



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
TRANSPORT MR CHRIS HLABISA AT THE YOUTH GATHERING IN DURBAN
ON SATURDAY 7 JUNE 2008**

Protocol observed

- Before I go any further, I wish to emphasize that the KZN Department of Transport is very serious about safety on our roads. To that effect, this year has been dedicated to road safety which means that we focus our attention on road safety 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.
- I am emphasizing road safety here because our research tells us that people who die on our roads are mostly young people between ages 18 and 35 years.
- These are people who are economically active. These are usually professionals who have just graduated and got good jobs. These are people who have just got married and have young kids.

- You will remember that during the last summer holidays we embarked on a bold, educational and awareness campaign to break through the communication clutter and to change the mindset of all road users. We were working with celebrities such as radio DJs and soccer teams to convey our road safety messages.
- Now we are visiting churches and interact with members on road safety issues. We are working with our road safety ambassadors from the interfaith programme. This initiative is a whole year programme and not only for particular times of the year when traffic volumes are at their peak.
- In fact, the KZN Department of Transport has a legislative mandate to manage the transportation system in KwaZulu-Natal. But in a technical environment like the Department of Transport, it is very crucial that we invest on scarce and critical technical skills in order to achieve our mandate.
- It is for this very reason that we have established programmes specifically targeting our youth. These programmes are also a benchmark against which we can judge the progress we make in the empowerment of our young people, especially the previously disadvantaged.
- Our Technology Transfer Centre (T²) has embarked on various apprenticeship skills programmes. Students have been recruited for these programmes on a four year program in Mechanical engineering and others on a one year program in Civil engineering.

- As one of our major investments, the African Renaissance Road Upgrading Programme (ARRUP) plays a vital role in the skills development of students to enhance the engineering skills in the country.
- Civil Engineering students from Technikons and Universities are offered in-service training from ARRUP and Cabinet Projects. Schools are visited with the aim to encourage scholars to consider careers in engineering and take science and mathematics as subjects.
- In another move to attract schools in Civil Engineering, my Department has become the main sponsor of the annual bridge building competition organized by the Civil Engineering of South Africa (CESA) in the Pietermaritzburg region.
- Our bursary committee awards financial assistance to students at university levels who are pursuing fields of Technical and Civil engineering. These programmes are designed to afford opportunities as well as skills development to people who were previously designated as disadvantaged – to gain support and be able to contribute positively towards upliftment of the economy.
- Technikon and University students have been awarded bursaries and we have an agreement that once they complete their studies, they will work for the Department for a minimum of years equivalent to the years they were funded. I am appealing to other students to make use of this opportunity and apply for financial assistance.

- In terms of Zibambele programme, there are more than 7 500 Zibambele contractors who are youth. Some of these have had their education up to grade 12 and have passed maths and science. The Department intends to assist these youth in acquiring the necessary skills.
- Our youth is also encouraged to participate in other EPWP projects such as Siyazenzela Waste Management and during road construction.
- Hundreds of students have participated in the Student Driver Education project targeting Grades 11 and 12 learners. The aim of the project is assist school learners to obtain drivers licences while at school.
- In conclusion, as young people you must take responsibility to determine your destiny, you must refuse to be distracted by the ordinary things that attract the youth.
- Finally, let us continue to work and pray with unity of purpose and without ceasing for a safer South Africa, where the number of road accidents will be significantly reduced.

I thank you