



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

**AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

MEDIA STATEMENT

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PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT CEMENTS PARTNERSHIP WITH PROVINCIAL CANNABIS CAPTAINS TO EDIFY LOCAL GROWERS

Verulam, Durban - In a quest to grow the Cannabis industry in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, government has sealed a public-private partnership with Opulence Pharmaceuticals, marking a milestone that will yield exponential growth from the sector that will transform the lives of local growers.

The Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD) in collaboration with the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) will be working with the Cannabis giant on a skills and knowledge transfer programme.

Farmers will receive continuous training and essential skills on cannabis production. They will also be linked to the market and be prepared for exports.

The visit emanated from a successful inaugural Cannabis EXPO which was hosted in October by DARD in partnership with (EDTEA).

Opulence Pharmaceuticals chief executive officer, Duran Govender, said the visit to the processing plant was another manifestation of the very strong and bilateral relations in the province between government and the business sector. He pledged solidarity with the government and mutual respect for a better KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa.

“Opulence Pharmaceuticals is a leader of cannabis in our country and being a Black youth privately owned company in our province, we are excited to empower and educate our local emerging farmers with knowledge that we have gained through trial and error that has led us to perfecting this sector.

Our vision as a company and as a government, is to create sustainable jobs and to also control the entire value chain in both industrial hemp and medicinal cannabis. We must ensure that we capitalize on the fact that our province has some of the best sunlight in the world and vast amounts of land that has fertile soil for agriculture. We look forward to building a strong foundation based on job creation and empowerment of our people through cannabis and hemp,” said Govender.

MEC Siboniso Duma said he took pride in knowing that the processing plant was established by an African for Africans.



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“In the past Africans were being punished severely for cannabis and our parents could not trade. People were killed defending the sovereignty of this herb but now our people are receiving licenses and permits.”

MEC Duma it was the province’s vision to have at least 6 processing plants.

MEC Super Zuma extended his gratitude to MEC Duma for not being hesitant in forging a partnership to drive the development of the Cannabis industry.

Zuma said today’s engagement was part of a giant leap already taken by Black business to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the niche cannabis industry.

“This establishment is premised on utilization of technology to enhance the production of medicinal cannabis. This is a proud moment for the sector and the province at large, especially noting that this operation is aligned fully to the ANC government’s economic transformation agenda.

When we made a commitment to traverse this new territory, we were aware of its economic importance and its potential to grow the economy of KZN. Other sources are already predicting that the industry could be worth over R107 billion, it’s therefore an attractive investment option to help the government to clinically address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The outcome of today’s visit and engagement must be a public-private partnership anchored on providing a platform for expansion to launch other similar projects of scale. Furthermore, this is a strategic platform to establish a practical mentorship programme that will advance the interests of previously marginalized Black farmers in this industry in line with the national Master Plan which seeks to integrate small growers into formal cannabis value chains.

“We call on all other established businesses to partner with the government in the quest to accelerate inclusive growth and development of the citizens of this country and in particular, our Province ” said MEC Zuma.

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Issued jointly by the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs | MEC Siboniso Duma | Department of Agriculture and Rural Development | MEC Super Zuma