



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE DURING THE KZN-
PTPA LAUNCH IN EMPANGENI ON SATURDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2007.**

Protocol Observed

- The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is committed to a structured, ongoing consultation process that allows stakeholders to make informed decisions on how best to prioritise their needs, either on public transport, road safety or access roads.
- In realizing that in most instances, the commuters are excluded in the decision-making processes which affect their transportation, the Department has established Public Transport Passenger Associations (PTPA) to promote public participation and accelerate transformation in the public transport sector.
- It is on that score that we are gathered here today to launch our provincial structure, the KwaZulu-Natal Public Transport Passenger Association. The provincial structure comes after the establishment of local associations that are operating all over the province.

- I want to emphasize that the provincial association and local associations are the only public formal structures we recognize as government and the public transport industry. They are formal bodies representing all public transport users in the province and are guided by their constitution.
- As government, we are under no illusion about the magnitude of the task at hand and the obligation we have in ensuring that the public transport system is responsive to national policy imperatives and contributes meaningfully to economic development and growth.
- When we launched our Transport Month in the province last week, we were emphasizing also our commitment to the development of an effective and efficient public transport system that is fully responsive to the needs of our people.
- Public transport can only improve if we work together as a collective. While it is true that government has a responsibility to regulate the industry and ensure compliance with safety standards, the communities similarly have an obligation to ensure that operators provide the level of service expected by the commuters.
- In the context of a province having experienced taxi violence, as Passenger Associations you will play an important role in bringing about peace and reconciliation. You will promote passenger safety and improve relations between the operators and the entire public.

- Public transport is a critical ingredient to economic growth and development as it enables the mobility of the labour force. Our assertion that transport is the heartbeat of the economy is no misnomer, but rather a fundamental expression that truly defines the place transport occupies in the economic terrain.
- The little strides we make as stakeholders and communities as a contribution to the broader agenda of improving public transport must be acknowledged and appreciated. The challenge that lies ahead may be daunting, but it is not unachievable.
- Ladies and gentlemen, as it has been said earlier, this launch coincides with our celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Public Transport Enforcement Unit (PETU), well known by its “Operation Shanela”. In fact we celebrate the achievements this Unit has had since it was established five years ago.
- Through this Unit, we have seen improved compliance with Public Transport Permits, significant reduction in illegal operators, significant reduction in taxi related violence, significant reduction in bakkies operators and improved public transport vehicles roadworthiness through Thathi’skorokoro operations.

- Our government is always committed to securing a transformed public transport sector in South Africa which is economically sustainable and which provides the public with safe, affordable, reliable and comfortable transport. This, I believe, provides the context, which highlights the critically important role of our Public Transport Enforcement Unit. In fact, as passengers these are people you need to work with.
- In closing, I want to pay a special tribute to the RTI and its Public Transport Enforcement Unit as well as the leadership of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport. Sometimes it's a dangerous work to regulate those that do not conform. These are brave people and true public servants. They deserve your support.
- Finally, I would like to welcome the elected leaders of the public transport passengers in the province. We welcome them in our transport family. Let's continue to defend the weak in our society.

I thank you