



SPEECH (NOTES) BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY & LIAISON, MR. B.H. CELE AT THE SOD TURNING CEREMONY AT NGUDWINI HELD ON TUESDAY, 11TH OCTOBER 2005.

All Protocol Observed.

- In order to accelerate progress towards government's goal of poverty alleviation and economic growth, the provision of a balanced road network is of paramount importance.
- Hence, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport has adopted an infrastructure programme that will meet both the basic needs of the citizens of our province, as well as open up previously suppressed economies and human potential in urban and rural areas so as to increase output in all sectors of the economy.
- This infrastructure programme entails building proper bridges and roads that will provide all-weather access, especially to economic, social and cultural services.
- Nation building is linked to reconstruction and development and involves providing access to modern and effective services, not only in urban areas but also in our rural and previously disadvantaged communities as well.

- In turning the sod today, we mark the commencement of the upgrading of Main Roads 218 and 710, through which we will be providing this local community with an all weather link onto the existing surfaced Main Road 50 in the north and to Sundumbili in the south.
- The upgrading of these roads will assist in the abstraction of timber and sugar cane produced by the local farmers in the area to the timber and sugar mills located on the coast.
- The Bongolwana Hospital is located close to the intersection of Main Roads 218 and 710 and the upgrading of these roads will therefore provide much improved access to this medical facility.
- Numerous schools are also situated along the length of this road and will benefit from the improved access.
- The existing road is over topped at a number of steam crossings during heavy rain. These structures are to be upgraded to provide all weather access under normal storm conditions.
- The upgrading of these roads will therefore provide much-needed access to amongst others, the following:
 - The Bongolwana Hospital;
 - A number of schools situated along the length of the route;
 - The local community at large;
 - Local farmers for the abstraction of timber and sugar cane; and
 - Economic and tourism potential.
- During the next three years this project will also bring a cash injection of over R60 million into this region, resulting in almost 40 kilometres of road that will be upgraded.

- The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport will therefore structure the implementation strategy to ensure that our Vukuzakhe Emerging Contractors play a major role throughout the construction phase and that training and mentorship is a critical feature of the project.
- Indeed, the economic impact is significant. Not only will road users be the beneficiaries of this project, but it will provide economic upliftment for the entire community. Already, the labour that will be utilised in this project will come from the communities thus contributing to the development of skills.
- Road infrastructure development by its nature creates additional economic spin-offs, and that is what we are looking forward to experience here in Ngudwini.
- I am sure that most of you are aware by now that the month of October has been declared “Public Transport Month”. The strategic goal of Public Transport Month is to champion the speedy transformation of public transport services.
- In this regard, the upgrading of this road is designed to make the transport system serve the people. It is designed to create greater convenience and to provide adequate facilities. The upgrading of this road will uplift the area, promote economic development, create opportunities for jobs and give impetus to the informal sector.
- This project is an excellent example of what we want to do all over KwaZulu-Natal, so that we truly address the legacy of apartheid and make sure that our work benefits everybody - especially the millions of our historically disadvantaged citizens.

- This is a significant bold step towards a systematic approach to infrastructure development through integrated transport plans and integrated development plans, and it is an ideal way to ensure provision of transport to people wherever they live.

- Buses and taxis are important modes of public transport and they are also feeders into the rail mode of transport. These three transport modes together with others not mentioned here should be seen as complementing one another. This road belongs to you, the citizens of our province, and it is for you to take care of it, and for the public transport operators to provide quality services from it.

- Remember:
 - Public Transport makes the economy work!
 - A better and sustainable Public Transport system is ONLY possible with the participation of citizens!
 - Public Transport is for all irrespective of social status.
 - Most South Africans cannot live without public transport.
 - Improvements in Public Transport infrastructure is for better services.

- Finally, together “Let’s build a KwaZulu-Natal that truly belongs to all”.

THANK YOU.