

KZN, Kenya partner to develop co-operative college

By [Gabi Khumalo](#)

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NAIROBI: The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government has partnered with the Co-operative College of Kenya to develop a training programme, which will culminate in the establishment of a provincial co-operative college.

Speaking on Tuesday during a visit in Kenya, Premier Sibusiso Ndebele said co-operatives had been identified as a significant driver of development in the second economy.

"The role of co-operatives in reducing poverty and creating employment is extremely significant, the success of the co-operative movement that we saw in Kenya is amazing, unbelievable and highly impressive," Premier Ndebele said.

He said although South Africa had achieved political freedom, the real task was to now achieve economic freedom and to ensure that the majority of people participate meaningfully in the mainstream economy.

"The Kenyan experience of co-operatives is a clear indication of how co-operatives can contribute to real broad-based black economic empowerment and our people must move from being contributors and consumers to being involved in management, ownership and control of the economy," he said.

He added that the 2010 FIFA World Cup was upon the country and the entire African continent must benefit.

"We must ensure the normalisation of our continent and ensure that peace is irreversible, we need to close the chapter on conflict and open a new chapter on reconciliation and development, the co-operative movement should be used as an instrument for unity and development," said the premier.

The co-operative movement in Kenya makes tremendous contributions towards wealth and employment creation.

Over 63% of the Kenyan population depend on co-operative related activities for their livelihood with a membership of over seven million in 12 000 registered co-operative societies, the co-operative movement has mobilised over R180 billion in savings.

It contributes about 45% of Gross Domestic Product and 31% of the national savings.

Ndebele said the co-operative movement is present in every sector of the economy and plays a vital role, adding that savings and credit co-operative societies play a pivotal role in the financial services sub-sector in the country and have mobilised resources to the tune of R170 billion for the benefit of their members.

In turn, the members have invested the funds in small and micro enterprises that contribute significantly to the socio-economic growth of the country, generating employment and enhancing social integration, he said.

Areas of involvement include produce marketing, farm input supply, resource mobilisation, financial services, value addition and investment, housing and transport.

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