

MEDIA STATEMENT

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MEC ZONDI LEADS SUCCESSFUL KZN COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT INDABA

The MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Rev. Musa Zondi, led a highly successful inaugural KwaZulu-Natal Compliance and Enforcement Indaba, held at the Elangeni Hotel in Durban on 28 October 2025.

The Indaba brought together a broad spectrum of stakeholders - including representatives from all three spheres of government, law enforcement, regulatory bodies, the National Prosecuting Authority, the South African Police Service as well as the South African Revenue Service - with the aim of strengthening collaboration to promote fair and ethical business practices across KwaZulu-Natal.

In his keynote address, MEC Zondi emphasised that compliance was not merely a bureaucratic requirement, but a strategic enabler of inclusive growth, job creation and socio-economic transformation.

“Compliance touches every one of us. We must collectively target the sources of illicit trade and manufacturing to cut off supply chains that threaten our economy and safety,” he said.

He further noted that the overall compliance rate for businesses inspected in the first quarter of the 2025/2026 financial year had improved to 28%, up from 19% in the previous quarter. This reflected progress driven by ongoing inspections and compliance awareness programmes.

MEC Zondi also reaffirmed government’s commitment to responsible economic development and urged municipalities to intensify inspections, particularly within high-risk sectors such as FMCG (spaza shops, liquor outlets, supermarkets, and wholesalers), tourism and hospitality, clothing and textile, trucking, retail motor, and gaming and betting

The MEC cautioned the public against the consumption of illicit and counterfeit food and liquor products, warning that these pose serious health risks and could be life-threatening.

Key Resolutions Adopted at the Indaba

Following extensive deliberations, the Indaba adopted six key resolutions aimed at strengthening enforcement, improving collaboration and promoting ethical business practices across the province:

1. **Dedicated Business Licensing and Enforcement Units:** Municipalities will establish specialised units responsible for processing business licences and permits, conducting regular inspections as well as amplifying processes to reduce red tape and accelerate approvals. Municipal Integrated Compliance and Regulatory Forums (MICOREs) will be formed to coordinate joint inspections and monitor compliance trends.

2. **Enhanced Collaboration Among Law Enforcement Agencies:** Stakeholders resolved to intensify joint operations to combat illicit and illegal trade, strengthen prosecution efforts and improve training for enforcement officers. The Department of Home Affairs will increase human resource capacity for immigration inspections, and the implementation of Gazette No. 37837 (15 July 2014) on undesirable businesses by foreign nationals will be reinforced.

3. **Improved Oversight of Food Handling Businesses:** Municipalities will lobby for the employment of more Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs) and ensure consistent enforcement of food safety standards. Harmonisation of overlapping legislation will be prioritised to ensure uniform application of compliance regulations.

4. **Accessibility of Quality Standards and Certification:** EDTEA will conclude an MoU with the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) to make certification services more accessible to KZN businesses. Collaboration with provincial entities will ensure alignment with SABS standards to enhance product quality and consumer safety.

5. **Stronger Customs Enforcement:** SARS Customs will increase visibility and joint inspections at ports of entry, especially container inspections, to curb the influx of counterfeit and illicit goods. Public education/awareness campaigns will also be intensified to reduce consumer demand for illegal products.

6. **Simplified Land Use and Licensing in Township and Rural Areas:** Municipalities will establish collaborative business licensing committees to address structural bottlenecks and create a more conducive environment for land use and development, especially in rural and township economies.

MEC Zondi welcomed the resolutions, describing them as “a blueprint for a more compliant, fair, ethical and inclusive provincial economy.”

“This Indaba marks a turning point in how we approach compliance and enforcement in KwaZulu-Natal. The resolutions taken today will help us protect consumers, level the playing field for legitimate businesses, and uphold the values of transparency and accountability that define this administration,” said MEC Zondi.

The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, will convene a follow-up session in early 2026 to assess progress on the resolutions and to review the implementation of the KwaZulu-Natal Business Bill, which seeks to modernise the licensing framework and strengthen enforcement mechanisms across the province.

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