

***Not enjoyment, not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to – morrow
Find us farther than today***

(Henry Longfellow)

Chairperson, it is my pleasure to present the budget speech on Vote 12, Department of Transport amounting to R3.7billion. This budget is dedicated 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. This budget is dedicated to the communities of eMsinga, kwaNxamalala eNkandla, kwaNongoma, oBuka, eSayidi, kwaBhidla who travel kilometers on foot to the nearest clinic, hospital, school, pension payout. This budget is dedicated to the learners of KwaQwasha who were killed on their way to schools while crossing swollen rivers.

This budget is dedicated to the children of UmKhomazi who in the absence of a pedestrian bridge were killed whilst crossing the Umkhomazi river to school. This budget is dedicated to Mr Sphamandla Dladla of Weenen who was killed recently whilst crossing uThukela river. This budget is dedicated to the communities of Sizinda and kwaNxasane who battle to cross Thombothi River in order to get to schools and clinics. This budget is dedicated to the teachers and learners of Mdumela High School who had to undress everyday to cross Isikhwebezi river to school. This budget is dedicated to the Vukuzakhe contractors, the Mechanical entrepreneurs, the Zibambebe women that their lives are better than yesterday and their tomorrows are better than today.

As we celebrate the 10 year anniversary of Asiphephe, we further dedicate this budget speech to safety on our roads. This budget is dedicated to the child headed family of kwaMayaba in Newcastle who lost their mother who was the sole bread winner in a tragic road crash. This budget is dedicated to the Sangweni family who lost six members of their family in a fatal road crash involving a truck. This budget is dedicated to the childheaded Mtshali family of kwaMakhutha who lost their grandmother, the sole bread winner in a tragic road crash involving a truck and a minibus taxi at Isipingo. This budget is dedicated to the Gumbi family eJozini who lost five brothers in fatal road crash. This budget is dedicated to the Mthakathi family who lost the entire family in a fatal road crash. This budget speech is dedicated to Mr Anthony Grinker, a former member of this house who lost his life in a tragic road crash. This budget is dedicated to Mr John Aulsebrook, a former member of this house, who lost his life on the road. This budget is dedicated to Inkosi uGumede, who lost his life in a tragic road crash.

HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE DEPARTMENT

Chairperson, as we dedicate this speech to Operation kuShunquthuli and Safety on our roads, we are mindful for the fact that these initiatives are dependent on our most valuable assets in this department, the people. This budget must speak to the recruitment, the retention and the promotion of people with disabilities. This budget must speak to the recruitment, the promotion and the retention of women in the department, particularly African women. This budget must talk to the recruitment, the promotion and retention of scarce and critical skills in the department. This budget must talk to the skills development at all levels in the department. This budget must talk to an integrated wellness programme in the department. We are hopeful that the R159 786 million budget allocated to administration will go a long way in achieving these mandates.

Since 2004, this department has recruited 1 black female General Manager, 9 female Managers, and 86 female Middle Managers. All in all a total of 824 women were appointed from level 1 to 8 in this technical department since 2004. While much effort has been made to improve the workforce profile of the Department, there is still a need to accelerate the recruitment, promotion and retention of women to ensure their true representation in the workforce.

Paradoxically, in a technical environment like the Department of Transport, the recruitment, promotion and retention of women tend to compete with the retention of scarce and or critical technical skill which is male dominated. The bulk of the pool of engineers, of technicians, of surveyors to mention a few are largely male. The challenge therefore is to balance both these needs of women and the technical skill. It is therefore important that management in the department is mindful of these dichotomies and collectively, craft solutions that will talk to retention strategies whilst also championing the cause for women advancement, particularly African women.

With regards to people with disabilities and youth, this department will embark on a special programme to deal with disability and youth. This will ensure the department's alignment with the mandates of the government of the day.

Skills Development remains at the forefront of this department honourable members. It is through skills development that any organisation remains abreast of any advancement. In the past financial year alone, R7million was spent on Adult Basic Education (ABET). The focus area for ABET is to give learners basic life skills whilst ensuring that learners progress through ABET levels up to the National Qualifications Framework. We are pleased to announce that this financial year ABET will now extend to Umzimkhulu and Kokstad areas.

