



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE ABET
GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON THURSDAY, 17 APRIL 2008.**

All Protocol Observed.

- ? The mandate to pursue ABET was derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Chapter 2, section 29(1) which says that everyone has the right to a basic education, including Adult Basic Education and Training
- ? This Department has taken the responsibility of Adult Basic Education very seriously and is making every effort to ensure that employees are given the opportunity to receive basic education, not only to comply with legislation but most importantly to help build strong economic base in the province.
- ? Education and literacy are very important for us in that they together ensure that we have staff that can read, write and be able to identify road signs and signals and can save their own lives including those of others.
- ? This graduation ceremony therefore means a lot to us as the Department of Transport because it means we have more literate people now who can interpret road signs and thereby save their own lives and those of others.

- ? If we need to ensure a better service delivery, first of all, we need to ensure that all our staff members are literate. In the 21st century there is no country or province that can hope to play an active role in the world if the majority of its people are illiterate.

- ? ABET is an important vehicle in the social, political and economic development of the workers. It enables learners to make informed judgements and decisions to ensure a democratic workplace, province and ultimately a democratic South Africa.

- ? Through it, learners begin to enjoy a certain degree of independence and can learn how to apply for such facilities like telephones, ID, pension, licence and be able to read a menu in a restaurant.

- ? Our intention is to maximize and monitor skills development and retention strategy for officials to better position the Department to deliver on its mandate whilst ensuring transformation of the Department. This will ensure that not only are the scarce skills attracted and retained, but also that the department does not lose the skills already acquired.

- ? In his State of the Nation Address on 08 February 2008, President Thabo Mbeki said that skills development was one of the government's "apex priorities" for 2008. South Africa is set to pilot a mass literacy campaign targeting 300 000 adults and youngsters across the country this year.

- ? During 2007/08 financial year, the total number of ABET learners was 859. There are 941 learners in the programme this year. Currently there are 61 female learners coming from all Regions attending classes. Last year the number was 51.
- ? There are 161 learners who have excelled (80%-100%) in various learning areas during the examinations. There has been a great improvement when compared to the previous year where the number was 154.
- ? However, we are aware of the challenges that still exist in this programme which include:
- An increase in the number of women learners entering the programme in all Regions.
 - Inadequate classes and not conducive to be a learning environment.
 - The nature of other learners' duties warranting that they have to be taken out of the class often, e.g. grader operator.
 - Other employees are shy to enter into the programme especially those who are office based.
- ? To this end, the Department is increasing the learning areas thus also necessitating an increase in the number of hours to teach.
- ? In closing, I would like to congratulate all those who have received certificates. May I wish you and your families all the best and that you prosper in every respect and that all your good wishes become reality.

Thank you.