



**SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR B.H. CELE DURING SOD TURNING
OF THULWANE BRIDGE – INKANDLA ON TUESDAY, 03 FEBRUARY 2009**

All Protocol Observed

- In the past financial years we have dedicated our budget two things. We have dedicated it to road safety because the Department of Transport has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that our people have a safe and reliable transport system in the province.
- Another focal point of our budget has been the road infrastructure development - the building of access roads, the building of pedestrian bridges, the building of vehicle bridges, particularly in the rural areas. All this is done under 'Operation KuShunquthuli'.
- 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 Inkandla, where people still travel kilometers on foot to the nearest clinic, hospital, school, pension payout points. We say as government we cannot allow a situation where teachers and learners of have to undress everyday to cross rivers to school.

- Inkandla is one of the areas in the province that have been declared as priority areas for service delivery due to the high rate of poverty and unemployment. The KZN Department of Transport has invested R1,9 billion to deal with the service delivery challenges in the Uthungulu District.
- Our projects include the construction of P240, P230, P15, P50, P499/P494, P496 – John Ross Highway, P218 and P568 among others.
- Today's sod turning marks the beginning of the construction of Uthulwane Vehicle Bridge over Uthukela River as well as access road. The estimated cost of the project is R37.5 million. The access road is about 11 km long and is at the tune of R7.5 million. The bridge is R30 million.
- The construction work will involve a substantial financial injection into the area with job opportunities being created for locals. This is done by a government which has decided to work for all its citizens, without any consideration of political affiliation.
- 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. Indeed, *imisebenzi iyabonakala*.
- 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.
- Today we are also rolling out the Road Monitor Programme which seeks to address the traffic hazard caused by livestock on provincial roads and at the same time, deals with challenges of unemployment and poverty alleviation.

- This programme will give employment opportunities to 50% women and 50% youth. It entails essentially the equipping of a local person with a bicycle and safety clothing and he or she would be required to roam a designated stretch of road and herd any livestock off it.
- When the democratic government took over in 1994, the challenge was not only to address historical imbalances but also to face new challenges imposed by globalization; challenges such as crime, AIDS, poverty etc. It is in this context that we set our selves a goal of achieving a better life for all.
- In conclusion, as we head towards elections, remember that a better life is based on certain fundamentals and preconditions which include peace, democracy and development.

I thank you.