



INTERNET ARTICLE

President Zuma hosts first Imbizo after the elections

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An estimated 15 000 crowd descended at Indumiso College of Education in Mbali township outside Pietermaritzburg recently to listen to President Jacob Zuma at his first Imbizo after the general elections earlier this year. The event was also attended by 10 Cabinet Ministers and four Deputy Ministers, KwaZulu-Natal Premier and his MECs and Mayors.

Among the Ministers were Jeff Hadebe, Minister in the Presidency; Nomvula Mokonyane of Water and Sanitation; Tina Joemat-Peterson of Energy; Lindiwe Sisulu of Human Settlement; Angie Motshekga of Basic Education; Blade Nzimande of Higher education; Malusi Gigaba of Home Affairs; Bathabile Dlamini of Social Development; Nkosinathi Nhleko of Police; David Mahlobo of State Security; Faith Muthambi of Communications and Susan Shabangu of Women in the Presidency.

The event was preceded by walkabouts and visits to certain houses by the President, Premier Senzo Mchunu and the Ministers to assess the nature of problems per house and the possible solution thereof.

The Imbizo was one of the biggest events in Natal Midlands with guests coming as far as Bergville in the Giants Castle and Jozini in Umkhanyakude District.

However, it was a different gathering of its kind with the President preferring to listen to the problems that were expressed by the communities and letting the politicians respond to them. The problems that were raised ranged from serious socio-economic challenges such as crime, poor sanitation and non-performing Councillors to the elite ones such as the awarding of tenders to the connected.

Ntombikayise Biyela complained about a single parent after she was impregnated by a man who later deserted her and the child. Social workers in Msunduzi were delaying in recommending a grant for her to the Department of Social Service because the father of the child might come back. Busisiwe Ngwenya from France Village lost a twin daughter last year after the mud wall of the house fell on top of her during the rainy season. She blamed the local Council for her woes because it didn't build decent houses for the community. The streets in her village are flooded with raw sewage from burst pipes. Some families still used the bucket system which was causing all sorts of woes for the locals.

A woman who claimed to have been a displaced victim of the political violence of the 1990s said she slept in the streets after being kicked out by her relatives from the houses. Her plight resulted in her son becoming mentally disturbed. She had nowhere to complain because she didn't know who the Councillor of her ward was.

A woman from Mshwathi Village complained about her house that was built on a water pipe and consequently the walls had cracked. The cracks were so big that passersby at night peeped through them to observe what the family was doing. It was a miracle that they have not been robbed because they are exposed. Her repeated complaints to the local Council have fallen on deaf ears.

Responding to issues that were related to her department, Ms Nomvula Mokonyane said the department was working closely with Umgeni Water to address the scarcity of water in



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Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas to address the problems of water. She said after discussions with Umgeni and officials in her department she has decided that the residents of Mafunze Village will have taps installed in their yards at a cost of R900 per household. However, indigent families will not be made to pay for the installation. Meanwhile, water tankers will continue supplying water in the area until the new financial year in April 2015.

The MEC for Human Settlement, Mr Ravi Pillay, said Umgungundlovu District Municipality had invested R350 million for development. A total of 25 000 new houses will be built in Msunduzi and 900 000 others will be built in Vulindlela in the next five years.

President Zuma assured the community that the national government, working together with provincial and local governments will, without delay, address all the challenges facing the community and will ensure that he receives a progress report as government was taking such challenges as matter of serious concern.

“We have noted all the concerns raised by the community and as government we are happy that the community came out to present their sufferings to the leaders that they elected,” he said.

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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