



**SPEECH NOTES FOR THE KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR BHEKI CELE DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING TAXI RANK ON WEDNESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2007- UMBUMBULU**

**All protocol observed.**

- There is nothing that makes me happy like being part of the launch of a project that will impact positively on the lives of ordinary people.
- In KwaZulu-Natal and in South Africa generally, we are still faced with a situation where previous town planning did not accommodate our public transport. This is a task that municipalities must respond to squarely in designing their public transport plans, infrastructure development, and land use policies.
- As government, we are under no illusion about the magnitude of the task at hand and the obligation we have in ensuring that the public transport system is responsive to national policy imperatives and contributes meaningfully to economic development and growth.

- Therefore, the official opening of this taxi rank today bears testimony to our commitment as government, the development of an effective and efficient public transport system that is fully responsive to the needs of our people.
- Public transport can only improve if we work together as a collective. While it is true that government has a responsibility to regulate the industry and ensure compliance with safety standards, the communities similarly have an obligation to ensure that operators provide the level of service expected by the commuters.
- Our democratic government is committed to a structured, ongoing consultation process that allows stakeholders to make informed decisions on how best to prioritise their needs, either on public transport, road safety or access roads.
- It is on that score that the KZN Department of Transport has recently launched its provincial commuter structure, the KwaZulu-Natal Public Transport Passenger Association. The provincial structure comes after the establishment of local associations that are operating all over the province.
- In the context of a province having experienced taxi violence, the Passenger Associations will play an important role in bringing about peace and reconciliation. They will promote passenger safety and improve relations between the operators and the entire public.

- As a matter of fact, all taxi passengers become pedestrians before and after traveling in taxis. Therefore, I would not have made justice to you and myself if I did not draw your attention to the unacceptable pedestrian fatality rates that have increased on KZN roads.
- Statistics indicate that the major causes of pedestrian deaths are jay walking, walking on and crossing freeways and walking on the roads when drunk. I believe that with obeying a few simple road safety rules, many pedestrian lives could be saved.
- We have embarked on a bold, educational and awareness campaign to break through the communication clutter and to change pedestrian mindset. We are working with celebrities such as radio DJs and soccer teams to convey our road safety messages.
- In KZN, football has always been regarded as the language of the people. The advent of the FIFA 2010 World Cup has raised the profile of football even further, and extended its following through the province, at all levels of society.
- The KZN Department of Transport and key players of the participating soccer teams - Amazulu, Golden Arrows, Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates – will be distribute road safety messages at selected PSL games in KZN, at community soccer matches in key high-risk areas and in shopping malls, taverns and schools.

- Indeed, the little strides we make as stakeholders and communities as a contribution to the broader agenda of improving public transport system must be acknowledged and appreciated. The challenge that lies ahead may be daunting, but it is not unachievable.
  
- May I conclude by congratulating you for this new facility and I trust that it will be a meaningful and productive venue in which society benefits.
  
- Always remember this:
  - Look right, look left, look right again before you cross the road.
  - It is dangerous and illegal to walk on the freeway.
  - Avoid roads at all times when intoxicated or drunk.
  - Be seen, be safe. Wear bright coloured clothing, especially at night.
  - Walk facing oncoming traffic.
  - Live and let live

**I thank you.**