



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR B.H. CELE AT THE
LAUNCH OF FLOOD DAMAGE REPAIR PLAN IN THE SOUTH
COAST ON TUESDAY, 27 JANUARY 2009**

All Protocol Observed

- It is not my intention to take you back to what you have gone through. I know that I have been on the south coast many times for memorial services.
- The video you saw is produced by the Department to show how the impact of fatalities is on people left behind. It shows how these accidents kill people who are economically active. At least you can see it on DVD, we see it live; not once, but many times.
- Coming to today's event, why are we here? We have come here today to say that as a democratically elected government, we work tirelessly to ensure that our people have a better life.
- Last year heavy rain, as much as 500 mm in some places, fell over two days causing disastrous flooding along a 40 km wide strip of the coastal region of KwaZulu-Natal stretching from eZingolweni to uMgababa.

- This resulted in severe damage to infrastructure in both urban and rural areas and caused disruption of essential services and hardship to thousands of people.
- Some rural communities became isolated from schools, shops, clinics and places of work and the loss or damage to some bridges on major road links forced the closure of roads with the result that much longer alternative routes needed to be used for daily activities.
- The municipalities of eZingolweni, uMuziwabantu, Hibiscus Coast, uMzambe, uMdoni and Vulamehlo were severely affected. The damage to municipal infrastructure and the disruption of municipal services was extensive.
- After inspecting hundreds of roads throughout the Ugu District it was estimated that R 1,1 billion worth of damage was caused to provincial road infrastructure alone.
- Subsequent to that, the provincial Cabinet appealed for financial assistance from national government which resulted to an amount of R 617 million being allocated for the repair of provincial road infrastructure.
- The Department set itself a target of completing the road repairs within 17 weeks that included the Christmas period. I am pleased to announce that work is taking place on 240 roads in the uGu District and that 36 % of the work has been completed.

- Some 27 bridges and causeways had either been totally destroyed or have suffered serious structural damage. These are being investigated and tests are being carried out for the design of new structures. Contractors will be starting soon on the reconstruction but completion will only be towards the end of the year.
- The Department of Transport has set itself two primary objectives before implementing its plan: We will give top priority to the repair of roads, particularly in the rural areas where the affected communities had suffered for long enough. We also maximise opportunities for contractor development and local employment.
- The Head of Department has exercised his emergency powers to mobilise all available resources with the aim of undertaking the major portion of the work before the 31 March 2009 – the end of financial year.
- In conclusion, I know that this work coincides with election campaigns, but elections or no elections our task is to follow-up on our commitments. In fact, as a democratically elected government we have an obligation to serve our people irrespective of which political party they belong to.
- Finally, remember that preconditions for a better life include peace, democracy and development.

I thank you.