



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. BHEKI CELE DURING THE SOD
TURNING OF P487 AT KWACEZA ON SATURDAY 12 APRIL 2008.**

All Protocol Observed.

- ? The democratic government has prioritized rural developmental needs, which includes amongst other things, the construction, upgrading, maintenance and control of the provincial road network.
- ? The Department is building a 500 km long of new roads per year in the province, fifty two percent of which is blacktop and thirty-five percent gravel road that is maintained by 38 000 members of the Department's Zibambele poverty alleviation programme.
- ? This government is very much committed and our people who have waited so long for a better life are now on record giving testimony that indeed, we do follow-up on our commitments.
- ? But I want to emphasize that when we bring these projects we do it for people irrespective of which political party they belong to. Our government's policy says that during the construction work, cost must remain an economic benefit to the communities that project will serve.
- ? All contractors are compelled to source all materials from the local suppliers and employ all artisans and labour from the nearby communities.

- ? We know that in the past our rural communities, in particular, were facing a social and economic crisis in spite of their potential in terms of agriculture and tourism. But, when the democratic government took over in 1994, the challenge was not only to address historical imbalances but also to face new challenges imposed by crime, AIDS and poverty.
- ? It is in this context that we set ourselves a goal of achieving a better life for all. Therefore, I want to warn you as communities not to allow yourselves to be manipulated politicians who use your weakness for their political gain.
- ? The Department is upgrading the 32 km-long Main Road P487 from Main Road P52 to Thulasizwe TB Hospital. We are upgrading the gravel road to a surfaced blacktop standard. The project is divided into three phases, the first of which is 10km and will be completed by March 2009 at an estimated cost of R35 million.
- ? It is envisaged that the road upgrading will stimulate the local economy and provide a much improved public transport route to Ceza Hospital and Thulasizwe TB Hospital as well as numerous schools and clinics.
- ? This is one of the projects the Department has brought to Zululand District. We have injected more than R1.3 million in the road maintenance, the construction of new infrastructure, special projects and poverty alleviation and empowerment in this District.
- ? Our projects include, among others, D1820, D487, P700, P432, P235/ P49/ P52, P234 Qwasha River Road Bridge, Mpembeni, Sikhwebezi Pedestrian Bridge, Thombothi River Bridge, Obivane River Bridge, Wela River Bridge, KwaBhanya Vehicle Bridge and Hlonyane Bridge .

- ? As government we will continue to do everything possible to assist our communities in whatever challenges they face in their areas. But my appeal is that you use proper structures that we have put in place in all three spheres of government.

- ? My Department is prepared to assist municipalities with capacity when planning road infrastructure. Some of the roads under municipalities are not properly designed and to maintain them is like reconstructing them entirely. We say now we will not maintain municipal roads that were not planned in consultation with us as the Department of Transport.

- ? In closing, I want to emphasize that the Department of Transport has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that our people have a safe and reliable transport system in the province. I am emphasizing road safety here because it has become clear that there is no use to build roads that will kill our people.

- ? Each person that dies or is seriously injured on our roads is a tragedy for the individuals, the families and communities, and for the nation as a whole. What you saw on DVD, we see it live; not once, but many times.

- ? So, we need to strengthen our road safety awareness campaigns wherever we are, so that we build roads in order to develop people, and not to kill them.

I thank you