



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,  
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE SOD  
TURNING CEREMONY AT UMZUMBE THE 16<sup>th</sup> OF OCTOBER 2007**

**Protocol observed**

- Since 2005, the month of October was declared as the National Transport Month. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, we launched our provincial plan for the month and since then we have been moving up and down ensuring that our people are sensitized to road safety issues among other things.
- I am emphasizing road safety here because it has become clear that there is no use to build roads that will kill our people. We need to strengthen our road safety awareness campaigns wherever we are, so that we build roads in order to develop people, and not to kill them.

- I am aware that some people say that they are tired of Cele, he talks too much. Fortunately, I am not alone, but I am just one of the many ambassadors of road safety in our province and indeed our country. Ambassadors of safety on our roads are not only the many celebrities we work with, including soccer stars and radio DJs. But our real road safety ambassadors are the members of the bereaved families who carry the eternal scares of losing their loved-ones. We know that people can better understand if the message is conveyed by their role models of some kind. But my Department has also produced a documentary that shows our people, our mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers and relatives and friends dead on the road. At least you can see it on DVD, we see it live; not once, but many times.
- Our commitment to promoting a safe road environment is precisely due to the fact that the Department of Transport has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that our people have a safe and reliable transport system in the province. It is our duty to minimize carnage on our road through education and enforcement. We have to work tirelessly to ensure that South Africa becomes a better place for all and reducing unnecessary suffering on our roads is fundamental.
- Currently, my Department is unlocking the economic shackles of the past by means of innovative programmes that seek to address rural poverty. Our efforts in trying to push back the frontiers of poverty are known everywhere.

- The official openings and sod turnings that are held all over the province highlight the very important task we set ourselves to change the lives of the people of KwaZulu-Natal. The Zibambe road maintenance programme poverty alleviation programme has become a household name in KwaZulu-Natal. This programme is a role model poverty alleviation initiative for the rest of the country.
- My Department does not make empty promises. The pledge we are making today as we stage this SOD-turning ceremony today marks the beginning of road works that will see Main Road 73 upgraded at the tune of R375 million. This road will provide a direct link between MTWALUME / SIPOFU and HIGH FLATS. In addition to this, it will provide a secondary link to St FAITHS via D168. This will have positive spin-offs with regards to the reduction in commuting costs and other business developments.
- So this main road is an important link for all communities under traditional authorities of Amakhosi like Inkosi uLuthuli, iNkosi uQwabe, iNkosi uNdelu, iNkosi uShiyabanye and iNkosi Ikhwezi Lokusa. Upgrading this road will improve access to the existing 28 schools, 4 clinics and improve the quality of life of a total population of approximately 30 000 people.
- The construction of this road over a 5-year-period will create a total of 375 000 job opportunities. The result is that those employed can be expected to enhance their personal expenditure thus creating a multiplier effect in economic growth.

- The whole construction project will be unbundled to maximize construction opportunities. Approximately 200 business opportunities will open up for the Department's emerging contract programme involved in various aspects of road construction known as Vukuzakhe.
- I am pleased to say that our Department is in constant liaison and consultation with all communities through our Rural Road Transport Forums (RRTF's), Projects Liaison Committees (PLCs), Community Road Safety Councils (CRSC's), Public Transport Passenger Associations (PTPA), bus and taxi formations, local municipalities and other civil society structures.
- This process of on-going consultation facilitates the identification of transport needs and challenges, and it is on the basis of these that the Department is able to act from an informed position for the benefit of all the people of our province.
- There are millions of rands to be spent during the 2007/08 financial year in building roads and causeways that will be built through the Department's Port Shepstone Cost Centre. Therefore, in addition to the construction of the Main Road 73, the lives of the residents of this area will be improved through other road infrastructural projects, and it is up to you to take maximum advantage of these opportunities presented to you by your government.

- In closing, as we head towards the forthcoming December Holidays, I would like to urge all our stakeholders to play a more active role in spreading the message of road safety right down to grassroots level.
- I would like to urge all road users to respect one another; pedestrians must give the necessary respect to motorists, and vice-versa. Each and every death on our roads is one too many, and that each and every death or serious injury is a tragedy for the individuals, the families and communities, and for the nation.
- We must continue to strive to increase respect for human life, and treat road carnage with the seriousness it deserves.

**I thank you**