

Architects called to help KZN Govt with NDP

PRETORIA: KwaZulu-Natal Premier Senzo Mchunu has called on architects and stakeholders in the architectural fraternity to work with the provincial government to realise the objectives of the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP).



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Premier Mchunu explained that the PGDP, which is aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP), puts more emphasis on investments in strategic infrastructure in order to drive socio-economic development.

He was speaking, on Monday, at the opening of the 25th International Union of Architects World Congress (IUA).

The Premier emphasised that the provincial government was fully aware that the successful implementation of the plan was dependent on collaboration with the private sector and other stakeholders such as architects.

"One of the fundamental approaches of the PGDP is to ensure that development takes place in a way that empowers people and communities and enables them to take control of their own development.

"We believe that this must be taken forward through a concrete set of partnerships around local projects, in which local authorities, the private sector, the community and organised labour have a role to play," Premier Mchunu explained.

He called upon architects to assist with innovative ideas on how to ensure that government moves with speed in implementing the programme of the eradication of slums and informal settlements in the province.

"As architects, you must realize that you have an important role to play in terms of guiding the infrastructure development to accommodate the ever increasing population growth and urbanisation."

The UIA, which is a non-governmental organisation accredited by the United Nations, represents professional associations of architects in 124 countries and approximately 1.3 million architects worldwide.

The five-day Congress, which started on 3 August 2014, is held under the theme "Architecture Otherwhere", and the intention is to acknowledge the built environment as a major force that can be harnessed towards a better life for all.

The Premier noted that the Congress comes at a particularly significant opportunity when the province is steaming ahead with the implementation of the PGDP, which among other things, seeks to position the province as a gateway to South Africa and the entire Southern African region.

He also added that the IUA is a platform on which synergies between the economies of different countries should be built and strengthened through the promotion of partnerships and identification of opportunities for investments.

"I view this congress as a strategic platform through which we must promote trade amongst our countries. As KwaZulu-Natal, we are always on the lookout for trading partners because we know that we cannot prosper in isolation. Therefore I want to state unequivocally that we believe that our long-term success lies in economic integration with economies of the world.

"For instance, the private sector has significant capacity in the field of project management and infrastructure maintenance - there are new ways of delivering and managing infrastructure more effectively based on international best practice," the Premier noted.

The Provincial Government is working with local authorities and government parastatals to find new ways of organising projects, so that the private sector can have a role in the different stages of planning, implementation, financing and management.

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