

MEC KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE 9th ELECTIVE CONGRESS OF DENOSA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MMC for Health, Margaret Makhetlha
General Secretary of DENOSA, Kwena Manamela,
North West Provincial Chairperson of Cosatu, Wageng
Motshwaedi
North West Provincial Secretary of COSATU (**in
absentia**), Kopano Konopi
DENOSA Chairperson in Gauteng, Simphiwe Gada
DENOSA Chairperson in Mpumalanga, Linah Giyane
DENOSA Provincial Secretary in Limpopo, Jacob Molepo
The newly elected leadership of DENOSA in the province
The outgoing leadership of DENOSA in the province
Chief Director in the Department of Health for the Dr
Kenneth Kaunda District, Phil Maboe
Legal advisor, Advocate Moses Mampo
MEC Support staff led by Molefe Molefe, the stand-in
Head of office
The staff members in the office of the Provincial Treasurer

Dumelang,

INTRODUCTION

It is indeed an honour and privilege to have been invited to this auspicious occasion as the Provincial Treasurer of the ANC in the North West province, deployed as the MEC for

the Department of Health to attend the 9th elective of Democratic Nursing Organization of South Africa (DENOSA).

Let me also take this time to congratulate the newly elected Leadership of DENOSA. Members have bestowed you the responsibility to take the baton of their aspirations and elevate it to the greater heights. I wish you a great success in your journey to carry forward the hopes and dreams of members of DENOSA.

As the MEC accorded a responsibility to take the reigns of the Health department for the seventh administration, I commit myself to work together with your good selves to advance the agenda of access to quality healthcare services for the citizens of this province. In simple terms, I can say, the agenda for transformation of the health sector.

Not only that, but a healthy, conducive working environment for you that speaks to your theme for this year and I quote:

“Promoting organizational growth through innovative practices towards a resilient quality healthcare and effective member servicing.”

unquote

Yesterday we launched a campaign called **Tshela Ka Itekanelo**. The aim of this is to commit ourselves as

individuals to lead a healthy lifestyle. As public servants in the health sector, we need you to be the face of this campaign. We urge you to encourage members of the public, especially patients to seek our help, *gore ba tshela ka itekanelo*. We plead with you that through this campaign, you caution our patients that an excessive lifestyle has a negative effect on their health.

The purpose of unions in the workplace

Unions play a pivotal role in the workplace as:

1. They are the voice of workers.
2. They advise and resolve workplace issues.
3. They are the representatives of workers
4. They ensure that workers meet their minimum obligations.
5. They contribute to the development of workers.

You are one of the most important stakeholders in the Department and I want to assure you that we do not take that for granted.

The role of DENOSA in advancing workers

Programme director, the North West appreciates the great constructive contribution played by DENOSA for many years. We greatly appreciate your fight for the rights not only for your members, but society at large.

DENOSA, as the biggest labour union in the province, has demonstrated that if both government and labour intentionally pursue a balanced partnership, much can be achieved.

The department has created a dedicated Nursing Practise through persuasion of DENOSA leadership. This unit has graced this occasion in leading some of the strategic interventions such as capacity building through the South African Nursing Council CPD programme and leadership initiative for Nursing Managers.

Support from the Department

I sent officials from different branches and directorates from the department to clarify on matters raised by the union, this as a way to cement the departments dedication to a transparent and open working relationship with you.

Ladies and gentlemen, we continue to heed to the call for help to professionalise the nursing sector. We know and understand the strenuous conditions you work under. We acknowledge the pressure that comes with the territory, and we encourage you to use all resources at your disposal to ensure that you are well taken care of mentally, psychologically, physically and spiritually.

Opportunities from the department

Chairperson, there are many opportunities that are available at the Department for you. We encourage you to

utilize them. These opportunities will empower you and ensure that you do not remain stagnant in your respective careers as healthcare professionals. Apply, apply, apply until you are appointed.

I would also like to encourage you to register to further your studies and grow yourselves as we continue to witness that the system is currently evolving and things are changing.

The Department offers bursaries to employees, including nurses. We also approve study leave with full pay upon request. I hope that some of you here today have utilized this opportunity, and if not, you have a chance to do so.

Shortage of nurses

Chairperson, we have a serious challenge in this regard, and it is indeed a thorn in our flesh. However, we intend to accelerate the appointment of nurses in every facility where there is a shortage, before the end of this financial year. I have requested that this be prioritized because nurses are the heartbeat of the healthcare system. Truth be told, a doctor cannot function without a nurse.

For instance, your dedication during the Covid-19 pandemic needs to be celebrated still. Everyone went for cover during this period but nurses led from the front. We appreciate your resilience.

Corporate services has confirmed that there are posts available and the CFO has confirmed the availability of budget for all vacant funded posts. We hope that you apply, apply, apply and continue to apply, especially where you qualify, le se fele pelo until you are appointed.

Uniforms

There is much progress registered by the Department of Health in executing the negotiated national resolution to provide our nurses with a standardized uniform.

The process to purchase your uniforms is advancing with speed. A service provider has been appointed and the Service Level Agreement has been signed. The Department is currently busy with the collection of orders and we anticipate that the entire process will be implemented and concluded before end of this financial year.

30% overtime

The Department is working around the clock to process the outstanding 30% overtime as committed. This is one item that I know took time but I appreciate your patience in this regard. As we know that when dealing with public funds, it is imperative that you consult with the relevant offices. In this case, the Ministry of Public Service and Administration, the Office of the Premier and the Provincial Treasury. We sincerely apologise for the delay as we were waiting for concurrence from the Minister.

I hope that the amount of discipline that you showcased towards the conclusion of this process is how we will handle all future matters that you bring to my table.

Old and dilapidated infrastructure

There is currently a lot of construction that is being done in our facilities across the province. Some are renovations, and some are brand new. This is a commitment that for the coming years, buildings that are old and are without space, will be visited, assessed and stemming from the recommendations, they will be prioritized. I have already started with the oversight visits through the programmes of **Re bona ka matlho** and **Kopano ke matla**.

Safety in our facilities

There is still work to be done to ensure that you work in a safe and secured environment. A few of the gaps that have been noticed are currently being dealt with. One of the most inspiring words that were said by the late former president Nelson Mandela is that you cannot postpone safety, and I agree. It may seem like a mundane task but if not handled carefully, tomorrow may be too late. It is of utmost importance that we feel safe where we work and we will. I received a briefing that the new tender will be bigger, and address the issue safety in the workplace.

NHI Act

Comrades and compatriots, the introduction of National Health Insurance is charging us to hold each other's hands as we implement it to the best of our ability. If we work together, we will be able to face all challenges that comes with it while at the same time we ensure that we don't stumble and fall.

If it happens that we differ in the course of our journey, we should not allow our differences to deter us and we should instead engage so that we find a common ground.

CONCLUSION

Proverbs 16 verse 3 reads thus and I quote:

“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.”

Unquote

Workers, rest assured that as the Health Department and as the ruling party, we appreciate your efforts in upholding the oath of your profession. We are also encouraged by your professionalism in healing the people of the North West province. Your dedication to your work does not go unnoticed.

I want to reiterate that the doors of my office are forever open, not only for complaints and concerns but also for plans and strategies to help strengthen the healthcare system.

Leadership, kgetsi ya puo ga e tlale. Let us go back, work together and bring the much-needed healing to the people of the North West province and lead constructive engagements to reposition our alliance in the province.

I thank you.