The department further invests in bursary schemes for students at tertiary level whilst also awarding bursaries to our employees so as to sharpen their skills and ensure that their today is better than their yesterday, and their tomorrow is better than today.

Honourable members, with regards to employee wellness, a study conducted by Dr Coetzee revealed that since 2006, absenteeism has reduced by 30% in

the department. This is thanks to an integrated wellness approach to health of our employees. About 2415 employees access this programme per month. Most importantly our traffic officers who experience trauma everyday as they attend to scenes of crashes are to benefit from this programme with the recent appointment of a dedicated counsellor.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Chairperson, at the very heart of building and maintaining road infrastructure is Operation ku Shunquthuli. This budget which is 79% of the total Vote 12 is dedicated to Vukuzakhe contractors and to Zibambeke contractors so that their yesterdays are better than today, and their tomorrows are better than today. As this department, we shall ensure that Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment is realized through our business. As this department we shall ensure that poverty alleviation programmes are sustainable.

R2.9 billion is allocated to road infrastructure development. Of the total budget R1.6 billion is for upgrading and construction, whilst R1.2 billion is for the maintenance of our existing road infrastructure network. The balance is used for the essential and support services like Planning, Design, including Programme Support.

The road network assessment in terms of maintenance indicates a huge backlog. Some of our roads are approaching a state of disrepair even though the Department embarked on a pothole fixing programme about 10 months ago. The intrinsic problem of limited funding continues to face us, hence we are unable to deal with our backlog as quickly and expediently as we would want to. Members would be encouraged to learn that it is estimated that about 80% of the identified roads with potholes have been repaired to date. Although this is praiseworthy, the general condition of the road network points to an ageing pavement situation which is in need of urgent rehabilitation in order not to fall apart in the near future.

Chairperson, funding set aside for rehabilitation is nowhere near what is required and additional funding must be sourced urgently to address this issue. This is more urgent particularly with regards to the rehabilitation of our provincial economic routes, which if no action is taken will reach a state of disrepair. The total funding requirement to address the backlog in maintenance is approximately R5.9 billion, whilst approximately R19 billion is required to address the backlog in construction. Over a 3year period, approximately R1.9 billion is required per annum to address the maintenance backlog for the infrastructure that is worth about R48 billion. Over a 10 year period, approximately R2 billion is required per annum to address the construction backlogs.

Honourable members, the upgrading and reconstruction of roads in Umzimkhulu to acceptable standards is still underway with the conditional grant specifically allocated for this area. The Department is working with

community structures that were put in place in the last financial year. Feedback from the communities is that they are happy with what is currently happening in this area. In the last financial year the Department was given an allocation of R22 million towards the development of Umzimkhulu. In the current financial year, the allocation stands at R120 million. Departmental assessment of roads in Umzimkhulu revealed that an amount of R1.2 billion is required in order to bring the whole network to acceptable standard. When comparing R1.2 billion with the current allocation, the R22million is merely a drop in the ocean.

The provision of infrastructure comes with other challenges apart from the limited funding. Technical Skills Shortage is one of the areas of concern. The Department is experiencing an exodus of trained staff, young and old. In order to ensure continuity as well as in the interest of good quality of work, it is of utmost importance that experienced staff is retained. This will enable the Department to train new recruits as well as to appropriately monitor consultants in its employ. Furthermore, this move could even reduce the usage of consultants. The Department needs to engage in a drive to recruit, train and retain these skills.

Floods are also an area of concern. No funding is set aside for adverse nature conditions, yet these kinds of conditions are prevalent in this province. These conditions are a set back for the department as these damaged roads must be repaired for mobility purposes.

Gravel Shortage is another problematic area. This results in increased hauling which in turn result in increased cost of either construction or regravelling of gravel roads.

