



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,  
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE SOD  
TURNING OF INTETHE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE ON THURSDAY, 15 MAY  
2008.**

**Protocol Observed**

- ? Pedestrian bridges are central to the provision of access and the improvement of the quality of lives of our people. But what I have always emphasised is that as government spheres we need to work together to ensure that our people have a better life. Their tomorrow is better than today.
- ? My Department is also prepared to assist municipalities with capacity when planning road infrastructure. We assist municipalities irrespective of which political party is leading that municipality.
- ? Today we are turning the SOD to mark the beginning of the construction of Intethe Pedestrian Bridge which was initially requested by a ward councilor in 2006. The total cost of the project is estimated at R5 million.
- ? As per our government's policy, another important aspect of the construction of the bridge is that its cost remains an economic benefit to the communities it will serve. To this end, the prospective contractors will be compelled to source all materials from the Ulundi/Mahlabathini area and employ all artisans and labour from the nearby communities.

- ? We all know that in 2002 two school children drowned in Isishwili River and in 2007 another child drowned while trying to cross the river. One teacher from Skhalelumuzi was once mugged and killed near the river dongas as he was about to cross the river. The bridge will help the community not to go down the dongas to cross.
  
- ? Despite the limited resources that government is able to provide, each year pedestrian bridges have received priority in this Department. About 346 foot bridges are needed in KwaZulu-Natal in order for school children and their teachers, parents, grandparents, mothers to be able to cross the river easily and safely.
  
- ? In the 2006/07 financial year alone, 14 pedestrian bridges were constructed to the value of R32 million, in 2007/08 we constructed 10 pedestrian bridges to the value of R40 million and this financial year 2008/09, 13 pedestrian bridges to the value of R48 million are to be constructed throughout the province.
  
- ? The number of people that will utilize the bridge after completion is huge. This includes S'khalelumuzi Primary School and Insikayendlu High School, a hospital and mobile clinics, a police station, public transport and historical sites etc., along the road;
  
- ? The quality of life of the local communities is difficult at the present moment, especially school children. When it rains, school children must walk for 3km before they get to schools.
  
- ? 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 by January next year, we will officially open this bridge to improve the quality of the lives of people , especially school children utilizing the bridge; to improve the economic development of the local people during construction and to improve the attendance and pass rate of Skhalelumuzi Primary and Insikayendlu High School;
  
- ? 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, Thombothi River Bridge, Wela River Bridge, Obivane River Bridge, Umbhudula Road and KwaBhanya 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**