MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO: ALL MEDIA
DATE: 19 March 2015
ATTENTION: Editors, News Editors & PR Wires

MEC MCHUNU CONCERNED ABOUT ACCIDENTS INVOLVING LEARNERS

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu, has learnt with sadness of a bakkie accident involving 20 school children, on 18 March 2015 in Port Shepstone.

Preliminary reports revealed that 20 school children were travelling at the back of an open bakkie when this accident happened. Two were critically injured and 18 sustained minor injuries. It is alleged that the driver of the bakkie who is said to be elderly, failed to stop at an intersection due to an undisclosed illness and rammed into a big stone, leading to children's heads bumping into each other.

Mchunu noted with concern the increasing number of children who are transported by bakkies and end up in accidents.

"We are deeply saddened that children continue to get hurt while they travel to and from school in unsafe modes of transport. Just last week we received reports that two children from Ladysmith died on their way to school. We have been advocating for "Omalume" to refrain from using bakkies to carry school children because they are not certified to carry school children. We are looking into amending the regulations to possibly phase out or make it illegal for bakkies or any unauthorised vehicles to transport passengers because it is not a safe mode of transport. This is a national issue, which is also driven by the national department to come up with legislation which will avert such accidents. We wish all the injured learners a speedy recovery and plead with parents to find safe alternative means to ferry their children to school," said Mchunu.

Ends.

Media contacts:
Kwanele Ncalane: 072- 803 1462/ 079- 699 5755/ Kwanele.Ncalane@kzntransport.gov.za
Nathi Sukazi 081 018 0518/ Nathi.Sukazi@kzntransport.gov.za
Website: www.kzntransport.gov.za
Twitter: @KZNTransport
Facebook: www.facebook.com/kzntransport