



**MEDIA STATEMENT BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,  
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE ROAD  
ACCIDENT REPORT MEDIA BRIEFING HELD AT ORDINANCE ROAD (SAPS  
HEADQUARTERS) IN DURBAN ON 04 MARCH 2008**

Ladies and Gentlemen of the media it is with great sadness coupled with shock that I once again stand before you to give an update on accident reports. Statistics don't die but people do, yesterday our province was covered by a dark cloud of horrific accidents that left 31 people dead and some seriously injured. It is indeed a shocking reality that in less than three hours thirty one people lost their lives due to car accidents in KwaZulu-Natal alone. It is also sad that we continue to count loss of human lives in numbers, because of reckless and negligent driving that could have been avoided if people could **"Just do Right"** on the road.

Valuable lives were lost yesterday in three gruesome accidents in our province. I received a call to alert me of an accident that had just occurred at Shongweni near the Marianhill toll plaza. Preliminary reports revealed that the driver of the bakkie which was traveling on the N3 North bound carrying workers from Rainbow Chickens to work, lost control of the bakkie and ended up facing on coming traffic on the N3 South bound which resulted in a head-on collision with

two other cars which were traveling on the opposite direction. Upon impact 10 people were killed and two died later in hospital.

Whilst one was still in shock and traumatized about seeing dead bodies lying on the road another call came through from Mtubatuba, that a Ford Ikon carrying 6 teachers and a ten year old pupil from the same school was involved in a crash that left two of the teachers and a pupil occupant dead. Whilst we were still trying to reconcile all of these horrific incidents, another call came through to inform us of an accident that has just occurred in Dundee leaving 15 people dead. In all three accidents human error seems to be the major contributing factor that could have been avoided if people could be 100% compliant and Just do Right on the road.

Difficult as it is for one to mentally digest yesterday's accidents, the mandate imposed on government to ensure that the province's roads are safe still stands. That could only mean that we embark vigorously on our road safety campaigns and we also become very tight on our enforcement efforts to ensure 100% compliance. I always relate my message to a carrot and a stick scenario and indications are that we now need to stop feeding the carrot and start using the stick because some people don't want to listen and they apply idiotic behavior on our roads which results in incidences like yesterday's.

It was somewhat encouraging and consoling to have the Premier of the Province Mr. Sbu Ndebele as well as the MEC for Health in our province Ms. Peggy Nkonyeni accompanying me to the accidents scenes which left us in serious shock. The Premier of the province has declared Thursday (06/03/08) a day of mourning to commemorate the lives of those who lost their lives on the roads due to vehicle accidents. The day will also accommodate prayer sessions to ask for divine intervention on the dark cloud that has fallen on our beloved province.

Much as I believe that divine intervention from GOD is needed, I also believe that people must work on the behavioral patterns on the roads. Tolerance and 100 % compliance should be the order of each day on the roads. I believe it would be pointless to ask GOD to protect us on the roads whereas our attitudes and behavior remains hostile and negative with no tolerance for each other.

Ladies and gentlemen the department has started with its preparations for the Easter Holidays and it is on that score that we will maximize our law enforcement strategies in order to reduce the rate of fatalities and crashes on are roads. Road Safety promotion will also be maximized particularly to faith based organization as the Easter period poses a huge challenge to all of us.

It is time for us all to change and start living responsibly. Let us all unite in ensuring that our roads are safe at all times and also ensure that yesterday does not repeat itself.

**I thank you.**