

**SPEECH NOTES FOR KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY & LIAISON, HON. WILLIES MCHUNU AT THE
OPENING OF ALBERT PARK METRO POLICE STATION IN DURBAN ON
05 NOVEMBER 2010.**

Protocol Observed

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for allowing me to join you here today and to share some of my views with you on safety issues in eThekweni. There is nothing that makes me happier than being a part of the launch of a project that will impact positively on the lives of ordinary people.

One of the foremost threats to democracy we are facing currently, is the problem of crime and violence in South Africa. Political commentators, Community Leaders, Religious Leaders and members of the public continue to speak of the breakdown in the moral foundation of society.

On the other hand, as government, we are under no illusion about the magnitude of the task at hand and the obligation we have in ensuring that our infrastructure in law enforcement is fully responsive to the needs of our people. The official opening of this Central Regional Metro Police Station today therefore bears testimony to our commitment as government to the development of an effective and efficient law enforcement system in our city of Durban.

We are grateful to Ethekewini Municipality for choosing the Albert Park area for this infrastructure. We know that during the recent years we saw crime moving from Point area to Albert Park. We know that this area has always been associated with drug dealing and in 2008 many xenophobic incidents were reported in this area.

Coincidentally, the Metro Police and I as the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, have a responsibility to ensure that people's lives are saved from road accidents as well as criminal activities. I find it important therefore to emphasise that this station is erected here in the interest of public safety.

It is not just another means and measures put in place to prevent motorists from irresponsible behaviour as they drive into the city. But we also appeal to communities of Ethekewini as a whole to join our government in spearheading its drive to **build a united front against crime** in KZN. With Durban having almost 40% of KwaZulu-Natal's population residing in it and having become an international destination for tourists, it is important that we join hands in the fight against crime and criminals to further enhance Durban's stature among other local and international competitors.

To roll out this 'Building a United Front Against Crime, which we do in all Districts of the province, the Department of Community Safety and Liaison is unleashing what it calls Operation Hlasela. Operation Hlasela simply means, we are waging a war against crime and its perpetrators. This we do by employing a simple technique; Simple but very effective.

Here, we target and focus on all the crime related challenges that plague the specific area and we do not leave until we rid that area of crime and its perpetrators. We invite people so that they can tell us what they are going to do to help us win this battle. In Ethekewini, we have launched it in the INK area and now we are preparing to take it to Pinetown following the recent killings at Ntshongweni and Tshelimnyama.

Based on the Provincial Implementation Strategy of this Build a United Front Programme we promote the establishment of Community Safety Forums (CSFs) in these areas. The CSFs serve as an engagement mechanism between communities and the criminal justice system and all other relevant role layers.

It will also serve to promote local government responses to safety and security issues. We also encourage the establishment of Street Committees in the promotion of safety at local level and our Community Police Forums (CPF) play a central role in setting up and ensuring sustainability of these committees. CPFs in turn are supported by the Department of Community Safety and Liaison and Safer Cities in establishing and maintaining Street Committees.

In conclusion, the upsurge of crime levels in some of the area in Ethekewini is a great concern not only within KwaZulu-Natal but Nationally as well. One thing is for certain when things such as that happen, and that is the people most affected are ordinary men, women and children whose lives are so intertwined in crime that they start losing hope that there is a possibility of living in a crime free area.

That is why we say this united front we talk about has a number of elements such as, to mention but a few, looking at the family as a basic unit in society, promoting responsible citizenship, civic mindedness, building of community cohesion, crime reporting and information sharing, etc...

Finally, I take this opportunity to make a clarion call that all committed and creative civil society formations should go all the way, side by side with government in the fight against crime. It may not be easy, but we will get there.

I thank you.