



SPEECH NOTES BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. BHEKI CELE AT THE SOD TURNING OF NYELELA PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE - MABEDLANE ON FRIDAY 06 MARCH 2009.

Protocol observed

- Our gathering here today for the sod turning of the bridge is indicative of the fact that the good relationship and the trust have gone from strength to strength in the past five years between our government and communities.
- It is not surprising that our people who were previously disadvantaged are now on record giving testimony that indeed, we do follow-up on our commitments. They give testimony that as a democratically elected government we serve our people irrespective of which political party they belong to.
- Today we are responding to a request by the community that a bridge be constructed that will serve approximately 75 households in this area. People want to have access to creches, schools in the area and main road for public transport.
- Because our government has ears to listen, today we are committing ourselves to an investment of R11,4 million for the construction of Nyelele Pedestrian Bridge.

- We know that Zululand is one of the areas in the province where people still travel kilometers on foot to the nearest clinic, hospital, school, pension payout and have to undress everyday to cross rivers. It is on that score that the Department of Transport has invested R1,5 billion in this District to deal with infrastructure challenges under Operation Kushunquthuli.
- We have injected cash in projects that include, among others, D1820, D487, P700, P432, P235/ P49/ P52, P234, Umbhudula Road Qwasha River Road Bridge, Mpembeni, Sikhwebezi Pedestrian Bridge, Thombothi River Bridge, Obivane River Bridge, Wela River Bridge, KwaBhanya Vehicle Bridge, Intethe River Bridge and Nsonyane Bridge.
- This is not the first time we have government in the history of South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal in particular. But our people where these infrastructure projects were constructed bear testimony of how much improved their lives have been.
- In line with our policy, construction the cost must remain an economic benefit to the local communities where contractors source all materials from the area and employ all artisans and labour from the nearby communities. There must be no political preferences in this regard.
- As a society, we are facing challenges such as crime, AIDS, poverty, unemployment etc. These challenges can only be addressed under certain circumstances which include peace, democracy and development. These are preconditions of a better life for all.
- Apart from the R1,5 billion investment under Operation Kushunquthuli, this District now has 3 575 Zibambele contractors. There are 211 savings clubs and they have saved R1 433 980 to date.

- We have also had other activities in areas under Mahlabathini and Nongoma RRTFs, such as regravellings at the tune of R38 million, construction of local roads to the value of R6 million and construction of causeways at the cost of R5,7 million.
- In conclusion the figure for pedestrian bridges to be built in KwaZulu-Natal has increased dramatically to more than 400. Unfortunately, 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 is better than yesterday and their tomorrow is better than today.

I thank you