

# KwaZulu-Natal's new Premier's Co-ordinating Forum

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On 19 April 2005 a new intergovernmental forum was launched for the provincial government and municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal. The forum, called the Premier's Co-ordinating Forum (PCF), reflects the structure and spirit of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Bill of 2005 currently before Parliament. The signing of the Protocol at the Durban International Convention Centre made good the initiative of the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Sbu Ndebele, first announced in his first State of the Province address in 2004.

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## Objects of the PCF

The Protocol sets out the following objects of the PCF:

- to promote and facilitate intergovernmental relations and co-operative government between the Province and the municipalities in the province;
- to seek unity of purpose and co-ordination of effort around the development priorities of the province; and
- to ensure effective and efficient service

delivery that is not hampered by jurisdictional boundaries.

## Composition of the PCF

The Forum consists of:

- the Premier;
- the ten members of the Executive Council of the Province;
- the mayors of the ten district municipalities;
- the mayor of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality; and
- the chairperson of KwaNaloga.

The parties decided in February that the entire Executive Council of the province should be included in the PCF in order to facilitate co-ordination among the provincial departments.

## Functions of the PCF

The functions of the Forum are, among others:

- to discuss matters arising from the President's Co-ordinating Council and the application of national laws and policies in municipalities;
- to consult on the development of provincial policy and legislation and the implementation of such policy and legislation; and
- to consider reports from provincial inter-governmental forums created for specific sectors and from district intergovernmental forums.

## Functioning of the PCF

The Protocol requires that the PCF meets at least four times per year under the chairpersonship of the Premier. The Protocol further provides that any decision of the PCF must be taken by resolution of the majority of the members present, with a quorum being the majority of its members.

## Resolutions and their implementation

To make the PCF an effective structure the following procedures were adopted with regard to the adoption of resolutions and their implementation: Members must have an appropriate mandate from their respective executive authorities to deal with the matters on

## key points

- The Premier's Co-ordinating Forum of KwaZulu/Natal was established on 19 April 2005.
- It follows the requirements of the IGR Framework Bill of 2005.
- It consists of the Premier, the Provincial Executive Committee, the mayors of the ten district municipalities, the mayor of eThekweni Metropolitan Council and the chairperson of KwaNaloga.
- The KZN PCF sets an example to other provinces for the implementation of IGR Framework Bill.

the agenda. After a resolution has been taken, members must seek its ratification by their respective executive authorities within a reasonable time. The executive authorities must notify the PCF of their ratification. Similarly, when an executive authority does not ratify a resolution it must inform the PCF, with reasons for its decision. When an executive authority ratifies a resolution or recommendation, it must take all necessary measures within its jurisdiction to implement the resolution. When an executive authority deviates from or repeals a resolution that it has previously ratified, it must notify the PCF within a reasonable time. When a member of the PCF believes that another member is acting in a manner that is inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Protocol, or is not complying with a resolution of the PCF that it has ratified, such a member must notify the PCF. The PCF must seek to resolve the issue at the first available meeting.

## Premier's Technical Co-ordinating Committee

The Protocol also established a technical support structure in the form of the Premier's Technical Co-ordinating Committee, the function of which

is to provide technical support for the PCF and implement decisions.

The Committee consists of:

- the Director-General of the Provincial Administration;
- the heads of the provincial departments;
- the municipal managers of the district municipalities and eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality; and
- the Chief Executive Officer of KwaNaloga.

## Comment

KwaZulu-Natal must be congratulated on the establishment of the PCF. It was one of two provinces that did not have an overarching intergovernmental relations (IGR) structure that brought the political leadership of the province and local government together. Learning from the experience of other provinces and following the spirit of the IGR Framework Bill, KwaZulu-Natal has managed to establish a streamlined and robust structure where the executives of the province and the district and metropolitan municipalities can meet to map the way towards development in the province. In aligning the PCF to the IGR Framework Bill, the practice in KwaZulu-Natal will be instructive to other provinces when it comes to their implementation of the IGR Framework Bill (which should soon become law).

The establishment of an IGR forum is only the first step in implementing co-operative government. The real task for the PCF is to grapple with the key development issues facing the province. Particular attention should thus be given to ensuring that these issues appear on the agenda. Further, the executive of the provincial government and local government must ensure that the PCF is an opportunity to work towards development and that it does not lapse into a talk shop.

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