



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. B.H. CELE DURING THE SOD
TURNING CEREMONY UMSINGA ON FRIDAY 25 JANUARY 2008.**

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 Umsinga and Umzinyathi District as a whole stand to benefit in this regard.
- The KZN Department of Transport allocated a total budget of R97.7 million in 2007/2008 financial year to deal with the service delivery challenges in this District and a budget of R120 million has been allocated for the 2008/09 financial year.
- Four months ago, we were here at Umsinga, KwaNxamalala where we launched our 'Operation Kushunquthuli'. In this Operation we are strengthening 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.

- We have injected cash in the road maintenance, the construction of new infrastructure, special projects and poverty alleviation and empowerment. Our special projects include among others, the construction of Dicky Bridge, Sphongweni Road, Nxamalala Road, Nyonini Road, Ezingulubeni Road, Mbalane Bridge, P549 and the Nhlesi Road stone pitching.
- I am therefore delighted that today another milestone is recorded in the lives of people of Umsinga, as we do the sod turning to mark the beginning of the upgrading of Main Road 32 from gravel to blacktop and the construction of Zonyama Road.
- The estimated cost of the Main Road 32 is approximately R7 million and the project is planned to be completed in September 2008. This cost estimate will be covering a measured and calculated length of 7 kilometres. The cost for Zonyama Road project is estimated at R18 million and is expected to be completed in September 2008. This cost will be covering the length of 14 kilometres
- We know that in 2002 there was an attempt by Msinga Municipality to construct the Zonyama Road but due to insufficient funds and lack of technical background from the municipality team the construction was a failure. I want emphasise that this is what we experience all over the province.
- It is on that score that my Department has started to assist municipalities with capacity when planning road infrastructure. We have been requested by some municipalities to maintain their roads, but only to find that to maintain them will be like reconstructing them entirely due to improper design. We say now we will not maintain municipal roads that were not planned in consultation with us as the Department of Transport.

- I know that at some stage we were lambasted for doing sod turning and not delivering. But no one came to apologise when we came to officially open the road a few months later.

- I want to assure you that after nine months from now, we will officially open these projects to provide among others:
 - Safe vehicular access to the community's property;
 - Safe access for pedestrians especially school going children;
 - Commercial opportunities to the community;
 - Agricultural development opportunities to the community;
 - Access to the nearby commercial centres;
 - Elimination of the heavy dust pollution which is a severe health risk;
 - Enhancement of the introduction of I.T. at the schools nearby.

- 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. 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.

- This year the Department of Transport is celebrating 10 years of **Asiphephe** which was launched in 1998 by my predecessor now Premier, Mr. Sbu Ndebele. We will be intensifying our road safety campaigns throughout the year and by that, we mean business.

- I want to warn bad drivers in KZN that things will change this year. We are definitely introducing a licence demerit system this financial year and we will be eating your driver's licences alive, slowly but surely.
- Finally, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the community of Umsinga on all road and bridge projects they have received and yet to receive. Our goals are indeed centred around the lives of our people.

I thank you.