



SPEECH NOTES FOR THE KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR BHEKI CELE DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING IXOBHO COST CENTRE ON FRIDAY 31 OCTOBER 2008

All protocol observed.

- Today we have come to the end of October which is declared as National Transport Month. During this month we look into perspectives on our transport systems and this year our focus has been on transport system beyond 2010.
- Our Government is viewing the World Cup as a major revolution in South Africa's transports system. Long after the 2010 FIFA World Cup, our transport systems should be able to sustain our economy.
- But we wanted to ensure that while our focus is on 2010 and beyond, we continued to provide transport infrastructure to our rural communities who may not be affected directly by 2010 projects.
- As government, we are under no illusion about the magnitude of the task at hand and the obligation we have in ensuring that the infrastructure systems are responsive to national policy imperatives and contribute meaningfully to economic development and growth.

- Therefore, the official opening of this Cost Centre today bears testimony to our commitment as government, to the development of an effective and efficient transport system that is fully responsive to the needs of our people. The construction cost of the Centre was R 4,3 million.
- We are aware that this Centre is still faced with the challenge of filling posts within the technical, survey and road control and documentation section. This is mainly due to the skills shortage within the country and also the unavailability of suitable accommodation within and around Ixopo.
- It is for reasons like those that this Department is expanding its skills development programmes at all levels through all its social upliftment programmes. We say that the officials of the Department are a very critical component in the execution of our mandates.
- Our intention is to maximize and monitor skills development and retention strategy for officials to better position the Department to deliver on its mandate whilst ensuring transformation of the Department. This will ensure that not only are the scarce skills attracted and retained, but also that the department does not lose the skills already acquired.
- Although, I believe in the protection of human rights, I find it difficult that we as a Department should continue spending our limited resources on human resources development, only to lose them to other Departments or private sector. Indeed, something must be done to address that.
- Let us make the Department our home, by demonstrating that its problems are all of our problems. As a transport family we need our collective solutions. We need skills to combat poverty, which breeds crime and lawlessness.

- I hope that the issue of accommodation can be addressed by also having local authorities on board. We know that in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa generally, we are still faced with a situation where previous town planning did not accommodate some of our public infrastructure.
- This is a task that municipalities must respond to squarely in designing and planning their public infrastructure development, and land use policies.
- In conclusion, I want to thank all our highly trained technical staff as well as all our stakeholders, who are always prepared to serve this Department, they deserve our appreciation.
- I congratulate you on this new facility and I trust that it will be a meaningful and productive venue in which society benefits.

I thank you.