

Council to build a 'united nation'

JANINE MOODLEY

ANGLICAN Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Natal Rubin Phillip says he will do his best to move the province in the direction it needs to be for positive and radical change.

He was speaking to **POST** soon after his appointment as co-chairperson of the 94-member Social Cohesion and Moral Regeneration Council.

The anti-apartheid activist and religious leader's position in the council was announced last week by acting premier and Economic Development and Tourism MEC Sihle Zikalala, at its launch in Mayville. Phillip will co-chair the council with KZN premier Willies Mchunu.

Consisting of 30 government and 64 non-governmental members from civil society, business, academia and labour in the province, the council will seek to directly deal with marginalisation, exclusion, social ills and political intolerance.

Zikalala said the council aimed to build a "united nation that works towards a common vision".

"The council will mobilise the people of KwaZulu-Natal to focus on overcoming prejudices and promoting positive values."

He said he wanted the province to be known for peace, democracy, hard work and integrity. "We want a society where everyone can experience and enjoy their human rights and human dignity."

He spoke on racial tension, violent killings of political leaders, the brutal killing of police,

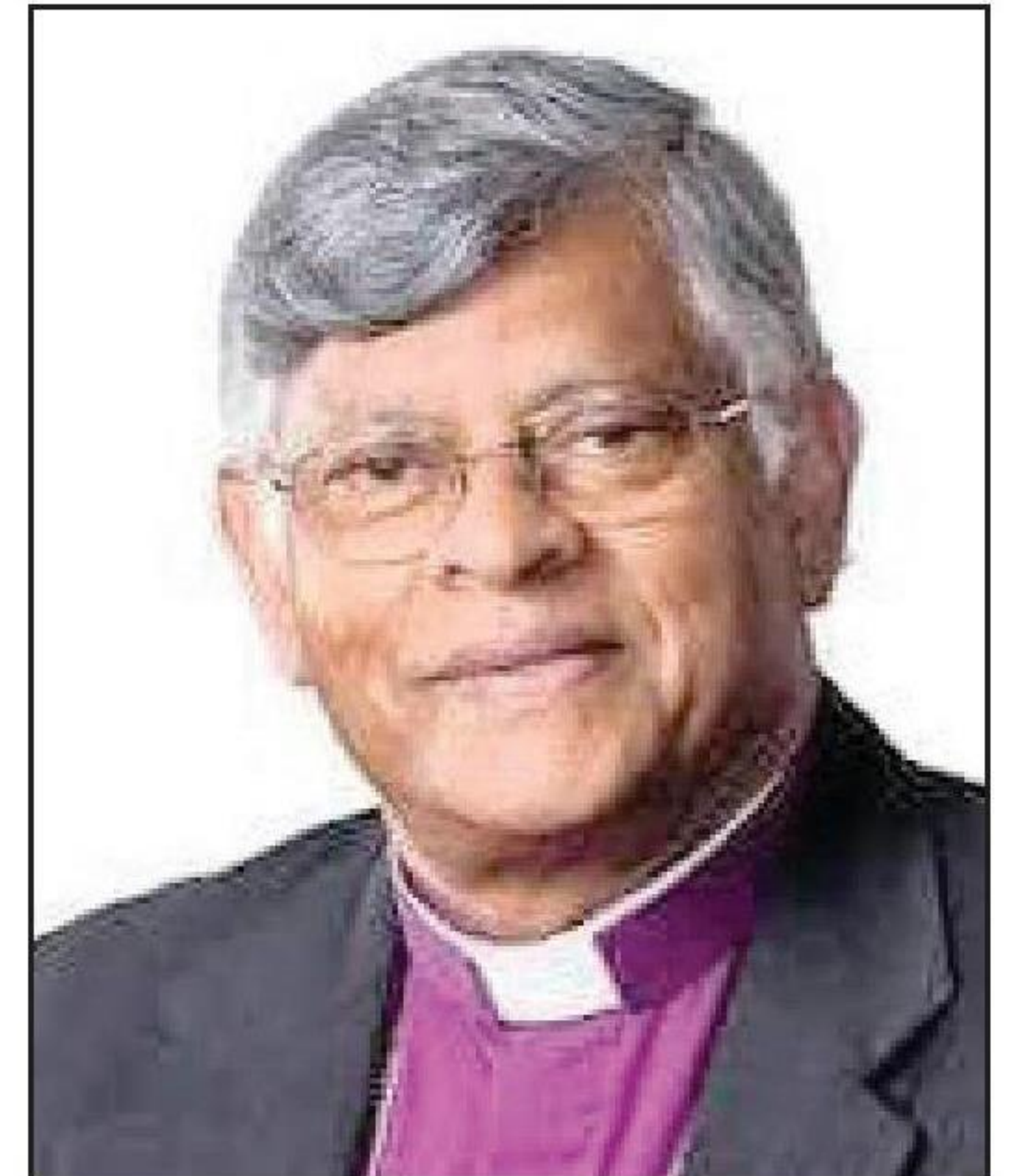


Public Works MEC Ravi Pillay convenes the meeting in Mayville.

PICTURES: THOKOZANI MBUNDA / AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY (ANA)



Acting KZN premier and MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Sihle Zikalala.



Anglican Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Natal, Rubin Phillip.

sporadic outbreaks of xenophobic attacks, the abuse of the vulnerable and general intolerance in the province.

"Today we launch a campaign that aims for a society that is non-racial, non-sexist, just democratic where people from different backgrounds will live together side by side, enjoying peace and harmony. This council is to facilitate open dialogue with civil society."

Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation MEC Bongiwe Sithole-Moloi unpacked the draft social cohesion and moral regeneration strategy, saying it focused on areas that persistently cause "disharmony in society", and referred to the land question. She said "cultures of entitlement" would also be looked at.

"The haves believe they ought to have as they are the rightful owners of what they

have and the have-nots are contesting this as they argue that what the haves have is stolen and therefore should be shared."

She said radical socio-economic transformation would also be addressed.

The launch also brought together leaders from several religious institutions, including the Islamic, Hindu, Nazareth Baptist and Christian faith.

Professor Brij Maharaj, of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, said he believed moral regeneration should be spearheaded by the religious sector.

"Moral regeneration must be led by the faith sector who I believe is not doing enough."

Maharaj recited a prayer for peace from Asian scripture.

Mayor Zandile Gumede later took the podium, saying a big

part of conflict was due to people trying to protect their economical means. She condemned the xenophobic attacks in the city and said people needed to live together in unison.

She said it was important for people to "find one another" to move towards a united nation.

Public Works MEC Ravi Pillay, who is the chairperson of the executive subcommittee on social cohesion and moral regeneration, gave a brief address on the context and background behind choosing the council. He said it was after serious debate at the social cohesion summit in KwaMashu in June that a decision was taken to put together a council.

"Advertisements were placed in the newspapers calling for people to come forward and be part of the council, which brings us to where we are today."

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A 94-MEMBER Social Cohesion and Moral Regeneration Council was launched at the Public Works Conference Centre in Mayville last week. The council is co-chaired by Bishop Rubin Phillip and KZN Premier Willies Mchunu and will seek to directly deal with marginalisation, exclusion, social ills and political intolerance. Members of the council and guests included ...

SOCIAL COHESION AND MORAL REGENERATION COUNCIL LAUNCH



Busi Ngcobo, Ela Gandhi and Babu Baijoo.



Brandon Pillay, Liza Aziz, Logie Naidoo, Shane Hansraj, Shayanka Maharaj and Stanley Moonsamy.

PICTURES: THOKOZANI MBUNDA / ANA