



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE MEMORIAL
SERVICE IN GREYTOWN ON THURSDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2007**

Protocol observed

- Today is a very sad day for the community of Greytown, Ladysmith region and the entire KwaZulu-Natal. It is also of particular sadness to the families, relatives and friends of those about whom we are gathered here today.
- It is indeed, true that accidents are unpredictable. That is why we call - what is normally referred to as accidents - crashes. However, what happened in this area on Monday was not an accident. It was something preventable.

- I received a message on Monday evening that eight had died in an accident in this area. That message came just few minutes after I spoke to school children in Durban who participated in one of our road safety programme.
- My concern to those kids was the behaviour of our young people on the roads and in our society as a whole. I was chocked by the news that three teenagers died in an accident involving a car driven by unlicensed 16 years old boy.
- Our challenge now is that despite our commitment to safety of our people, we continue to loose people on our roads. However, unlike the HIV scourge, I believe that we have the remedy, the cure and the vaccine. The question posed at all of us is whether or not do we wish to prevent this carnage from ravaging us further.
- As a country we seem to think less of the dangers that can afflict us on the road. Unlike most people who practice safe sex, most still do not see misbehaviour on the roads as a virus that will ultimately kill them.
- Unfortunately, we learn bad driving habits from our parents, brothers, sisters, relatives and role models. We even have people who glorify these bad driving behaviours. How often do we hear people bragging about how fast they had driven between Johannesburg and Durban?

- How often do we see people quickly putting on safety belts as they approach a road block or see a traffic police officer ahead? How often do we witness a driver breaking a traffic law but remain silent about it?

- Speed, drinking and driving, fatigue, unsafe overtaking, ignoring of traffic signals and other traffic signs, general reckless, negligent and aggressive driver behaviour, unsafe crossing of roads, drinking and walking, poor vehicle maintenance; unsafe following distances are some of the main causes of accidents.

- The loss of even one life is a tragedy, but the loss of nine good people and the injuries of four others, is a disaster for the families - for the friends and communities of those killed and injured.

- We send condolences to the families of:
 1. Sikesakhe Sithole – driver (33) male
 2. Basolile Sithole (54) female
 3. Mbambeni Sangweni (55) male
 4. Thembinkosi Sangweni (38) male
 5. Kholwayini Sangweni (41) female
 6. Nsukumbili Sangweni (73) male
 7. Siyabonga Nene (37) male
 8. Zanele Dlamini (37) female
 9. Vangeli Dlamini (3) Zanele's baby

- No matter how many words of condolences we may utter today, the pain that these families and all of us gathered here feel will never diminish nor disappear. What remains is for us to do something about these kinds of things. We can do something about preventing more friends and families from perishing in crashes such as these.
- As drivers we need to be responsible especially when in charge of human lives. As passengers we need to be very aware of safe and legal travel, and not make ourselves vulnerable to abuse.
- As pedestrians, we need to ensure that we walk in a manner with as little risk as possible. Let us all remember that one death on our roads is one too many! You can make the difference. You can call Mpimpa Hotline 086 221 1010 – your voice can save lives!

I thank you