Inflation coupled with the demand for construction materials is also a factor for concern. Construction costs escalate tremendously as a result of a huge demand for construction materials. An example in point is the escalation of construction costs for uMngeni River Viaduct on P577. The estimated construction cost was R138.5 million, however, when tenders were received the construction cost went up to R187 million. This is an effective cost increase of 38.7% per annum. Construction prices have continued to escalate at an alarming rate, particularly in the major urban centres where several large infrastructural construction projects have placed a massive demand on scarce resources.

The biggest challenge we therefore face honourable members is that, how does this budget build access to schools whose department has a budget of R21 billion. How does this budget build access to Health facilities whose department has a budget of R15 billion? How does this budget build and maintain access in rural areas, build and maintain infrastructure for the entire 9million people of KwaZulu-Natal? The list is endless Honourable Members and hinges on embarking on “ Business Unusual All Hands on Deck ”, advocated by the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr T Mbeki.

I was privileged to recently lead a delegation to India with the senior officials of the Department of Transport. It was amazing to learn how differently they treat the matter of access roads. In India access roads are a social issue by virtue of the fact that they change the lives of people. Access roads in India are an all weather type. This is an example of how a developmental country like ours has dealt with the issue of ensuring access for all. KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa as a whole must begin to find its own answers, different from our usual methods, with regards to the provision of access to all its people if indeed we are to make an impact on the improvement of the quality of lives of our people.

Roads of National Importance

Chairperson, the Department of Transport in a drive to better the lives of the people of KwaZulu-Natal identified Roads of National Importance in addition to the existing African Renaissance Road Upgrading Programme (ARRUP). The three currently identified roads are:

- The John Ross Highway
- The Sani Pass
-

Roads to the King Shaka International Airport and the Dube Trade Port.

Currently the John Ross Highway is a two lane road single carriageway. It is being upgraded to a dual carriageway. The anticipated construction completion date is March 2010. This road is estimated to cost R 636million of which the bulk of the money which is R468.4million is expected to come from the Department of Transport. Other contributors are uMhlathuze Municipality with R30million, uThungulu municipality with R10.1million, National Department of Transport with R50million, and the Department of Trade and Industry with R77.5million. The problem we are facing honourable members is that it is unlikely that the funding from the Department of Trade and Industry would be forthcoming, hence, the delay in completion of the project could result in cost escalations. The building of John Ross Highway also includes the building of the bridge over Nsezi River. In 2007, the bids for constructing this bridge were R257million alone.

The Sani Pass is 33km long and links South Africa and Lesotho. The building of this road will shorten Freight Transport from Lesotho to Durban by 150kilometres. The area where the road is being built is eco sensitive as it is on Ukhahlamba Drakensburg World Heritage site. The estimated project cost is R490 million, with KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport contributing R405 million. The National department of Transport will contribute R85 million, while the Budget available over the MTEF period is R105million bringing the shortfall to R300 million.

Construction on the roads supporting the Dube Trade Port (DTP) and King Shaka International Airport (KSIA) started towards the end of the financial

year with only R9.0 million to spend in the current financial year. The estimated project cost is R520million with the budget available over the MTEF period standing at R411million, thus bringing the shortfall to R100million.

Pedestrian Bridges

Pedestrian bridges are central to the provision of access and the improvement of the quality of lives of people Chairperson. Indeed in communities where these were constructed, people bear testimony of how much improved their lives have been. The Departmental study conducted revealed that there was a need for 146 pedestrian bridges to be built in KwaZulu-Natal. This figure increased dramatically to 246 when the Department of Education in the Province submitted an additional 100 bridges. This figure currently stands at a minimum of 346 with a further submission of 100 pedestrian bridges again from the Department of Education. The communities of Weenen for instance, need these bridges, the communities of Sizinda and kwaNxasane require these bridges, the communities of eMsinga, kwaNongoma, eMkhomazi, Abaqulusi, eMqulela, eNkumba naseNkandla to mention a few needs these bridges for their lives to go on, for their tomorrows to be better than today.

