



## **SPEECH NOTES BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON BHEKI CELE DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF P218 AND P710 ON THURSDAY 16 APRIL 2009**

### **All Protocol Observed**

- As the ANC led government we have made rural development a priority. We know that some years ago the KZN Department of Transport initiated the Roads for Rural Development programme which was designed to achieve a more balanced road network throughout KwaZulu-Natal and, at the same time, to create new work and business opportunities for disadvantaged communities.
- We recognise that the building of road networks and their maintenance usually constitute the largest single capital investment made in rural development. The absence of a road network does constrain the delivery of all other services.
- As such access roads have a considerable impact on the social, cultural and economic life of resource-poor people. Not only do they provide access to markets, services, employment, business development, transport and communication, they improve personal mobility, world view and quality of life.

- It is against this background therefore that our people who were previously disadvantaged are now on record giving testimony that indeed, we do follow-up on our commitments.
- Today we are opening Main Road P218 and P710. These roads are continually upgraded to blacktop surface for every consecutive financial year. To date, 15,9 km of blacktop has been completed at the tune of R31 million. The total length of the road is 40 km (P218 – 10 km and 710 – 30 km) and is to be completed by 2013. The total amount that will be invested is R105 million.
- There are a number of schools situated along the length of the road that will benefit from the improved access. The Mbongolwana Hospital is located close to the intersection of P218 and P710 and the upgrading of the roads will provide a much-improved access to this medical facility.
- The benefits of this road are an injection of funding into the local communities stretched along this route as well as a skills transfer to the local population.
- As much use as possible has and will continue to be made of emerging Vukuzakhe Contractors and all unskilled labour is sourced from the local communities. Only skilled persons are allowed to be brought into contracts along this route provided that there are no local people available who may have been previously trained.
- There have been 33 local job opportunities and 2,281 person days in this year alone. It is anticipated that there will be in the region of 110 local job opportunities created by this project.

- The upgrade of these two roads will provide the local community with an all weather link onto the existing P50 surfaced road in the north and to Sundumbili in the south. The upgrading of these roads will assist in the transportation of timber and sugar cane produced by the local farmers in the area, to the timber and sugar mills located on the coast.
- Indeed as the KZN government under the leadership Premier Ndebele, we are proud of our achievements. We are certain that another term in office will allow us to further accelerate the pace of transformation for the benefit of our people.
- In conclusion, we are the only government that truly transforms your lives. Rural development for us is not just an issue during this election period. As I stated earlier, we have had many programmes to address rural challenges, and therefore elections or no elections our task is to follow-up on our commitments.

**I thank you.**