

SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE MEMORIAL SERVICE AT AMAWOTI - INANDA ON THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER 2008

Protocol observed

- Exactly a month ago, we were gathered here for a memorial service of six people, who were killed in a road crash involving a minibus taxi.
- It is again with profound sadness that we are gathered here today to mourn the passing away of seven people, who died last Thursday as a result of an accident that took place between two minibuses.
- Our government is working tirelessly to ensure that South Africa becomes a safe and a better place for all. But our challenge now is that despite our commitment to safety of our people, we continue to loose people on our roads.
- Research has shown that a very high percentage of accidents are
 preceded by a road traffic violation, which makes the improvement of
 road-user perceptions, attitudes and behaviour a matter of urgency. The
 estimated cost of the impact of deaths and injuries sustained as a result of
 road accidents is now R43 billion.

- This country has been experiencing about 15 000 fatalities annually. In spite numerous, high profile visible policing, an alarmingly high number of drivers and pedestrians have continuously abrogated their responsibility with regard to road safety. This reckless attitude has unfairly jeopardised the safety of other road users and continue to put many lives at risk.
- According to reports, a mini bus was traveling on the M25 Duffs road
 when it collided head-on with another mini bus, traveling in the opposite
 direction. Seven people were killed instantly upon impact. A further
 seven victims were seriously injured, one person was critically injured and
 three sustained minor injured.
- It is alleged that the driver of the Quantum taxi lost control of the vehicle and hit into the crash barrier, overturning into oncoming traffic. The Sprinter taxi crashed head on into the Quantum.
- One unfortunate thing about these accidents is that they kill people who
 are economically active. 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.
- We would like to pass condolences to the families of the following:

Name	Age	Gender
Nombuso Ngubane	31	Female
Nokubonga Gama	29	Female
Ncamisile Mhlongo	24	Female
Ntombizonke Hlengwa	24	Female
Joseph Mlangeni	25	Male
Doctor Hlabisa	35	Male
Sihle Ngubo	24	Male

- I am grief-stricken each time I have to witness the pain of family members at gatherings such as these, and no amount of words are sufficient enough to comfort the families during these difficult moments.
- I would like to reiterate that the safety of passengers also rests in the hands of drivers, as well as public transport operators.
- The owners of public transport vehicles such as taxis and buses also have a role to play in ensuring that their drivers are qualified and capable of driving these vehicles.
- Finally, we always say that as government we do everything possible to assist the families in whatever way we can during these difficult moments.
 Let us all obey the rules of the road and JUST DO RIGHT!

I thank you.