



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. B.H. CELE DURING THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF NXAMALALA ROAD AT MSINGA ON THURSDAY 18
OCTOBER 2007.**

All Protocol Observed.

- Our government regards the provision of access as a fundamental component of economic reconstruction and development, and there is no doubt that the Umzinyathi District stands to benefit in this regard.
- Millions of rands are being spent in this District through investment on infrastructure that unlocks local economic development, links communities with social and economic services, and ensures that the quality of life for rural communities is improved.
- We have injected cash in the road maintenance, the construction of new infrastructure, special projects and poverty alleviation and empowerment. Our special projects include the construction of Dicky Bridge, Sphongweni Road, Nxamalala Road, Nyonini Road, Ezingulubeni Road, Mbalane Bridge, P549 and the Nhlesi Road stone pitching.

- I am indeed delighted that today, a milestone is recorded in the lives of people of Umsinga, as we officially open the Nxamalala Express to allow easy access by communities to various facilities in the area, including schools, clinics etc.
- This eight kilometres long road has been constructed at the tune of R4.2 million to link Nkobongweni road and D1267 to the Nxamalala area. It also serves as a link to Fabeni community in Nxamalala.
- Umsinga is one of the areas in the province that have been declared as priority areas for service delivery due to the high rate of poverty and unemployment. It is for this reason that an integrated approach amongst various departments is crucial in fast tracking service delivery in the area.
- Very few, if any, governments in history have been able to tackle manifold challenges such as we do in South Africa. The combined oppression of Colonialism and Apartheid left our communities on the verge of disintegration, stagnation and doom.
- Our rural communities, in particular, were facing a social and economic crisis in spite of their potential in terms of agriculture and tourism. Therefore, when the democratic government took over in 1994, the challenge was not only to address historical imbalances but also to face new challenges imposed by crime, AIDS and poverty. It is in this context that we set our self a goal of achieving a better life for all.
- A well-maintained road network is of critical importance in social reconstruction, especially in rural areas like here at Umsinga because this will, in turn create favourable conditions for PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT, and these are preconditions of A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL.

- I have always stated that during my tenure of Office, I will endeavour to defend the weak and increase access in rural areas by fast-tracking the building of roads and the constructing of bridges to link-up communities with social, cultural, academic and economic amenities.
- Hence, it gives me great pleasure to announce that today we are also launching 'Operation Kushunquthuli'. In this Operation we are strengthening our commitment to bring hope to those communities most in need so that they too can have just cause to celebrate a better life for all. We are changing people's lives through the construction of pedestrian bridges from Umthavuna in the south to Pholongolo in the north.
- A study we conducted reveals that we need 146 pedestrian bridges, but the Department of Education has added 100 more. These are needed to help our school children whose lives are often in danger as a result of flooded rivers and are forced not to attend school during the summer months, especially when it rains.
- This Operation means that no one, neither individuals nor organisations, will stop us from restoring the dignity of teachers who have to undress when they cross rivers.
- In closing, I want to emphasize that the Department of Transport has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that our people have a safe and reliable transport system in the province. 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 permanent scares of losing their loved-ones or having to take care of maimed and disabled loved ones.
- We believe that one of the best ways to convey and reinforce the safety message on our roads is to use our role models, people we like or look up to in society because we see them on television or listen to them speak on radio.
- 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.

- I would like to urge all road users to respect one another, pedestrians must give the necessary respect to motorists, and vice-versa. We at the DOT say one dead is one too many. Each person that dies or is seriously injured on our roads is a tragedy for the individuals, the families and communities, and for the nation as a whole.
- Cedrick Mkhize, a shining star in rugby, is one of the latest practical examples of how road is capable of depriving us of fine talent. The musicians and soccer stars that have been lost on the road bear testimony to the cold fact of loss that we have to endure in silence each time tragedy strikes on the road.
- You will endure it silently, not me – as MEC for Transport it is my responsibility to say enough is enough! If road safety is not effective, then we are left with no option but to crack the whip. We shall not hesitate to use our full law enforcement agencies to force people to toe the line on our roads. Soon we will deprive drivers of the privilege of driving on our roads if they are reckless because every bad driver is a potential killer. Soon we will have to take your license if you are a repeat offender and thereby pre-empt your committing a crime of murdering someone on the road.
- With those words, I wish to stress that we must continue to strive to increase respect for human life, and treat road carnage with the seriousness it deserves.

I thank you.