In the 2006/07 financial year alone, 14 pedestrian bridges were constructed to the value of R32 million. These were constructed eMahlabathini, eNkandla, Ongoye, eJozini, eNquthu, eMsinga, Greytown, eBuhlebamakhosi, Utrecht, Ladysmith, uMshwathi, Ixopo, Vulamehlo and Ezingolweni. In the 2007/08 financial year the department constructed 10 pedestrian bridges to the value of R40 million. These were constructed o Phongola, Nseleni, uMlalazi, Vryheid, Nquthu, KwaLeje, Buhlebamakhosi, uMzimkhulu, Vulamehlo and Ndwedwe.

Chairperson, with regards to the 2008/09 financial year, planning and design of 13 pedestrian bridges to the value of R48 million which are uniformly distributed throughout the Province has been completed. The construction of these will soon be rolled out. These will be constructed eVryheid, Mahlabathini, Nkandla, Umhlabuyalingana, Nquthu, Utrecht, eMzimkhulu, Vulindlela, Underburg kwaQulashe, Maphumulo, uMzumbe nase Mngeni. Funding at our disposal is not enough to build the required pedestrian bridges, however, we will try to address the backlog to the best of our abilities in the spirit of Operation Kushunquthuli and ultimately so that the quality of lives of the people of KwaZulu- Natal are better than yesterday and their tomorrows better than today.

SAFETY ON OUR ROADS

Chairperson, R436 649 million is allocated to Traffic Management. As we celebrate the 10 year anniversary of Asiphephe, we dedicate this budget to safety on our roads. This budget is dedicated to the orphans who lost their parents on road crashes. This budget is dedicated to the victims of road crashes who are now disabled. This budget is dedicated to families who lost

their loved ones. This budget is dedicated to the victims of the road crashes of Monday the 3rd 2008, wherein we lost 29 lives in two hours in the roads of KwaZulu-Natal. This budget is dedicated to the 12 people who died in a fatal road crash in Bergville involving a truck and a minibus on 17 April 2008. We remember the Mayaba family, the Gumbi family, the Mthakathi family, the Mtshali family among others. We commit ourselves to say one death is one too many. We commit ourselves to do our very best towards the reduction of fatalities on our roads.

This budget is therefore a call to one and all to say Road Safety is my Responsibility and it begins with me. This is a call to say Road Safety is not only the baby of the Road Safety Directorate, but also of the department as a whole, and of everybody. As we embark tirelessly as this department in changing the quality of lives of the people of KwaZulu-Natal through the provision of the much needed infrastructure and services we shall ensure that safety on our roads is at the forefront of our development. The external stakeholders like Community Road Safety Council (CRSC's), the Rural Road Transport Forma (RRTF's), the passenger associations, including each and everyone of us must partner with the department to champion road safety campaigns.

We continue to make a call to each and every person to commit and recommit to the saying Road Safety is Everybody's responsibility. We continue to make a call to one and all to, 'Just Do Right'. We continue to remind people to observe the fact that in KwaZulu-Natal we move, ' From Zero Tolerance to 100% Compliance '.

It is on that score that as a department we constantly try new ways of reaching the people of this province whilst they are alive through road safety education and campaigns. It is on that score that you find the department of transport using ambassadors from multimedia, from sport fraternity like soccer, from religion in order to drive its messages of safety. It is on that score that the department visits people at taverns, in schools, in festivals, at churches so as to ensure that our messages reach them alive wherever they may be. Campaigns and programmes like Omela eKhaya, Having a dedicated driver, School Crossing Patrol Service, Student Driver Education for Grades 11 and 12, multimedia messages and billboards to mention a few, are proving to be a positive contributor towards the reduction of fatalities on our roads. The interesting thing about the School Crossing Patrol Project is that unemployed women are appointed through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department and the Local Municipality to perform the duties of a reserve traffic warden. This contributes a great deal in poverty alleviation programmes.

