



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE
SIYABAKHUMBULA IN HARDING ON THE 12th OF APRIL 2009**

Protocol observed

- As the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport, part our mandate is to create a safe road environment, through the reduction of deaths and crashes on the provinces' roads.
- It is very encouraging to see so many of us gathered here today together with religious leaders and their congregations from different religious faiths, who have come together to pray for divine intervention in our efforts to reduce deaths on our roads.
- It was December 21 last year when we attended a funeral service for seven people who were killed on the road in this area. We had been here five months before for the memorial service of another seven people who were also killed on the road. I know that this may be statistics to others but statistics don't die, people die on the roads.
- When we met with Inkosi Xolo during those services, we thought that it would be necessary to call this service to remember those who passed away, but particularly, to pray together for God's intervention.

- Religious denominations and organisations are a critical pillar of civil society, as they make a meaningful impact in shaping societal behaviour and attitudes. We need to encourage all road users to take full ownership of the problem of aggressive and unsafe driving practices, so that they can be part of the solution to modify the behaviour and attitude of all road users.
- We cannot afford to continue to lose over 40 lives and experience 140 serious injuries every day. Not only is the pain and suffering immeasurable for victims and their families, but the cost to the treasury and the economy is around R56 billion per annum.
- Over the years, an analysis of the causes of these crashes indicates that speed, alcohol, driver fatigue, reckless and negligent driving, un-roadworthy vehicles, pedestrian deaths and the attitude of road users require specific attention.
- One unfortunate thing about these accidents is that they kill people who are economically active. People who drive their cars or travel in public transport are mostly working and have dependants. Another thing is that the impact of fatalities is seen on people left behind.
- But we can still make a difference on our roads, if we all pull together and all take responsibility for our actions. As drivers we need to be responsible especially when in charge of other human lives. As passengers we need to be very aware of safe and legal travel, and not make ourselves vulnerable to abuse.

- This Department has had several exciting developments in the past years that have an influence on road traffic management:
 - The reduction in alcohol levels for drivers from 0.05 gram per 100 millilitres of blood to 0.02 gram per 100 millilitres.
 - Manpower was increased from 350 enforcement officers to presently more than 900 officers.
 - The evidential breath testing instrument was rolled out and legislation was changed to support it.
 - Booze buses were rolled out province wide.
 - The mobile brake roller tester was introduced.

- Recently, for the first time in KZN we have launched the Automotive Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). This technology can read the number plate of vehicles stationary or moving and instantly tell us about any outstanding businesses e.g. unroadworthy vehicles, unlicensed vehicles etc.

- In conclusion, road safety is everybody's responsibility and it has become a moral and religious challenge. Therefore, I want to urge all religious leaders to ensure that road safety also becomes a spiritual issue, since road safety is also a matter of life and death.

- Finally, continue to work and pray with unity of purpose and without ceasing for a safer South Africa, where the number of road accidents and incidents of crime will be significantly reduced.

I thank you