

**TRANSCRIBED SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL TRANSPORT HEAD
MR. CHRIS HLABISA AT THE MASS FUNERAL SERVICE HELD IN HARDING
AT ENQABENI ON SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2009**

The working relationship between ourselves and the taxi associations have improved. I would like to thank them for coming;

There was a funeral that we attended together. There had been an accident that occurred at Nseleni when a truck coming from Mtuba towards Empangeni collided with a taxi carrying passengers coming from work, which was driving towards the intersection to the freeway. 7 people died including the driver of the vehicle. We are still investigating what led to the accident;

In 2005 I made my first trip to a funeral service as a representative of the Transport Department at Ngwavuma (Obonjeni), which is an incident that I will never forget;

The Gumbis had been travelling from Johannesburg, four brothers and one son. They probably stopped somewhere on the road to have some drinks (alcohol). They then assessed themselves as to who was the least drunk out of their group whom they would assign to drive the car since they had all been drinking. Unfortunately, they never reached their destination. They all died;

It is so unfortunate that we have to witness these tragedies on the road on a daily basis;

In December last year, Mr. Buthelezi from Eskhawini had been driving from home when he came across the SA Roadlink bus that was travelling from Johannesburg to Cape Town with one driver. There was supposed to be a co-driver at Cape Town to assist the main driver and take over when the other driver was feeling tired on the drive to Durban. Since there was no co-driver, the main driver had to again drive to Durban;

Drivers should rest every two hours to avoid fatigue;

Drivers should drink water and nothing else while on the road, and also inspect the vehicle to ascertain if it is still in a good state;

The driver of the Roadlink bus had been rushing to get to Durban and then probably drive back to Johannesburg, but he did not make it. We are still fighting for the bus to be removed from the road because it is unroadworthy, although we are not sure who is going to win this war;

During the horrific crash at Hibberdene the bus had been travelling in the wrong lane, and then drove into Mr. Buthelezi's car and killed him and his wife, 3 grandchildren, one daughter and three sons;

When we went to the family home of the deceased residing at Eskhawini, we found a key hanging at the door, as everyone had died in the accident. This is not the first incident we had witnessed where a home is permanently closed because everyone has died from a horrific accident;

Most accidents that occur are caused by negligence and by people who only care about making profits and have no concern for passengers whatsoever;

We were notified that on Friday (18 September) that six people died in an accident. A vehicle (double cab) drove straight into a taxi that had been travelling from Maphumulo to Stanger. 2 people were in the double cab and the taxi was fully loaded;

We no longer speak of passengers as loads, these people are our mothers, children etc. We have banned the taxi people from making people sit in fours or referring to them as loads;

Our province is facing serious cases of carnage, and the human element is always a contributing factor to such carnage;

It is painful to visit accident victims only to find that they will ask you if you have found a certain body part of a loved one who had died in an accident. There was a 1400 car model that had been carrying 14 passengers which met an accident at Ulundi 19. The 1400 failed to stop at the crossroads and drove into a Greyhound bus. One of the passengers of the Greyhound remembers that she had been carrying her child, only to find that the child's head had been cut off;

I am just making reference to situations that we come across on a daily basis, but still we never get used to the pain and trauma that we come across;

My deepest condolences to the families who are gathered here to lay to rest their loved ones (Shezi Family, Mawobe family);

Our country is facing financial problems (recession). The rate of poverty is rising and the government has come up with a National Skills Fund to help those who have lost their jobs because of the recession;

There is a need to emphasize the theme coined under Dr. Zweli Mkhize (One Home, One Garden). Each home must have a garden, and additionally schools and clinics should have gardens;

The lives that are lost during accidents are those of the youth and breadwinners. The youngest to have died out of all the accidents I have made reference to is a 1-year old and the oldest is 36-years old;

People have gone from eating 3 times a day to eating once. Children are affected at school. We will do a follow up on the families to check how life is carrying on after their loss;

Last year we lost 15000 people from the road. According to research that we have recently conducted, these accidents cost our country R56 billion every year;

I therefore urge everyone present here to be road safety ambassadors. When you see a person drinking excessively while on the road, warn those people that they will kill innocent people. People who drive drunk are likely to survive while causing harm to innocent people. People must also not drink and walk;

During a road block that we held in Florida Road, Durban last year, we arrested 60 people, 35% of which were female nurses from McCord Hospital in Durban;

Drivers are being warned not to exceed the speed limit when driving. Additionally this bad behaviour of people driving slowly in the fast lane should stop;

Why can't we practice discipline and be like the Australians who consider it as a crisis if they lose as many as 300 people on the road;

South Africans must just do right;

May the following rest in peace:

- Zwelihle Shezi (36)
- Mzikhona Sipho Shezi (26)
- Andiswa Mahobe (27)
- Wandile Shezi (6)
- Emihle Shezi (1)
- Nkululeko Mahobe (22)