

## **Politicians fail yet again to listen to their constituents - EC Premier rides roughshod over Pondoland wishes.**

16 July 2013

A visit by the Premier of the Eastern Cape, the Honorable Mrs N. Kivit and her MEC for Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, Zoleka Capa to Xolobeni in north-east Pondoland was the subject of extreme criticism by Wild Coast communities for creating divisions and sowing discord amongst them. Community members angrily accused the high level delegation of showing favouritism towards people supporting mining and similar 'top-down', externally imposed massive infrastructure projects such as the N2 Toll Road, and yet again ignoring the oft-expressed local needs and perspectives.

The arrival of the high level political delegation at the EXCO Outreach meeting at Xolobeni on Thursday 12 July included a mechanical saw and tractor being donated to a pro-mining group. The local Traditional Authority through whom the meeting had been brokered, said neither they nor the ward councillor had any prior knowledge of the donation of machinery. They first became aware of it during the speech of MEC Capa as the tractor began ploughing. Machinery and textiles for a sewing project were also donated to the pro-mining group while the rest of the community watched. The Amadiba Crisis Committee (ACC), a local elected organisation to represent local interests in proposed developments, saw these as attempts to divide the community and lure people to support mining.

In her speech at the end of the meeting the Premier angrily threatened the community that they 'would have no development, because they are against development'. Yet it was clear that the people are pro-development as a memorandum handed to the political delegation outlining development needs made this abundantly clear. It is however a different kind of development to that which government is trying to impose on them, namely the right development for local needs. The Premier deflected the issue, accusing 'the people behind the resistance' of manipulating local ambitions.

"Does no-one understand that we have own dreams of local empowerment and development and this does not include mining? Did the Premier hear what the community DO want? We hope the Premier will keep her word and do what she promised and provide services that the community has agreed on. These are the fixing of local roads, building of clinics, schools and developments of eco-tourism" said Mzamo Dlamini, spokesperson for the ACC.

Issued by the Amadiba Crisis Committee.

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