



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE AT THE OPENNING
OF P296/P38 IN NEWCASTLE ON FRIDAY, 17 APRIL 2009.**

Protocol Observed

- During the past years the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport has chipped away at the inequalities inherited from past governments. Over these years we have learnt many important development lessons.
- We have created a variety of innovative programmes such as African Renaissance Roads Upgrading Programme (ARRUP) which is about the upgrading and blacktopping of major transport corridors throughout the province of KwaZulu-Natal.
- I would like to assure you today that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is serious about putting an end to your physical and social isolation. We are serious about using our programmes to develop important transport corridors that will provide the necessary kick-start to realising the full development potential of our province.
- The Main Road P296/P38 project covers the upgrading of the original gravel road to a blacktop provincial main road. The project extends along P296 from Osizweni through Springboklaagte and then follows the P38 to the intersection with P277 at KwaMbakane.

- Work on the project has been in progress since 2003 and expenditure has been R135,9m. The total length is 27.5 km. All work has been undertaken by emerging contractors and a total of 128 contracts have been awarded from grade one to grade four.
- In terms of the ARRUP objectives, opportunities have been created for the employment of local people in the contracting work and 958 local jobs have been created resulting in 58 617 person days of employment. The total amount paid to local people is approximately R3,235,188.99
- Where possible material required for construction has been sourced locally and during the project 9 local companies were used. Purchases from them amounted to R927,924.00. A number of other local companies provided services directly to the contractors. In addition to the road two bridges of the Tendeka and Mbabane Rivers have been constructed.
- The construction of this road has benefited four High Schools, six Primary Schools, two Clinics, three Creches and a Police Station.
- During the progress of the project the following initiatives have been pursued:
 - i) Development of Soils Laboratory: In conjunction with the Newcastle Cost Centre a local entrepreneur was assisted to establish a soil laboratory. The laboratory has provided a service that was originally provided by established companies in Pietermaritzburg and Vryheid.
 - ii) Community Buildings: Two sets of site offices are handed over to the community for their use when no longer required. The first offices at km 9,0 near Osizweni were handed over approximately a year ago and have been used by the Taxi Association and for Adult Education classrooms.

- iii) Training in the field of Engineering: Each year schools were visited by members of a project team during which presentations were given to students about civil engineering as a career. Nine schools have been visited. Nine students (five female) have benefited directly from the project. Two students received full time bursaries to study at Technikon.
- Central to the core of service delivery is job creation and poverty alleviation. District 25 (Amajuba) has awarded 3172 job opportunities to the Zibambele Contractors with the annual expenditure to date of R15,937,474 million, these contracts were given to the poorest of the poor to maintain the roads in this district. A total of 58 contractors are employed locally to maintain this road (P296).
 - Apart from the above investments, the Department has special projects in this area including Verdriet Pedestrian Bridge - R 2,6 million, Vanjazi Pedestrian Bridge - R 1million. These have been completed.
 - In conclusion, it is you, the voting public, who gave our democratically elected government the mandate to use its budgets to devise innovative investment strategies to secure equity and the abolition of poverty in a transparent and accountable manner.
 - This is a non negotiable. If our budgets are not reaching grassroots communities and making a real tangible difference in the lives of poor people - who are our majority citizens and our majority voters - then we, as government, will have failed in the mandate we have been given by the people of South Africa.

I thank you