



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE
ZIBAMBELE WORKSHOP IN MARCH 2007**

Protocol Observed

- ? Our South African Constitution enshrines the rights and equality of women. Our legal framework demands that we are diligent in our efforts to advance the cause of women's social and economic empowerment.
- ? There can be no doubt that in South Africa the poorest of the poor are to be found in women headed households. In the context of a province previously torn apart by political war and faction fights, I do not have to cite statistic after statistic that would validate the plight of rural women and single mothers in particular.
- ? It is for this very reason that when we established Zibambele Road Maintenance programme, we specifically targeted women headed households to receive contracts. This programme is indeed a benchmark against which we can judge the progress we make in the empowerment of rural women in particular.

- ? Our Zibambele programme has been recognised as “best practice” in South Africa and it is now part of the Expanded Public Works Programme. We therefore cannot sit back and allow Zibambele to be neglected within our own department. We have set the standards for the rest of South Africa and we need to take our leadership responsibilities seriously.

- ? All too often I am confronted by reports that complain that:
 1. Tools have not been delivered to contractors and that they are therefore not able to perform their road maintenance duties to the best of their ability.
 2. Sometimes officials politicize the programme and verbally abuse contractors.
 3. Contractors are paid late and, indeed, some contractors are even working without yet being paid.
 4. Gravel to repair potholes is not delivered timeously.
 5. There is a lack of supervision in some areas which results in some contractors not working.

- ? During our Zibambele Summit last year we spoke about a serious challenge with the levels of literacy amongst the Zibambele contractors. We found that to resulting from the past legacy where women were not allowed to go to school and get education.

- ? This is very painful because Zibambele contractors are forced to operate in a modern world where they have to go the banks to withdraw their salaries. Further more, the training that the Zibambele contractors receive requires some basic literacy so that they can relate to it.

- ? I am proud today that our partnership with the Department of Education to introduce Zibambele contractors into the Abet and Masifundisane programme is going very well. To date, 340 people have enrolled for training as facilitators and 9010 have enrolled as learners or beneficiaries.
- ? As part of our new innovation in terms of the Zibambele programme and trendsetter for training and developing the poor, the Department intends to assist Zibambele contractors who are youth in acquiring the necessary skills. Already, 113 youth Zibambele contractors are be engaged in learnerships.
- ? The Department has contributed on the empowerment of saving clubs by giving annual contract to a safety vest project, called Izimbali Zasehlobo at Maqongqo. We are also using our saving clubs for catering during the Department's events such as sod turinings.
- ? As government, we need to come up with strategies to narrow the gap between the 1st and second economy. This cannot be achieved unless we create work and business opportunities for the very poor.
- ? Our target for 2009 is to 40 000 Zibambele contractors and we already have 38 000 in our system. I am proud to say that more than 1007 Zibambele savings clubs have been established to date. The total of R 8 million which has been saved is an indication of the potential and the power that exist within poor people when it comes to saving.
- ? 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