



KWAZULU NATAL DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS FORUM

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KwaZulu Natal Democracy and Voter Education Forum

The KwaZulu Natal Democracy and Election forum was initiated in 1998 and represents an attempt by civil society organisations in KwaZulu Natal to work together in a spirit of sharing and learning in order to inform and educate citizens about democracy and constitutional rights. It is currently made up of 33 organisations involved in work related to elections and democracy in the KwaZulu Natal province.

The forum members are non-partisan Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and individuals committed to peace, democracy and development. Over the past years, these organisations and individuals have demonstrated commitment to peacemaking and peace building for a better democratic South Africa.

For the upcoming National and Provincial Elections in 2009 the Democracy Development Programme has been elected as the lead organisation of the consortium.

This forum is the only functional one of its kind in South Africa and has set the trend for other provincial initiatives. The Forum works closely with other stakeholders including the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the South African Coalition of Election Observers (SACSEC)

The programmes consist of interventions during the April 2009 national government elections through 5 strategic initiatives, namely,

- Violence monitoring
- Election observation
- Mediation
- Voter and democracy education
- Litigation and code of conduct.

The planned initiatives seek to address problems relating to the 2009 national government elections, as voter apathy, political intolerance, electoral irregularities, political violence and political and electoral conflict continue to plague the province.

Over the years KwaZulu Natal has developed a reputation as being a Province characterised by violence, intimidation and political intolerance. This state of continued tension, particularly between the two major parties (the IFP and ANC) has been steadily escalating and it is expected that it would increase even further during the build-up to these elections with the birth of COPE. The KZNDEF continues to play an important part in the consolidation of democratic practice in the Province.