



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE SOD
TURNING OF THE OBIVANE RIVER BRIDGE ON SUNDAY, 21 OCTOBER
2007.**

Protocol Observed

- On Thursday, we launched 'Operation Kushunquthuli' in which 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 access roads and bridges from the south to the north and from the east to the west. There is no one, neither individuals nor organisations, who will stop us from bringing infrastructure to our people.
- I know that some people are saying we do many sod turnings, perhaps to score political points. But I think it's them who try to score political points by misleading people who have waited so long for this development because we do follow-up on our commitments.

- This is not the first time we have government in the history of South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal in particular. But our people have only begun to see change in their lives through our democratic government's development programmes.
- We have come to the Zululand District many times to invest in 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.
- Today we are here at Ophuzane for a sod turning ceremony to facilitate the construction of the Obivane River Bridge with an estimated cost of R5.7 million over a period of 14 months. The purpose of this project is to provide vehicular access across the Obivane River between Ophuzane community to the north of the river and a school and various isolated communities to the south of the river.
- The Obivane River is frequently flooded during summer months, preventing vehicles from crossing the river. The proposed road bridge is positioned in close proximity to the recently constructed pedestrian bridge.
- A study we conducted reveals that we need 146 pedestrian bridges, but the Department of Education has added 100 more, bringing the total number of pedestrian bridges that are needed in the province to 246.

- These footbridges 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.
- May I take this opportunity to congratulate the community of Zululand District on all the road and bridge projects they have received and yet to receive.
- Here, I am talking about, among others, D1820, P487, P700, P432 P235/ P49/ P52, P234 Qwasha River Road Bridge, Mpembeni, Sikhwebezi Pedestrian Bridge, Thombothi River Bridge and Wela River Bridge.
- There can be no doubt that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is well advanced towards achieving its objective of creating an equitable and sustainable transport systems in KZN and defending the weak.

I thank you