

## PRESS RELEASE

*Joint statement for immediate release*  
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### **KZNCC AND DDP COLLABORATE TO RELAUNCH THE KZN DEMOCRACY ELECTION FORUM (DEF)**



**W**ith just under a week till the much anticipated Address & Registration Weekend on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018. The KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council (KZNCC) has collaborated with the Democracy Development Program (DDP) to relaunch the KwaZulu Natal Democracy Education Forum (KZNDEF)

The forum consists of 20 Faith Based Organisations, Civil Society organisations and Social Movements

On Thursday, the KZNDEF concluded a one day relaunching meeting in Durban at Glenridge Church. The meeting brought together high profile Civil society organizations, media institutions, Community Based Organizations, academic institutions and donor entities that work on democracy deepening, violence monitoring, protection of human rights, upholding the rule of law and promoting good governance through the twin principles of transparency and accountability.

#### **Plans for the initiative:**

- **Political Violence**

There is a continuous concern over the current politically motivated violence and intolerance. We have noted with serious concern the incidents of killings, particularly where political figures are victims or where the killings are being linked to tenders, delivery of services and contest for positions. Participants confirmed that a situation like this cannot be allowed to continue in the context of democracy. It is then against this backdrop that civil society took a stand to intervene by means of implementing various initiatives aimed to monitor and report the violence, roll out

peace building initiatives, rollout training on conflict resolution skills focussing on youth & women and mobilising the faith sector to offer stress and drama care and counselling for affected people. Therefore, KZNDEF was initiated to re-ignite and focus its Election Observation Mission to promote free, fair and credible elections as a means of supporting processes in the Province.

- **Plans of capacity building on mediation and conflict resolution:**

The consortium plans to conduct training of peace monitors, mediators, observers and also deploy with eminent persons to resolve conflict in hot spot areas as requested.

- **Concerns over voter apathy:**

It was noted that a higher percentage of people between the ages of 18-35 years have not registered for voting. In partnership with IEC, churches and other civil society organisations will be conducting the Address harvesting and Registration Weekend on the 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

Discussions were also about the plan to collaborate with the Department of Home Affairs on the issues related to Identity documents.

Furthermore, the KZNDEF have been involved in:

- Mobilizing communities to encourage citizens to get bar-coded identity documents;
- Urging the registered voters to inspect the voters' roll to ensure its correctness;
- Urging all citizens who qualify, to register to vote.
- Ensuring that the people of KwaZulu-Natal understand democratic and electoral principles before they go to the polls to cast their votes.

- **Plans for democracy & peace building workshops:**

KZNCC and IEC are currently conducting workshops where to date we have trained four (4) municipalities under Msunduzi Local Municipality.

- **Plans for election observation:**

More than 10 000 observers will be recruited, trained and deployed to all polling stations to monitor and observe elections.

### **Who is involved in this initiative?**

It was endorsed that DDP and KZNCC will be the secretariat in the project alongside the following:

1. Faith sector
2. Civil Society organisations
3. Social movements

### **Where does the initiative take place?**

Throughout the entire KZN province including the former hotspot areas i.e. hostels, farms, rural areas and urban areas.

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