Safety by Engineering

Chairperson, the focus point for the Department within the Road Safety Directorate in 2008/09 will be the implementation of low cost high incidence engineering remedial measures. To this end the Department has adopted a 24/7/ 365 days rolling road safety education plan that provides a holistic and

co-ordinated approach in the primary areas of concern, concentrating on behaviour and geographical hazardous areas. This strategy provides us with a framework, which compliments the strategic road safety plans of National Government, Provinces, Local Authorities including other stakeholders in road safety. This strategy goes a long way in promoting road safety advice, remedial engineering schemes and working with stakeholders on enforcement initiatives. The strategy is ultimately aimed at reducing casualties, whilst encouraging a healthier lifestyle. It is our conviction that a well designed road, with all the road safety measures in place will contribute to a reduction in fatalities for all road users, including pedestrians and drivers.

Honourable Members, I had the privilege of leading a delegation of officials of the Department of Transport to Bogota in Colombia as well as to Australia. What was remarkable about the visit was that countries like Australia and Bogota have achieved reduced fatalities on their roads through road safety engineering amongst other techniques. The lesson we can learn from such countries is that as we build infrastructure, we factor in road safety engineering at all times, at all levels. In such countries, pedestrian side walks including bicycle paths for instance, are by design built to separate cyclists and pedestrians from the main roads utilized by motorists. It is therefore critical that the department needs to sensitize the engineers that build our infrastructure on these matters even if it means going to an extent of including these as requirements in their contracts.

Best Practices on Safety on our roads

In Australia, in the State of Victoria it took them 30 years to reach a stage where fatalities per annum were in the region of 330. Such results could one day be achieved in this country through a holistic approach to road safety. A case in point which gives us hope are statistics over the December 2007 holidays. During these holidays, KwaZulu-Natal alone contributed 42% reduction in fatalities on South African Roads as a whole. The rest of the 8 provinces shared the remainder of the spread. A lesson that we have learnt over this season which we need to intensify is the significant role of road safety ambassadors, patrons of safety from multisectors such as television, radio, soccer, religion amongst others. Furthermore, the role of multidisciplinary campaigns at targeted areas like taverns, stadia, festivals amongst others have proven to be very effective as well. We have come to learn that people listen better if the messages are transmitted differently by their idols, be they pastors, be they soccer stars, be they television personalities, be they radio personalities. The multidisciplinary law enforcement agencies also played a pivotal role in this success.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Honourable members, in line with operation kuShunquthuli as well as safety on our roads, the department will step up enforcement. Given the challenge of ensuring the safety of communities, the Department has identified a need to improve its capacity to manage the increased traffic volumes as more people take advantage of the new well-maintained roads that are being built

since the democratic government took over.

This has meant scaling up the intake of traffic police trainees, who are dominated by women in the interest of gender equity. The Public Transport Enforcement Unit (PTEU), which celebrated its 10 year anniversary in 2007 will also increase by 100 officers over the next two years in order to deal with enforcement within the public passenger transport sector. As part of scaling up the number of traffic officers, investigations are underway to replace uniform officers engaged in non-core functions with administrative personnel as this will provide increased numbers of officers on the road to improve service delivery. These new recruits coupled with the replacement of uniform officers with administrative staff will boost the visibility levels of law enforcement agencies and thus discourage potential traffic crimes. That is a positive development for safety on our roads since we continually have more traffic officers that conduct road blocks.

The planned traffic officer exchange programmes between Australia and South Africa will surely have a positive bearing on our capacity to manage road traffic. We look forward to the added value that would emerge out of this exchange, particularly with regards to our operations.

In an attempt to focus on overloading, the weighbridge at Winkelspruit is to be relocated to the N2 triangle at Kokstad where it is our intention to eventually move the RTI patrol station to a purpose built facility on that location so as to exert an enforcement presence at this point of entry to KwaZulu-Natal.

A newly built weighbridge is to be commissioned shortly at Gingindlovu on the R102 further adding to the protection of the provincial road network. This traffic control centre is 90% complete and will be operational by the end of July 2008. The weighbridge on the N11 near Dundee turn off has been re-commissioned and is operating effectively as a deterrent to overloading by freight operators. The weighbridges will contribute significantly in reducing overloading on the provincial road network. The current financial year will see a huge crackdown on overloading in the province. Campaigns like Thath' isikorokoro and Yehlakancane will continue so as to ensure law enforcement in the public and freight sector.

