

**SPEECH NOTES FOR THE KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR WILLIES MCHUNU AT THE
ESTCOURT PEACE-BUILDING AND CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVE
OPERATION HLA SELA PROJECT ON 02 AUGUST 2010**

Programme Director;
Cabinet Members present;
Members of the Portfolio Committee;
Representatives of Political Parties;
Mayors, Councillors, Municipal Managers and Officials;
Amakhosi;
Leaders of Business and Civil Society;
Provincial Commissioner and SAPS members;
Chairpersons and Members of CPFs;
Representatives of Labour;
Representatives of the Taxi Industry;
Representatives of Faith Based Organisations;
Officials from Government Departments;
Youth Leaders;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all of you who have come to this important Symposium. To me, your presence here is a reflection that there is incredible will to make this area safer and prosperous.

Today we are here on a mission. Our mission is called Operation Hlasela. Operation Hlasela is about waging open war against all the factors that may directly and indirectly have led to instability in this area. As Government working with you as a collective, we cannot have a situation where we allow ourselves to be deprived of that which is most precious to the people and their leaders, that is, peace.

As Government, community leaders from different structures and as members of this community, we have to take a stand, work together side by side in finding solutions to the safety challenges we now have which are threatening the wellbeing of our people.

Today is a day for us to share our ideas, engage each other and emerge with workable solutions for the benefit of all. Remember, the purpose of this exercise is **dialogue** – it is about agreeing to disagree and finding common ground.

Provincial Government is on a course of *Building a United Front Against Crime*, and what better place to do so than in an area such as this one where peace and stability are being so seriously threatened by events that have taken place in this area, both recent and past.

We are profoundly aware that this can only be done if we combine our energy and resources, and therefore, this Symposium has been called to harness our collective wisdom and agree on the roles that each of us will play in making the communities of this area enjoy safe zones for all, young and old, men, women and children.

As I indicated earlier, Provincial Government under Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize has a programme called '*Operation Hlasela.*' Operation Hlasela is about embarking on a concerted drive to streamline and integrate programmes which will lead to targeted and sustained interventions in areas where there are serious safety challenges. Through the vigorous work of the Department of Community Safety & Liaison which I am privileged to lead, we as Provincial Government, working side by side with community-based structures, are prioritizing the following:

- Promoting and initiating peace and stability in troubled areas;
- Preventing and detecting crime as well as address crime that has arisen;
- Promoting co-operation between the police and communities;
- Strengthening co-operation amongst Government Departments in the area;
- Establishing Community Safety Forums;

- Building the capacity of Community Police Forums; and
- Encourage the establishment of Street Committees for the area.

Having said all that, I want to emphasize that we remain convinced that our people themselves hold the key to their hope of a future which is free of crime and violence.

In hosting this symposium, therefore, the intention is to join hands with you to find mechanisms to win the battle against crime.

The critical questions we must find answers to as we engage each other today are:

- How do we restore healthy community life and facilitate the improvement of the physical and moral environment?
- How does government become more interactive, responsive and caring?
- How do civil society formations become more committed and creative?
- How does our business community become more ethical, involved and generous?
- What community-based crime prevention programmes will be most effective in protecting young people from the dangers that prevail in their respective communities?

Throughout the Province, **Community Safety Forums** are being established and these structures will in future play a central role as mechanisms for engagement between communities and the criminal justice system and other role players. Community Safety Forums will direct government responses to local safety and security challenges and function as the central hub connecting criminal justice service delivery to the community. Importantly, they will implement crime prevention programmes, with a priority on programmes targeting the youth.

Street Committees are the structures that will be used to strengthen crime prevention initiatives. Municipalities, assisted by Community Police Forums (CPFs), are called upon to play a central role in setting up and ensuring sustainability of street committees.

Street Committees must devise and implement specific programmes of action targeting local crime problems and ensure that information is passed on to the Community Safety Forum within the District, for joint responses where local solutions cannot be found.

None of this can be done by anyone in isolation. Government is working hard at entrenching a common vision of prosperity and safety for our people.

In conclusion, it has long been said that what makes evil triumph is when good people do nothing. You have been invited here because you represent the good that is found in this area – you are eminent in your own right, already making a difference in the lives of our people in your particular sphere – be it industry, development, government or community leadership. Therefore, above all that will be said today, please remember that this is a peoples' Programme. It will succeed in proportion to your commitment. We look forward to hearing from each sector what role you can play in bringing about lasting peace for this area.

I thank you.