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Author: CLIVE NDOU

Job creation plans on track: KZN Premier Thami Ntuli

CLIVE NDOU

Despite the subdued economy, KwaZulu-Natal Premier Thami Ntuli has assured the province's citizens that the government of provincial unity (GPU)'s plans to create thousands of jobs are on track.

Delivering his State of the Province Address (Sopa) at Pietermaritzburg's Woodburn Stadium yesterday, Ntuli, among other things, cited major developments in the province's two industrial hubs of Dube Trade Port and Richards Bay Industrial Zone (RBIDZ) as proof that the GPU's job creation and economic development initiatives were beginning to bear some fruit.

"Last year, we reported R1.4 billion earmarked for construction projects in Trade Zone 2 at Dube Trade Port, the Ogihara SA manufacturing facility at Trade Zone 2 is 85% complete, with a 5 000m² warehouse 67% completed.

"It [Dube Trade Port] has successfully secured R4.6 billion in private-sector investments and created over 5 000 permanent jobs and 51



FROM LEFT: KZN Premier Thami Ntuli, Transport and Human Settlements MEC Siboniso Duma, and King Misuzulu kaZwelithini at the State of the Province Address (Sopa) at the Woodburn Stadium in Pietermaritzburg yesterday.

PHOTO: NQUBEKO MBHELE

000 indirect jobs.

"In the coming year, the Dube Trade Port's focus will be on increased investments of R500 million private sector funding and job creation with potential of 1 250 new permanent jobs and 250 temporary

jobs," he said.

On developments at RBIDZ, Ntuli said the process of expanding the area's industrial sites so that more investors could move in was at an advanced stage.

"The Nyanza Light Metals project

in the RBIDZ has commenced with site preparation towards the construction of the commercial plant. Funding secured is to the value of R116 million and site clearance is 81% complete as of January 2025.

"The construction will commence in July 2025, creating more than 3 000 construction jobs," he said.

While most of the jobs being currently created were driven by private sector investment, Ntuli said the provincial government would directly be involved in job creation through the Expanded Public Works Programme.

"KwaZulu-Natal is actively participating in the Extended Public Works Programme. Under this programme Ezemvelo is to create 9 400 employment opportunities through environment sector public employment programmes (EPWP).

"The KZN Township and Rural Economies Revitalisation Programme will benefit more than 1 000 community members adjoining Ezemvelo protected areas.

"We will create 7 725 work opportunities in environmental public

employment and waste economy programmes with a focus on youth, women, and people with disabilities," he said.

Apart from the problem of high unemployment, the province has a housing problem which has been exacerbated by the displacement of several families due to floods.

While acknowledging that the pace at which the government was delivering houses was slow, Ntuli said a lot was being done to fast-track delivery.

"In addressing the housing backlog in general, we have provided 5 540 breaking-new-ground houses, 406 sites, 261 first-home finance housing opportunities and 400 houses to vulnerable groups.

"In 2025/26 financial year we will deliver a total of 6 622 houses and distribute 2 467 title deeds," he said.

While GPU political parties such as the IFP, ANC and DA welcome Ntuli's Sopa, the MK Party and the EFF rejected the premier's speech, with the EFF saying it was out of sync with residents' expectations.

• clive.ndou@witness.co.za