Technological Advancement in Law enforcement

Chairperson, we are proud to announce that the implementation of the computerised learners and driver's vehicle testing system has now been completed at the five provincial testing centres as a measure to minimise fraud and corruption at driver's licence testing centres. The system is currently being maintained and optimally utilised. The advantages and convenience of the touch screen system has been convincingly demonstrated at our five major provincial licence testing centres where waiting lists have been slashed from six weeks to two days. Often same day test are available. We trust that this will go a long way in ensuring that the drivers we have on our road are legitimate thus contributing to a pool of good drivers on our roads.

Honourable members, part of the law enforcement strategy which the department has adopted is a more sophisticated method in detecting speedsters on our roads. The department continues to invest in technology so as to ensure that we keep abreast of developments at all times. The Department of Transport is the first ever in Africa as a whole to bring to its shores the speed over distance device. This automated speed enforcement device is aimed at ensuring the constant adherence to speed limits at all times over a distance of 8km thus eliminating the tendency to slow down as one approaches the camera, and subsequently speed up after passing the camera. This technology has proven more effective and realistic internationally and is utilised where manual speed timing cannot be safely carried out.

Furthermore on technology, the Department following its visit to the Vehicle Operating Standards Agency (VOSA) in London is in the process of purchasing a mobile brake tester. This technology can be used at the road side to test for vehicle fitness. It will ensure that at any time, at any place in the interest of safety on our roads, a vehicle can be pulled aside and tested without necessarily diverting to weigh bridges. If the vehicle is unroadworthy, the necessary penalties of impounding, or fines would kick in.

Honourable members, the department is also exploring bringing cutting edge technology which would be fitted on mobile unmarked law enforcement vehicles. These unmarked vehicles will, in addition to our speed over distance device, enable us to tell the speed at which a car in transit is moving on our roads. The vehicle will tell us whether the vehicles is stolen or legitimate, who it belongs to so that by the time you are pulled aside, the law enforcement officers know exactly what your case is all about.

In line with the principle that Road Safety is Everyone's responsibility, the department has engaged the services of the Institute of Road Transport Engineers to better understand the causes of collisions from a mechanical point of view which has assisted the department a great deal in numerous police investigations.

SAFETY IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND FREIGHT

Chairperson, about 70% of people in South Africa use Public Transport. To this end; R79, 037 million is allocated to Transportation. Safety in this mode of transport becomes critical because when crashes occur in the modes of transport that carry such high volume of people, more fatalities occur. Unfortunately, most of the people who die on the roads are economically active people. It is the workers travelling in busses or taxis in order to earn a living for their families. It is a recently graduated doctor, teacher, nurse, lawyer, engineer who has recently bought a car. It is a middle class family travelling to and fro holiday destinations. It is our future, the school children travelling to and fro school in the quest to become the better people of tomorrow.

More and more road safety campaigns need to be tailored towards public transport users, drivers and operators in particular to raise awareness about the impact of fatalities on the roads to families in particular.

Honourable members, it is out of this road safety concern that the department will launch the training academy wherein the training of taxi drivers, taxi owners, bus drivers and truck drivers will take place. The training academy focuses on business management and driver skill development initiatives in the interest of addressing the challenges related to safety and business ethics in public transport. This initiative is supported by the MEC for Education in KwaZulu-Natal. To this end Public FET colleges are involved in the training interventions.

Allow me Chairperson to give you an update on the taxi recapitalization programme. To date, the Department has received 2 325 requests from taxi operators to have their vehicles scrapped and 1 554 have already been scrapped or freed from our road due to old-age and the potential road disaster that they pose. Indeed the taxi recapitalization programme is a direct contribution to safety since one public transport vehicle that is involved in one accident affects many people.

We are sustaining efforts to encourage the utilization of non-motorized public transport. The Shova Kalula Initiative is one such measure that sees the Department distributing bicycles to communities and schools where public transport is not available. Again, there is a need to provide appropriate infrastructure for non-motorized public transport participants namely cyclists and pedestrians. The Department is sensitizing its engineers on the issue of inclusive road designs and suitable signage to promote safe co-existence between motorized and non-motorized public transport users.

