



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,  
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. BHEKI CELE DURING THE SOD  
TURNING CEREMONY AT LOWSBERG ON THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2008.**

**All Protocol Observed.**

- ? The KZN Department of Transport is on a mission to connect people from across the province and make them realise that every place can be open to them.
- ? It is on that score that today we salute and congratulate the people of Ngoje for their new victory. You have been denied access for years, but your struggle is now being rewarded. As government, we will remove all obstacles in your way.
- ? Today's sod turning ceremony marks the beginning of the construction of Mbhudula Road project which involves the construction of some 11,5 km of new gravel road network with a new 90m long bridge over the Mkuze River. The estimated budget for the project is R22 million.
- ? The work is expected to start this year (2008) and will create opportunities for Vukuzakhe Contractors from stages one to four. The total number of job opportunities that will be created for unskilled local community members will be forty four and they will be absorbed by the Vukuzakhe Contractors.

- ? On completion, this road will be maintained by our Zibambele road maintenance programme, which will also create more employment opportunities for impoverished women.
- ? The Mbhudula community resides on a farm situated some 20 km to the south of the town of Louwsburg. This community can only get access to the provincial road network by right of way across adjacent to private properties. This right of way has been denied to the community by the neighboring farmers who have closed off the boundary fences.
- ? Social facilities such as a clinic and a school are situated on District Road D579 on the northern boundary of the Mbhudula community farm and are not easily accessed due to the right of way challenges.
- ? Other members of the community have had to see their loved ones die in their hands because there is no access to health facilities.
- ? The project therefore provides an improved road network and links up with the provincial road network (i.e. D579 and D422). This will in turn provide access to agricultural land and social facilities.
- ? This is one of the projects the Department has brought to Zululand District. We have injected more than R1.3 million in the road maintenance, the construction of new infrastructure, special projects and poverty alleviation and empowerment in this District.
- ? Our projects include, among others, D1820, D487, P700, P432, P235/P49/ P52, P234 Qwasha River Road Bridge, Mpembeni, Sikhwebezi Pedestrian Bridge, Thombothi River Bridge, Obivane River Bridge, Wela River Bridge, KwaBhanya Vehicle Bridge and Hlonyane Bridge .

- ? Coming back to Zibambele programme, this week we had a workshop for all Zibambele stakeholders where we discussed challenges facing the programme.
- ? In this programme we target mostly women-headed households to receive contracts and it is indeed a benchmark against which we can judge the progress we make in the empowerment of rural women in particular.
- ? The Department is contributing to the empowerment of savings clubs. Now, we use our saving clubs for catering during the Department's events such as sod turnings.
- ? We must take politics out of this programme. Contractors must be identified and selected on the basis of poverty in their community.
- ? In conclusion, I want to emphasise that corruption and fraud will not be tolerated in this programme; most of all stealing against poor women is being greedy and will not be tolerated. Instead you must continue to be trendsetters through innovations and take the programme to new heights.

**I thank you**