



**SPEECH (NOTES) BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. BHEKI CELE AT THE SOD
TURNING OF SIKHWEBEZI VEHICLE BRIDGE ON SUNDAY, 05 AUGUST
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 Zululand District is one of the most benefiting in this regard.
- We have come to this District many times to invest 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.
- Just two months ago, we came here to officially open Isikhwebezi River pedestrian bridge and I promised to come back.

- It gives me great pleasure, therefore that today we are gathered here for the sod turning of Isikhwebezi vehicle bridge. Indeed, this project is yet another indication of our government's resolve to strengthen 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.
- The development of access roads and bridges and the promotion of labour intensive construction methods are important focus areas that enable our government to provide the much needed infrastructure in remote rural communities, and ensure that jobs are created where they are needed the most.
- This focus is consistent with the Presidential call for infrastructure delivery through the Expanded Public Works Programme, and calls for the provision of rural transport infrastructure and services in order to ensure access and mobility in rural areas.
- This is but one of our Bridge Projects for the Zululand District. It provides all year access to the schools and clinics for the communities who for years have had to cross the river using low level structure on D1730.
- The Isikhwebezi vehicle bridge will be 75 metres long, and when preliminary design report is completed, we will then have the total budget estimate, the start date and anticipated construction completion date.
- When we build these bridges, we are fully aware that we are also saving lives particularly of our young people whose lives are often in danger as a result of flooded rivers and are forced not to attend school during the summer months.

- May I take this opportunity to congratulate the community of Zululand District on all road and bridge projects they have received and yet to receive.
- Here I am talking about, among others, Qwasha River Road Bridge, D1820, P700, P432 Mpembeni, P487, Sikhwebezi Pedestrian Bridge, Thombothi River Bridge, Wela River Bridge, P235/ P49/ P52, P234 and Obivane River Bridge
- There can be no doubting the fact that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is well advanced towards achieving its objective of creating an equitable and sustainable transport systems in KZN.
- In conclusion, as government we are working to ensure that the socio-economic rights of children as enshrined in our Constitution, including the right to education, health, care and support become a reality and a matter of top priority.
- When we came here last time I handed over two computers to learners and promised to come back with more. Therefore, I am extremely proud and grateful today that I am handing over eight computers to learners at Umdumela Primary School.
- As government we will continue to do everything possible to assist our communities in whatever challenges they face in their areas.

I thank you.