The successful launch of passenger associations in the 2007/08 financial year promises to be a positive contributor of safety on our roads particularly in the public transport mode. Through this association we aspire to get a different breed of passengers. We aspire to a passenger who will speak out rather than corroborate with public transport operators whose behaviour and vehicle condition undermine their safety. We aspire to a passenger who will have an equal status to negotiate with the operators on matters of mutual concern. We aspire to a passenger that will make a contribution towards the creation of conditions that are conducive to safety on our roads.

In line with 2010 World Cup commitment to improve public transport system, the Department has identified three hubs for the implementation of Public Transport Intermodal facilities. The three identified hubs are Pietermaritzburg, Portshepstone and Stanger. Funding for implementation has been made available by the National Department of Transport through Public Transport Infrastructure and Systems Grant.

DEVELOPMENTAL AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES IN THE DEPARTMENT

ZIBAMBELE

Zibambele is a favourite baby in the department because it changes the lives of destitute women headed households dramatically out of a bare minimum wage. This budget is dedicated to these resilient women of kwaNongoma, eMpendle, eNkandla, eNgoje, whose lives and those of their families are better than yesterday because of Zibambele. This budget is dedicated to the Zibambele contractors of EMsinga, eMbumbulu, eMnambithi, who are always thankful for the little they earn because out of it they put food on the table. This budget is dedicated to the Zibambele women of eMzumbe, eZingolweni, who out of the little they earn, have managed to collectively save millions of rands. This budget is dedicated to Zibambele women of eMtubatuba, eManguzi, eNkumba who continuously strive to make their tomorrows better than today out of the little that they earn.

Chairperson, since the inception of Zibambele, the renowned poverty alleviation programme in the year 2000 by the department, the number of contractors on the programme has risen steadily over the years from merely 1500 contractors to 36 366 to date. These contractors currently maintain 22 156kilometres of the rural road network. To date a total of R672million has been paid to Zibambele contractors as salaries alone. Honourable members, in line with the recent fuel and food price hike, the department has increased the salaries for Zibambele contractors from R410 to R450, effective from 1 April 2008. R450 is a small change to most of us, but to the women of eMkhanyakude, oPhongolo, kwaMsane, eGingindlovu, it is a livelihood to them and they are thankful for that.

As a caring government, we have put it upon ourselves that Zibambele contractors must advance in life, must be better than yesterday. To this end, skills development and training of these contractors was introduced. This led the Department to organize them into savings clubs. The process was started in 2003 and to date a total 1068 savings clubs were formed. Also as part of the empowerment initiative, contractors are encouraged to save. As at the end of March 2008, they had collectively saved R10 018 266.61 million. Mr Speaker this is overwhelming considering that these women are earning just below R 500 a month and this saving is not compulsory but on a voluntary basis.

A learnership programme targeting Zibambele contractors has been initiated . This learnership has 113 learners comprising of students who will be doing NQF level 2 (road construction worker) and students who will be doing NQF level 4 (construction supervisor). Furthermore this Department has formed a partnership with the Department of Education where the 9000 Zibambele contractors were registered on the Masifundisane programme. Out of the 9000 contractors 350 of them with Matriculation were identified and trained as facilitators who will assist in the training of the 9000 learners. This is opening up new opportunities for them in the training and teaching field.

This Department is currently researching ways and strategies of empowering Zibambele women to ensure their increased participation in the mainstream

economy. This has necessitated that as department we look within our procurement chain to see what opportunities could be made available to Zibambele savings clubs .A number of opportunities have been earmarked for this purpose, these are some of the highlights: this department has adopted a strategy where for all the public interaction events held Zibambele savings clubs who are residing within that locality are given a contract to provide catering services. The amount the savings club realize for that day could have under normal circumstances been paid to an established service provider. Secondly, the department has awarded a contract for producing and supplying of safety vests to a Zibambele co-operative called Izimbali Zasehlobo from Maqonqo in Mpumalanga RRTF area. As at 31 March 2008, this co-operative had generated R2 900. Some of the initiatives are being fine tuned and will be rolled out in the current financial year.

