council and as expected, involved in addressing problems faced by students, particularly, those who had financial challenges.

History has recorded that Tumelo Seliane was a co-founder of the Care for a Colleague initiative, a program that assists needy students with grocery gift vouchers, and is still running under the auspices of the Medical Students Christian Fellowship (MSCF).

Equipped with this background, I was reminded of one selfless and gallant student leaders, whose life we also coincidentally celebrate in the month of September, that is, Steven Bantu Biko, who on such like-minded initiatives had this to say:

*'The blacks are tired of standing at the touchlines to witness a game that they should be playing. They want to do things for themselves and all by themselves.'*

Steve Biko attributed such kind of action and thinking to a philosophy, declaring:

*'Black Consciousness is an attitude of the mind and a way of life ... its essence is the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers - and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude.'*

Indeed, Tumelo Seliane was a living testimony of all what Biko theorized about. We now know that in his short life on earth, his contributions extended beyond the medical school and extended to the broader community. We know of his involvement with the Happy Valley Clinic in KwaNqetho (near Hillcrest), where he was a consistent volunteer, giving of his time and effort to attend to patients, supervise junior students, and manage the pharmacy.

Fellow compatriot, we all know that as fate would dictate it, Tumelo himself faced financial difficulties that made him to abandon his Clinical studies.

We are assembled here tonight because Tumelo's fellow students and his qualified colleagues decided to pay his outstanding fees and also obtained an Umthombo Youth Development Fund bursary for him to continue his studies.

I am moved and I am touched.

This noble and unpublicised extra-ordinary generous gesture leaves me convinced that from this crop of Medical students, we have very good; compassionate and conscientious Doctors.

As Doctors, you give me big hopes that you will greatly assist in the improvement of the health status of our population.

Since I now regard you as colleagues, I may as well bring to your attention that as health workers in making, you will be expected to positively impact on the vision of attaining a **Long and Healthy Life for all South Africans.**

You may as well get to know of that South Africa is experiencing a quadruple burden of disease and that it is our responsibility to reduce and manage these, namely:

- HIV and AIDS as well as Tuberculosis;
- Maternal and Child Health
- Non-communicable Diseases such as cancer, hypertension, diabetes and others

- Injury and violence

I also have to inform you that our ANC led government has made clear of its intention to redirect the Health System of this country towards the Primary Health Care approach.

The PHC Re-engineering effort is being prioritized with the aim to accelerate equity in service delivery towards universal access to health care. This is in line with the National Health Insurance vision. Besides improving access and quality of Health Services, our focus is also on keeping people healthy for as long as possible through health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

Indeed, this approach is in line with the 1978 **Alma-Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care**, which declares:

*'Primary health care includes at least: education concerning prevailing health problems and the methods of preventing and controlling them; promotion of food supply and proper nutrition; an adequate supply of safe water and basic sanitation; maternal and child health care, including family planning; immunization against the major infectious diseases; prevention and control of locally endemic diseases; appropriate treatment of common diseases and injuries and provision of essential drugs.'*

After completion, you are required to add meaningful value on the investments we continue making on prevention; treatment; rehabilitation and support efforts being enacted at community level.

As qualified Doctors, you will be reinforcing and strengthening Community based outreach teams; ensuring proper functioning and supervision of Clinics, Family and School Health Teams.

We find it very interesting and relevant that the approach of these Cuban trained doctors is **client and wellness oriented** as opposed to the disease oriented approach. Their socialization fits well with our efforts of Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS) strategy which requires community diagnosis; feedbacks to communities; development and ownership of community plan, its implementation, monitoring and evaluation of progress.

We will expect you to be our change agents, concentrating on **client and wellness oriented** approach as opposed to the current disease oriented focus.

Out there, in provinces like KZN, you will find Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS) structures that you should participate in and utilize them for community diagnosis; health promotion disease prevention and platforms to foster treatment adherence.

Going out to communities will make you better and relevant doctors.

Fellow compatriots, in the memory of Tumelo Seliane; we have no choice but to become health professionals that will truly serve this nation by being informative; courageous; selfless and committed to the cause of uplifting others.

The name of Tumelo Seliane will live on forever especially with the existence of the Tumelo Seliane Education Fund now established will the sole purpose assisting the needy medical students.

Besides the efforts we make as the KwaZulu Natal Department of Health to provide Bursaries to students pursuing Health related courses; I, in my personal capacity also pledge to be a patron of the Tumelo Seliane Education Fund. I am in.

I also commit to go out there to enlist support and commitment of my peer doctors to be part of this effort aimed at ensuring that all hard work and financial struggling student doctors do see their dreams become a reality.

Indeed healthcare profession is not just an aspiration, it's a calling that when fulfilled, uplifts the entire community. We will work together.

I thank you