



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE SOD
TURNING OF THE HLAMBANYATHI BRIDGE AND ACCESS ROAD ON
MONDAY, 14 JULY 2008.**

Protocol Observed

- In order to accelerate progress towards government's goal of poverty alleviation and economic growth, the provision of a balanced road network is of paramount importance.
- Hence, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport has an infrastructure programme that meets both the basic needs of the citizens of our province, as well as open up previously suppressed economies and human potential in urban and rural areas so as to increase output in all sectors of the economy.
- This infrastructure programme entails building proper bridges and roads that will provide all-weather access, especially to economic, social and cultural services.
- In turning the sod today, we mark the commencement of the construction of the Hlambanyathi Pedestrian Bridge and access road to S'theku School, through which we will be providing this local community with a link onto the existing Main Road 534. The two projects will be completed with an estimated cost of R3 million.

- The bridge will be between 45 and 50 metres long and will provide a safe crossing of the river for scholars and residents in the area. Presently, scholars from Sizanoto Primary School cross a stream in the area by walking across the top of a weir that has water flowing over it.
- The first portion of the existing road to the S'theku School is very steep and need to be realigned to follow the contours of a new access road onto Main Road 534.
- As per our government's policy, another important aspect of the construction of these projects is that the cost remains an economic benefit to the communities of the area. To this end, the prospective contractors will be compelled to source all materials from the local suppliers and employ all artisans and labour from the nearby communities.
- My appeal is that you use our Departmental community structures such as RRTFs and CRSCs that we have put in place in all communities. I am appealing to you as communities to refuse to be manipulated by politicians and officials who use your weakness for their political gain. But as this Department we have resolved that we will not have political office bearers in any of our structures.
- We in the Department of Transport have never been obstacles to development on the contrary we facilitate development. It is on that score that we are prepared to assist municipalities with capacity when planning road infrastructure.

- We have been requested by some municipalities to maintain their roads, but only to find that those roads were not properly designed and to maintain them will be like reconstructing them entirely. We say now we will not maintain municipal roads that were not planned in consultation with us as the Department of Transport.
- In closing, I want to emphasize that the Department of Transport has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that our people have a safe and reliable transport system in the province. I am emphasizing road safety here because it has become clear that there is no use to build roads that will kill our people.
- Finally, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the community of Uthungulu District on all road and bridge projects they have received and yet to receive. Our goals are indeed centred around the lives of our people.

I thank you