

## **SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL TRANSPORT HEAD MR CHRIS HLABISA DURING THE RTI PASSING OUT PARADE ON FRIDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2010.**

### **Protocol observed**

I wish to begin by apologising on behalf of our MEC the Honourable Mr Willies Mchunu, who could not be with us here today to address you due to other equally important engagements.

It is once again a great pleasure for me to be part of this graduation ceremony today for traffic officers who will be joining us permanently in our struggle to save lives on our roads in KwaZulu-Natal. It is our hope that these additional officers will be able to make some difference to help us reduce the carnage on our roads during this festive season and beyond.

I am saying this because we see that the challenge is still huge. The road crashes are still too many. Too many people are still victims of this preventable and curable disease that happens on the roads.

Just last Sunday we were launching our Summer Road Safety Plan at Umlazi Mega City shopping mall. As the province of KwaZulu-Natal, we pledged our support of this year's campaign and its theme which says: "Make Roads Safe Campaign," that is driven by the United Nations (UN).

This Make Roads Safe Campaign is also meant to kick-start the UN's commitment to a "Decade of Activism for Road Safety", as the whole world endeavours to curb road deaths drastically between 2011 and 2020 in line with the UN's proclamation in March this year.

Our launch was subsequent to the national plan which was launched by the national Minister oKaManzankosi on Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> of November in the North West province.

In his Summer Launch address, uManzankosi said: "Road deaths are now the leading global cause of deaths for children and young people aged 10 to 24. In addition, road deaths cost the countries billions of dollars, money that could instead be spent on education, health and poverty eradication. Standing up against road deaths means we must respond to this epidemic which kills on the scale of malaria and will soon overtake it."

Therefore, in the context of our province where we have experienced an increase in the number of fatalities on our roads during the past few months, and with the festive season having officially begun, more drastic measures still need to be taken. We have said that as Government we need to ensure that breaking road laws is portrayed as a big deal.

In fact as government we are readying ourselves not only to make this costly tendency to use the road irresponsibly unfashionable and old-fashioned, but it is our priority to continue to force road-users to worry about not breaking traffic laws more than they do now.

It is on that score that I want to warn all our new officers that you have joined the Road Traffic Profession during a very interesting period in its history. This is the season when most of traffic offenders, especially speedsters, have cash and would always attempt to bribe you.

The message is clear on that one: One of our government's priorities is fighting against crime and corruption. Never indulge yourselves into corrupt practices like bribery. You will be caught and you will pay the price.

An officer who dresses smartly, who takes pride in his/her uniform, who shows a high degree of self discipline and who respects others is generally perceived by the public to be an officer of integrity. Be proud of your uniform and make a difference.

A high visibility for officers on the roads is something that the public sees as a commitment to their road safety. It makes them feel safer and protected. It is your duty as traffic officers to protect and serve the public.

As the SAPS National Commissioner General Bheki Cele has lashed out at people who turn the organisation into a Zama Zama, we in the traffic law enforcement also reiterate that we don't want people who join us as a last resort because they could not get their intended careers.

In conclusion, I want to congratulate all of you who have graduated today. Please go back to your respective work places mindful of the high professional standards the KZN Transport Department and various local authorities expect of you and mindful also of the trust we have placed in you.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

**Thank You.**