



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE OPENING OF
INTETHE RIVER BRIDGE ON SUNDAY, 19 APRIL 2009.**

Protocol Observed

- Ulundi has become my home now. It is one of those areas that are close to my heart where people still travel kilometers on foot to the nearest clinic, hospital, school, pension payout.
- As the MEC for Transport in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, I have a political mandate of ensuring that we restore the dignity of female teachers and learners who have to undress when they cross rivers. I have a political mandate of ensuring that neither individual nor organisations will stop us from bringing infrastructure to our people.
- But what I have always emphasised is that as government spheres we need to work together to ensure that our people have a better life. Their tomorrow is better than today.
- It is unfortunate that in other areas people who work with us in the name a better life for our people are lashed out at and even removed from the office. But this Department is always prepared to assist municipalities with capacity when planning road infrastructure irrespective of which political party is leading that municipality.

- Today we are opening the first phase of the construction of Intethe River Bridge which was initially requested by a ward councilor in 2006. To date, R1, 7 million has been spent for the project.
- As per our government's policy, another important aspect of the construction of the bridge is that its cost remains an economic benefit to the communities it will serve. About 47 job opportunities have been created for locals – 37 males and 10 females.
- We all know that in 2002 two school children drowned in Intethe River and in 2007 another child drowned while trying to cross the river. One teacher from Skhalelumuzi was once mugged and killed near the river dongas as he was about to cross the river.
- The number of people that will utilize the bridge after completion is huge. This includes S'khalelumuzi Primary School and Insikayendlu High School, a hospital and mobile clinics, a police station, public transport and historical sites etc., along the road.
- May I take this opportunity to congratulate the community of the whole Zululand District on all the road and bridge projects they have received and yet to receive.
- Here, I am talking about, among others, D1820, P487, P700, P432 P235/ P49/ P52, P234 Qwasha River Road Bridge, Mpembeni, Sikhwebezi Pedestrian Bridge, Thombothi River Bridge, Wela River Bridge, Obivane River Bridge, Umbhudula Road and KwaBhanya River Bridge.
- As the term of this government under the leadership of the Premier Sbu Ndebele comes to an end this month, I wish to congratulate all of you who have benefited from the government's programmes.

- I also wish to thank all our stakeholders who have always ensured that we move to the same direction as a transport family since my tenure of office. *Imisebenzi iyabonakala.*
- Indeed, this is not the first time we have government in the history of South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal in particular. But our people have only begun to see change in their lives through our democratic government's development programmes.
- In conclusion, 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.
- The R9 billion infrastructure investment and the recruitment of more than 40 000 Zibambele contractors who have saved more than R9 million in the province for the past five years show that indeed, '*sibuyisela okwabantu kubantu, imisebenzi iyabonakala*'.

I thank you