



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE DURING THE DRIVER
OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION ON THURSDAY, 10 APRIL 2008.**

Protocol observed

- ? The Driver of the Year competition aims to reduce the number of road accidents / fatalities involving trucks and buses, through stimulating education amongst our heavy motor vehicle drivers and consequently improve the standard of heavy motor vehicle driving in our country.

- ? The competition serves as an incentive for the business sector to invest in advanced driver-training for the drivers of heavy duty vehicles. Skilled drivers contribute to saving of human lives and reduction of vehicle maintenance costs, including fleet management.

- ? I take this opportunity and thank all the participants who represented us at the National Driver of the Year in Bloemfontein last year. We know that five of the eleven drivers that competed at the National competition were placed in the top three in their respective categories.

- ? Four of these drivers will form part of the National team that competes at the international competition in Italy. KZN also won the best team award. It is on that score that this celebratory function is being held to acknowledge the sterling efforts of these drivers.

- ? The reason we are paying tribute to our drivers today is because their work is no bed of roses. Truck drivers sacrifice an enormous amount of their personal time and their hours of operation are taxing but they still manage to keep the wheels of our growing economy turning.

- ? I hope that programmes such as the Driver of the Year Competition will indeed, enhance the driving skills, competence and safety consciousness of heavy motor vehicle drivers. But I want to emphasize that this competition also needs to focus on educating drivers about human relations and tolerance on the road.

- ? We need to do away with the perception that South African drivers are bad drivers and show that we can be good drivers who are sensitive to road safety. We really need to improve our conduct on the road.

- ? Always remember that road accidents kill people who are very economically active people. People who drive their cars or travel in public transport are mostly working and have dependants. Another thing is that the impact of fatalities is seen on people left behind.

- ? But, I want to assure you that things will change this year as we celebrate 10 years of **Asiphephe** which was launched in 1998. We are intensifying our road safety campaigns throughout the year and by that, we mean business. We will introduce a licence demerit system that will deduct points each time a motorist breaks the law.

- ? I therefore urge you as drivers in KZN, to always support government in its efforts to decrease road accidents. Drive safely – a healthy driver means that there is a healthy nation. An unhealthy driver poses a potential road risk.

I thank you