

**EXECUTIVE STATEMENT ON RECENT FATAL ACCIDENTS IN THE PROVINCE OF  
KWAZULU NATAL  
PRESENTED TO THE KZN LEGISLATURE  
BY  
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KWAZULU NATAL**

**Tuesday, 17 September 2013**

- Madam Speaker;
- Acting Premier, Mr. Senzo Mchunu;
- Honourable Members,

Madam Speaker, please allow me to table the executive statement on the recent spate of accidents in the province in terms of Rule 100 of the Standing Rules of the KwaZulu Natal Legislature.

In the recent months, our province has experienced a disturbing increase in road accidents which have resulted in many fatalities and injuries. The two most recent crashes in our minds are:

- The R66/ R34 Nkwalini accident that claimed 10 lives – including eight maidens and two minders - who had attended Umkhosi WoMhlanga in Nongoma. This accident occurred on Sunday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2013.
- The other, horrific accident was of course the Pinetown/ M13 accident, which claimed the lives of 23 people. This accident took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2013.

**Collective responsibility**

Madam Speaker, I wish to state that the recent accidents happened as we were starting to consolidate the gains we have made in the past four years owing to the effective implementation of road safety programmes.

In the last three years, we experienced a marked decrease in road fatalities of at least 33.6 percent. This improvement is a solid basis upon which we have been building our progress towards achieving a 50 percent decrease in roads crashes and fatalities by 2020, as per the United Nations “Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020”.

Having noted the progress, the recent accidents show that we need to do more to ensure road safety as Government, working in partnership with all stakeholders in our society.

When we look at all these accidents, it is very clear that the common causes include the following:

1. Human error which can be attributed to drivers, owners of vehicles as well as other road users;
2. Unroadworthy vehicles;
3. Excessive speeding;
4. Drinking and driving; and
5. The general disregard of the road traffic rules and regulations.

#### **May to August Comparative Statistics for 2012 versus 2013**

2012			2013			VARIANCES	
2012	CRASHES	FATALITIES	2013	CRASHES	FATALITIES	VARIANCE ON CRASHES	VARIANCE ON FATALITIES
May-12	135	150	May-13	117	136	-18	-14
Jun-12	153	168	Jun-13	183	213	+30	+45
Jul-12	164	176	Jul-13	162	181	-02	+05
Aug-12	126	145	Aug-13	138	157	+12	+12

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members; This moment calls upon all responsible citizens of KwaZulu Natal – and South Africa at large – irrespective of political affiliation, to stand together and jointly search for lasting solutions.

We need all hands on deck to:

- Change the mindset of all road users – including drivers of light and heavy vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. We urge drivers to always act responsibly, by strictly adhering to the rules of the road. We call on pedestrians and passengers to remain vigilant at all times and be active citizens for the safety of all.
- Ensure that owners of vehicles – both business and private - properly maintain, service and ascertain roadworthiness of their vehicles.
- At all times, collectively condemn errant behaviour on our roads.

#### **On M13 Specifically**

Madam Speaker; let me address the house on the question of M13 specifically. The KwaZulu Natal Department of Transport has invested more than R80 million in the last two years upgrading the M13 road.

The department has instituted plans to address the challenges of M13. I have reported these plans to Cabinet. I have also indicated to Cabinet that I have since become aware of concerns that have been raised by various stakeholders with the Department of Transport on the use by trucks of Fields Hill (M13) including a desire for the banning of trucks on this road.

I have requested Cabinet to allow me to engage with all relevant role players and stakeholders on this matter. After this engagement, I will table a comprehensive report on my findings to both Cabinet and the Legislature for debate.

Madam Speaker; let me also indicate that as part of Strategic Initiative Project (SIP) 2, which is the Durban-Gauteng Corridor, and SIP 1, which includes the Richardsbay Corridor, we are currently busy with the feasibility studies to improve freight movement. EThekweni is also developing its own freight strategy. All these will in the long term improve the movement of freight in the province.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion Madam Speaker; I have noted the murder charge pressed against the driver of the truck by the National Prosecuting Authority, which carries 23 counts of murder.

The charge itself promises to address our usual call for harsher and punitive measures against road traffic rules offenders.

I hope we will not see the reversal of this approach as experienced in the Western Cape judgment on a case of a similar nature.

I also note with concern the actions of some sections of society of sympathising with the driver and thus sending the undesirable message of condoning the killing of 23 innocent lives. I therefore urge this house not to fall into the trap of encouraging errant driving behaviour on our roads with consequences of an increase in road fatalities.

Finally, let us all as stakeholders including the Government, the media, political parties and active participants in the transport industry as well the public at large, play our part to end road carnages. It is our collective responsibility.

**I thank you!**