



SPEECH (NOTES) BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY & LIAISON, MR. B.H. CELE AT THE ZIBAMBELE REGIONAL VISIT HELD AT IMPENDLE ON TUESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER 2005.

All Protocol Observed.

- In development terms Zibambele is a very young and ambitious programme. When the programme was officially launched in January 2000, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport committed to a target of 40 000 Zibambele contracts by 2010. I am pleased to inform you that I have instructed my Department to reach this target by 2009.
- We must take pride in the fact that by August 2005 we had awarded 25 267 Zibambele contracts of which 24 004 were awarded to women-headed households and 1 263 to men, with a budget of more than R 278 million paid to Zibambele contractors.
- I think that all of us are only too well aware that South Africans, as a nation, are not well recognised for saving money. The R3 million collectively saved by some 668 savings clubs by August this year is an effort and achievement that our Zibambele savings clubs should be applauded for.

- Zibambele savings clubs are beginning to become a focal point for other government pro poor and gender affirmative programmes. Through their savings clubs Zibambele contractors are being accessed to:
 - The Department of Home Affairs for identity documents.
 - The Department of Social Development for welfare payments such as disability grants, pensions and child grants.
 - The Department of Agriculture to introduce household food security through starter packs and the introduction of fruit trees.
 - The Department of Economic Development to form co-operatives.
 - The Department of Agriculture to assist Zibambele savings clubs / co-operatives to become the nucleus of dry land rice and fungi production in rural KwaZulu-Natal (note that rice is South Africa's most economically important agricultural import product).
 - From 2006 Zibambele contractors will be accessed to the Department of Education for the ABET programme.

- Clearly the Zibambele road maintenance contract system has proved itself as a highly successful antipoverty programme. It is precisely for this reason that it received the Impumelelo award as the most efficient and effective poverty alleviation programme in South Africa. We anticipate that systematic and sustained support for Zibambele contractors through their savings clubs will take Zibambele from an antipoverty programme into a developmental programme.

- There is then much to celebrate about Zibambele.

- However, it is my responsibility to sound a note of caution to those departmental officials and consultants who have not fully embraced the policies, procedures and time lines that are critical components of the Zibambele road maintenance system. All too often I am confronted by reports that complain that:
 - Tools have not been delivered to contractors and that they are therefore not able to perform their road maintenance duties to the best of their ability.
 - Sometimes officials politicize the programme. Contractors are often paid late and, indeed, some contractors are even working without yet being paid.
 - Gravel to repair potholes is not delivered timeously.
 - Contractors have repeatedly requested the Department to deduct the amount of their savings from their pay as this makes it easier and safer for them to save regularly. So far this has not happened.
 - There is a lack of supervision in some areas which results in some contractors not working.

- I take these complaints very seriously, particularly in light of the fact that prior to transferring the programme to our One Stop Shop regions, policies, procedures and time lines were all thoroughly workshopped. I want to use this opportunity therefore to emphasise that Zibambele is part and parcel of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport's routine road maintenance system and that it must be managed as such. Zibambele as a road maintenance system is here to stay. It is not a transient programme that can be ignored if you work for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport.

- On the same note I would like to sensitise the Zibambele contractors that the role they play in preserving the road network of KwaZulu-Natal is crucial. They should thus take it upon themselves to be responsible and perform their duties faithfully and efficiently. The deterioration of the road network that results from poor or no maintenance has adverse effects to all road users of the province. Let us not be found sitting under the trees or

leaving cones on the road and just disappearing to our homes during working time. We should take road safety as one vital duty of the programme taking on board what recently happened at KwaNongoma.

- It is important that you appreciate that innovative programmes such as Zibambele and Vukuzakhe must be incorporated as part of the culture of our department once policies and procedures have been developed and tested. Development is not an activity that can be separated from the core functions of our department and its work.
- Our Zibambele programme has been recognised as “best practice” in South Africa and it will be rolled out throughout South Africa as part of the Expanded Public Works Programme. We therefore cannot sit back and allow Zibambele to be neglected within our own department. We have set the standards for the rest of South Africa and we need to take our leadership responsibilities seriously.
- The National Minister of Transport and the Director General are seriously looking forward to working and expanding the programme to all provinces. As such the DG will be meeting our HOD to begin the nationalization of the project.

THANK YOU.