



SPEECH NOTES BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. BHEKI CELE AT THE SOD TURNING OF MBALANE BRIDGE AT MUDEN ON FRIDAY 15 JUNE 2007.

Protocol observed

- I am extremely delighted to be part of the sod-turning ceremony for Mbalane Bridge here at Muden. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport regards the provision of bridges and roads infrastructure as a fundamental component of economic reconstruction not only for our Province but also for the entire country.
- The construction of this bridge happens against the background of colonial deprivation of the people of Msinga dating back to the late 19th century when the Zulu people fell under British rule. People in this area were self-sufficient and produced enough for themselves and their livestock.

- During the apartheid, things became worse when the successive apartheid governments pushed people to areas not conducive to farming. There was a fierce competition over land and other important resources, which led to misunderstanding between communities and, ultimately to wars fuelled by apartheid's divide and rule tactics.
- A suspended pedestrian bridge was constructed long ago across the Mooi River to provide access for the community to the Muden and Greytown area. However, due to lack of maintenance, this foot bridge deteriorated to such a state where it is no longer safe to use.
- The Greytown RRTF chairman has informed us that several community members have lost their lives while using the pedestrian bridge.
- We are gathered here today therefore to fulfill the promise made my Department three years ago. During 2003/04 financial year, the Greytown RRTF identified the bridge as one of their priorities.
- Subsequent to this, the then MEC for Transport, S'bu Ndebele visited the area and confirmed support for the proposed bridge on behalf of the Department of Transport.

- The project calls for the construction of a single lane, simple supported vehicle bridge (five metres wide), with a total span of approximately eighty meters.

- The construction of the piles and pile-caps is currently out on tender with a planned start date of July 2007. The piling work will be undertaken by specialist contractors.

- The concrete work for the deck, approaches, pier protection work and earthworks for the approaches will be done by contractors on the Vukuzakhe Database of the Department. These works will be done utilizing one Stage Two and two Stage Three contractors.

- The estimate cost of the project is approximately R7 million and the project is programmed to be completed in early 2008.

- This project is of uttermost importance to the local community because it will:
 - Provide safe vehicular access to the community's property;
 - Provide safe access for pedestrians especially school going children;
 - Provide commercial opportunities to the community;
 - Provide agricultural development opportunities to the community;
 - Provide access to the nearby commercial centres (for example Greytown)

* I wish you all a very happy National Youth Day. May the courage and vision displayed by our youth, 31 years ago on June 16, 1976, serve to inspire and motivate all of us as we strive to bring happiness and DEFEND THE WEAK among our youth and people in this area.

I thank you.