



**SPEECH NOTES BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. BHEKI CELE AT THE SOD TURNING OF MLAMBOMUNYE LOCAL ROAD AT NQUTHU ON FRIDAY 03 APRIL 2009.**

**Protocol observed**

- Our gathering here today for the sod turning is indicative of the fact that our government has ears to listen. As a democratically elected government we respond to the needs of our communities.
- Our budget in the past financial years has been dedicated it to Operation KuShunquthuli and road safety. Operation kuShunquthuli is about road infrastructure development, the building of access roads, the building of pedestrian bridges, the building of vehicle bridges, particularly in the rural areas.
- We know that as a country, our focus is on transport system for 2010. But as the Department of Transport we want to ensure that while our focus is on 2010 and beyond, we continue to provide transport infrastructure to our rural communities who may not be affected directly by 2010 projects.
- Therefore we dedicated our budget to areas such as Nquthu, where people still travel kilometers on foot to the nearest clinic, hospital, school, pension payout. We say as government we cannot allow a situation where people cannot have access to their basic services.

- Today we are responding to a request by the community that a local road be constructed that will start near Qhobo Secondary School and Gwija Primary School, to serve over 100 homesteads within Mlambomunye and Bagayi areas. The total cost of the project is estimated at R21 million. The proposed length is 11,5 km.
- There is presently no clinic nearby and in case of illnesses, people have to be carried on wheelbarrows for long distances. Therefore the construction of this road will provide easy access for mobile clinics, pension paypoints, furniture vehicles, hearses and minibus taxis.
- On completion, this road will be maintained by our Zibambele road maintenance programme, which will also create more employment opportunities for impoverished women.
- I am pleased to learn that under Nquthu RRTF, we now have 1 343 Zibambele contractors. There are 39 savings clubs and they have saved R359 628 to date. We must take politics out of this programme. Contractors must be identified and selected on the basis of poverty in their community.
- We have also invested in other activities under Nquthu RRTF, such as construction of local roads to the value of R3,8 million and construction of causeways at the cost of R5,5 million.
- 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.

- Despite the limited funding, 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.
  
- In conclusion, earlier this week we launched our Easter Road Safety Campaign for 2009 where we outlined how we, as the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport has planned to ensure your safety on our roads during the coming weeks.
  
- During this Easter, enforcement and patrols will be conducted in the province focusing on the following critical offences:
  - Pedestrian Safety
  - Drunk and driving
  - Public Passenger Transport and LDVs (Bakkies)
  - Unsafe overtaking
  - Vehicle without number plates
  
- These are just some of the specific initiatives that we will be involved in during this period to ensure safety on our roads but there is also an extensive enforcement and safety plan in the form of roadblocks that we have provided to the media and brought to public attention. So, don't say you were not warned.

**I thank you**