



SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE SOD TURNING OF IBHOKWE BRIDGE IN VRYHEID ON SUNDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2008.

Protocol observed

- Today is a great day for the people of KwaMnyathi and the whole of Abaqulusi. We have come here today to say that as Government Departments, we work together to ensure that our people have a better life. Their tomorrow is better than today.
- Our government's efforts in trying to push back the frontiers of poverty are now known everywhere. Over the past years, we have been gradually unlocking the economic shackles by means of innovative programmes that sought to address rural challenges.
- The official openings and sod turnings that are held all over the province highlight the very important task we set ourselves to change the lives of the people of KwaZulu-Natal.
- 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.

- It has come to our attention that in some areas people are requested to produce membership cards for political parties before they are employed for these projects. But I want to warn you as communities also not to allow yourselves to be manipulated by politicians who use your weakness for their political gain.
- 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 globalization; challenges such as crime, AIDS and other diseases, poverty, unemployment etc. It is in this context that we set our selves a goal of achieving a better life for all.
- However, a better life will not just float in a foundation-less space. It is based on certain fundamentals and preconditions. Preconditions for a better life include peace, democracy and development.
- Today we have this sod-turning ceremony to mark the beginning of the construction of Ibhokwe River Bridge and the upgrade of a 5 km road that will incorporate the re-alignment of the existing road.
- The construction work will involve a substantial financial injection into the area with job opportunities being created for locals. The estimated cost of construction for this project, is approximately R15 million.
- The bridge will provide convenient access from Bhokwe and the adjacent mine, across UMfolozi River onto KwaMnyathi. The KwaMnyathi community has educational and commercial facilities that are utilized by the Bhokwe community. The mine will soon be re-opened and commercial activities will warrant a suitable structure to commute across the river.
- I know that in some areas we were lambasted for doing sod turning and not delivering. But no one came to apologise when we came to officially open that project a few months later.

- I want to assure you that next year we will officially open this bridge to improve the quality of the lives of people. Some of our projects in Zululand will be opened during election campaigns. But that is just a coincident, elections or no elections our task is to follow-up on our commitments.
- In conclusion, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the community of Zululand District on all the road and bridge projects they have received and yet to receive.
- Here, I am talking about, among others, D1820, P487, P700, P432 P235/ P49/ P52, P234 Qwasha River Road Bridge, Mpembeni, Sikhwebezi Pedestrian Bridge, Wela River Bridge, Obivane River Bridge, Umbhudula Road, KwaBhanya River Bridge and Intethe River Bridge.
- There can be no doubt that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is well advanced towards achieving its objective of creating an equitable and sustainable transport systems in KZN and defending the weak.

I thank you