



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,  
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR B.H. CELE DURING SOD TURNING  
AT NSONGWENI – KWANONGOMA ON WEDNESDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2008**

**All Protocol Observed**

- When we presented our budget earlier this year, we dedicated it to Operation KuShunquthuli. Operation kuShunquthuli is about road infrastructure development, the building of access roads, the building of pedestrian bridges, the building of vehicle bridges, particularly in the rural areas.
- We know that as a country, our focus is on transport system for 2010. But as the Department of Transport we want to ensure that while our focus is on 2010 and beyond, we continue to provide transport infrastructure to our rural communities who may not be affected directly by 2010 projects.
- Therefore we dedicated our budget to areas such as Nongoma, where people still travel kilometers on foot to the nearest clinic, hospital, school, pension payout. We say as government we cannot allow a situation where teachers and learners of have to undress everyday to cross rivers to school.

- When we had house to house visits in this area recently, we were shocked to find that learners walk about two hours to school and there are people who reside between two rivers. If those rivers are swollen people cannot move.
- It is on that score that today's sod turning marks the beginning of the construction of the Access Road and the Vehicle Bridge. The estimated cost of the project is approximately R6,7 million. The construction work will involve a substantial financial injection into the area with job opportunities being created for locals.
- This is in addition to R1,5 billion the Department of Transport has invested in Zululand to deal with the service delivery challenges. Zululand is one of the areas in the province that have been declared as priority areas for service delivery.
- I want to emphasize that as a democratically elected government we have an obligation to serve our people irrespective of which political party they belong to. It is against this background therefore that our people who were previously disadvantaged are now on record giving testimony that indeed, we do follow-up on our commitments. Indeed, *imisebenzi iyabonakala*.
- During our budget presentation, we also dedicated this financial year to safety on our roads. We have visited many families in this province who are victims of road crashes. We have seen how difficult life is for people who lost their sole bread winners in road crashes.
- Our country cannot afford to continue to lose many lives and experience serious injuries every day. Not only is the pain and suffering immeasurable for victims and their families, but the cost to the economy is more than R43 billion per annum.

- Still on road safety, we are also rolling out the Road Monitor Programme which seeks to address the traffic hazard caused by livestock on provincial roads and at the same time, deals with challenges of unemployment and poverty alleviation.
- Fencing of the road reserve has been found to be impractical, as a result of theft of the fencing material, the use of the strips of land as valuable pasture and the need for the communities on either side of the roads to cross in order to interact with one another.
- This programme will give employment opportunities to 50% women and 50% youth. It entails essentially the equipping of a local person with a bicycle and safety clothing and he or she would be required to roam a designated stretch of road and herd any livestock off it.
- 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.
- You have a constitutional right to service delivery. Even if, for your reason, you did not vote for the party that is running government, you have a right to a better life.

**I thank you**