



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,  
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LAIASON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE ZIBAMBELE  
SUMMIT ON FRIDAY, 28 SEPETEMBER 2007**

**Protocol Observed**

- Our South African Constitution enshrines the rights and equality of women. Our legal framework demands that we are diligent in our efforts to advance the cause of women's social and economic empowerment.
- It is for this very reason that when we established Zibambele Road Maintenance programme, we specifically targeted women headed households to receive contracts. This programme is indeed a benchmark against which we can judge the progress we make in the empowerment of rural women in particular.

- The empowerment of rural women is not something that can be taken lightly. I can stand here and cite statistic after statistic that would validate the plight of rural women and single mothers in particular.
- There can be no doubt that in South Africa the poorest of the poor are to be found in women headed households. Pushing back the frontiers of poverty – building a better life for all – cannot possibly be achieved unless we create work and business opportunities for the very poor.
- A quick survey conducted within the Zibambele programme has indicated a serious challenge with the levels of literacy amongst the Zibambele contractors. This is not surprising because these are the result of the past legacy where women were not allowed to go to school and get education.
- This is very painful because Zibambele contractors are forced to operate in a modern world where they have to go to the banks to withdraw their salaries. Further more, the training that the Zibambele contractors receive requires some basic literacy so that they can relate to it.
- As government we cannot leave a situation like this unattended to. It is on that score that the provincial government has launched the Masifundisane programme with an aim to get the province literate.

- To this end , the Department of Transport is partnering with the Department of Education to introduce Zibambele contractors into the Abet and Masifundisane programme.
- This is going to be an ongoing programme, at the end we hope to have every contractor able to read and to at least be able to write and read their names and not use a thumb print or a cross when they sign for their monies at the banks.
- As we will also be simplifying our Zibambele construction and maintenance manuals into isiZulu, the contractors must be able to read them at the comfort of their homes so that they can understand how to carry out their tasks on the road.
- The survey into the Zibambele programme has also indicated that there are approximately 7 500 Zibambele contractors who are youth. Of this a total of 23 have had their education up to grade 12. Of this total 22 have studied and passed maths and science.
- The Department intends to assist these youth in acquiring the necessary skills and starting this year these 22 youth Zibambele contractors who have passed Maths and science will be engaged in an NQF level 4 Learnership, and a further 80 youth Zibambele contractors will be engaged in a NQF level 2 learnership.

- The learnership will last for 18 months. During this period learners will be exposed to classroom as well as practical training. Upon completion these learners will have acquired technical skills that increase their chances of securing work within government departments, municipalities and the construction sector at large.
- This is a new innovation in terms of the Zibambele programme and it is a trendsetter for training and developing the poor.
- I am proud to say that more than 900 Zibambele savings clubs have been established to date. The total of R 7,5 million which has been saved is an indication of the potential and the power that exist within poor people when it comes to saving.
- Some of the savings clubs have already started their small businesses. The Department is going all out to engage other departments in order to assist the savings clubs to exit the programme.
- Today we have people from Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and SAMAFU who are agents of the Department of Trade and Industry. These organizations specialize in business training and small business funding and they will be partnering with the Department of transport to train savings clubs and co-operatives and also provide funding.

- I will therefore urge the savings clubs members to take this opportunity with both hands and use these resources to better their lives and those of their children.
- In conclusion, I would like all the officials who are involved in managing and implementing the programme to note that Zibambele programme is no longer the Department's programme only, it is now a national programme. It is thus important to treat the programme with due diligence and with integrity.
- Corruption and fraud will not be tolerated; most of all stealing against poor women is being greedy and will not be tolerated. Instead they must continue to be trendsetters through innovations and take the programme to new heights.

**I thank you**