Honourable Members, the Executive Council of KwaZulu-Natal gave the Department of Transport the task of coordinating the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) in this province. I'm pleased to share with this house that this province accounts for 29% of the total jobs realized to date in the whole country with the remainder of the eight Provinces sharing 71%. These figures do not come easy, the task of co-ordinating other Departments is challenging, but Chairperson this department is equal to the task.

SIYAZENZELA

The Expanded Public Works Programme has recently launched a formidable programme known as the Siyazenzela Waste Management Project. We have the honour of piloting Siyazenzela in this province through Hibiscus Coast and recently through Umsunduzi municipalities. The concept was adapted from the Waste Management Programme, called, ' Garbage that is not Garbage ' in Curitiba, Brazil. I am proud to announce that the pilot project in the Hibiscus Coast has grown since its inception from 1 site to 4 sites. Other municipalities like UMnambithi District Municipality have shown a keen interest in initiating Siyazenzela.

Siyazenzela proves to be one of the most effective ways to address poverty and joblessness that continue to plague our people like a disease. Again, testimonies from Siyazenzela beneficiaries (unemployed men and women) speak volumes of an untold tale of an effective poverty alleviation programme. The programme works on the basis of utilising the beneficiaries in their respective areas to collect waste in exchange for food. The contract for waste collection which could have been easily given to one person is spread along the principles of the Expanded Works Programme to benefit a number of households. The good thing is that the budget for this programme is inherently there in municipalities. The only difference is doing business differently to the norm. The roll out of this programme to all municipalities in the Province would go a long way in alleviating poverty in KwaZulu-Natal as a whole.

VUKUZAKHE AT WORK

Chairperson, the role of emerging contractors in line with the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment continues to be at the forefront of our agenda in the Department of Transport. We have established a regulatory framework to support Emerging Contractors. This framework allows for targeted procurement procedures which are in line with affirmative action policy to address the legacy of apartheid and gender discrimination. Amongst other things, is the timeous payment of these contractors so as to ensure their sustainability.

The programme has created 245 000 employment opportunities in excess of 3-4 months. The total budget for the programme to date stands at R2,616,95 billion. This includes supervision, training and overheads.

Honourable members any developmental programme by its nature must have an exit strategy at some point. The Vukuzakhe summit held recently at Alpine Heath resolved to craft an exit strategy for the contractors in such a way that there is a safe landing for them. Partnership is being sought with established contractors who are willing to come on board. We look forward to this partnership with the aim of ensuring that ultimately, our contractors participate fully in the open economy of this country and globally.

CONCLUSION

Chairperson, we commit ourselves to improving the quality of lives of the people of KwaZulu-Natal within this limited budget. We commit ourselves to say to the communities of eMsinga, eNkandla that indeed their lives would be better than yesterday. We commit ourselves to Zibambele women that their tomorrows would be better than today. We commit ourselves to Vukuzakhe contractors that their lives would be better than yesterday. We commit ourselves to the learners of Mdumela High School that their tomorrow will be better than today. We commit ourselves to the communities of Sizinda and KwaNxasane that their tomorrow would be better than today. We commit ourselves to the people of Weenen that their yesterday would be better than today. We commit ourselves to all the people of KwaZulu-Natal that we shall ensure that indeed their today is better than yesterday, their tomorrow better than today.

As I conclude Chairperson, allow me to give thanks to our guests present here today at the gallery and to the portfolio committee on Transport led by Mr O Singh. Many thanks also to the entire team in the Department of Transport, internal and external stakeholders under the leadership of Mr Chris Hlabisa who is the Head of Department. Special thank goes to the team at the Office of the Mec led by Mrs Duze.

I now formally table R 3, 755 billion Vote 12 Department of Transport and leave you with the words of Henry Longfellow:

***Not enjoyment, not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to – morrow
Find us farther than today
Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait***