



## agriculture & rural development

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agriculture  
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**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

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### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY KZN MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, MR CYRIL XABA, AT THE HANDOVER EVENT FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF LAND CLAIMS WITHIN THE ETHEKWINI DISTRICT, ICC, DURBAN, 04 NOVEMBER 2015**

Program Director, Advocate Bheki Mbili

eThekwini Mayor, Councillor James Nxumalo

eThekwini Speaker, Councillor Logie Naidoo

Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Ms Nomfundo Ntloko-Gobodo

Land Claimants and their families

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, 21 families will receive compensation amounting to over R22 million for the loss of their land and homes. Your original homes were in different areas of Durban from Cato Manor, Chatsworth, Redhill, Pinetown, Durban Central and Phoenix across to Ifafa Beach and Harding on the South Coast. This tells a story of the massive exercise in social engineering carried out by the Apartheid Government to create racially exclusive townships and suburbs.

We continue to live with that legacy as communities remain in racially-zoned areas. Yet, before this re-zoning, there were mixed communities where the different races co-existed side by side. It is no wonder that when the Group Areas Act was introduced in the early 1950's, the ANC as a liberation movement, along with other democratic organisations, like the Natal Indian Congress fought hard to oppose this legislation. It was against this background of repressive laws being introduced that the Freedom Charter was born.

Sixty years ago, ordinary South Africans said they wanted to live in a free, non-racial country. This demand was captured in the opening lines of the Freedom Charter which said that South Africa belonged to all who live in it, both black and white. Our current Constitution reflects this vision of the Freedom Charter and says that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

Yet, sadly today we still find ourselves trapped in an apartheid mind-set, where we view different race groups through a lens of stereotypes and prejudice.

Yesterday, MECs Ravi Pillay and Willies Mchunu as members of the Province's sub-committee on social cohesion successfully won a court interdict against hate speech circulating on social media against the Indian community. The urgency with which the Provincial Government acted on this matter demonstrates our commitment to the non-racial values that are spelt out in our Constitution, the country's Bill of Rights and the Freedom Charter.

This commitment is also shown in the manner in which land claims are handled by the Land Claims Commission. All cases are investigated and as we can see this evening, compensation, is given to all deserving cases, regardless of race and ethnic origin.

I have attended many handover events organised by the Land Claims Commission and while these are joyous occasions, I am saddened by what you as families have lost.

The Oberholzer family had prime land at Ifafa Beach but this was taken away under the Group Areas Act because Ifafa beach was proclaimed for the exclusive use and occupation of the White race group. Many of you would remember how few beaches were open to other race groups. Often these were rocky areas of the coastline and where it was difficult to swim in the sea. Today the eThekweni beaches are open to all race groups.

I was struck by the loss of the Matthee family who were dispossessed of their farms in the Harding area. The family produced vegetables for nearby markets. Mr Matthee had built a clinic and a store for the local community, as the town was too far away. He had also developed a hydro-electrical scheme which provided free electricity for the farms, store and clinic. Here was an enterprising farmer who had his livelihood taken away. I hope that there are younger members of the Matthee family who will choose to return to the family tradition of farming.

Similarly, the Reddy, Khan, Ramlall and Naicker families lost their land in Chatsworth. It is ironic that valuable farmland in Chatsworth was lost and replaced by the development of a township. In April there was a similar land claims hand-out event held at the eThekweni City Hall. I told the gathering that Chatsworth was once the home of 600 farmers and it was the area where the famous Cavendish bananas had its origins.

I am happy to see that Cato Manor land claims continue to be settled. To the Nzaba, Buthelezi, Mkhize, Mbili, Sibisi and Simelane families – well done on the successful lodgement of your claims. Cato Manor is another shameful chapter in the history of land dispossession in our Province. It was also an area of conflict between Africans and Indians. However, historians have confirmed that this conflict had its roots in the divide and rule tactics of the apartheid government. The present democratic government has taken a firm stand against racially-incited violence and is committed to building unity.

This was why MECs Pillay and Mchunu acted swiftly in legally stopping Mazibuye African Forum member, Mr Phumlani Mfeka from spreading hate speech and inciting violence.

To all the families that are receiving compensation today, thank you for pursuing your claims and thank you for your patience. Please understand that the verification process is complex and the Commission has to do extensive research to check the authenticity of claims. Your patience has been rewarded and this is why we are holding this celebratory event today. Government has made good on its promise to compensate you for the loss you and your families suffered as a result of discriminatory legislation.

Next week on 09 November 2015, Durban will commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of its great citizen, the late Archbishop Dennis Hurley. Archbishop Hurley fought for non-racialism and denounced apartheid as "blasphemy" and "intrinsically evil". He spoke out against the Group Areas Act and forced removals, which he described as, and I quote, "an enormous act of piracy".

This evening is also a celebration that we have overcome this, "enormous act of piracy." Let us be mindful of our hard-won freedom and play our own small parts in nurturing tolerance and better race relations. We can do this in our neighbourhoods, in our places of worship and in our workplaces. Let us all work harder at building our unity in diversity and show the rest of South Africa that eThekweni is truly a cultural melting pot.

I thank you!



From left: National Land Claims Commissioner Ms Nomfundo Nhloko Gobodo, KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba and Mr Mlungisi Ndhela (a land claimant from Cato Manor, Ethekewini) Municipality Speaker Clrr Loggie Naidoo and KZN Agriculture and Rural Development Head of Department Dr Sipiwe Mkhize during the official hand over of financial compensation to Land



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba together with National Land Claims Commissioner Ms Nomfundo Nhloko Gobodo and Ethekwini Municipality Speaker Clrr Loggie Naidoo handing over of financial compensation vouchers to Mr Ramdaw Ramlalall



National Land Claims Commissioner Ms Nomfundo Nhloko Gobodo, KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba, Ethekwini Municipality Speaker Clrr Loggie Naidoo and KZN Agriculture and Rural Development Head of Department Dr Sipiwe Mkhize congratulating the land claimants