

**SPEECH NOTES FOR THE KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,  
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR WILLIES MCHUNU AT THE  
LAUNCH OF OPERATION HLA SELA IN THE MPOFANA MUNICIPALITY  
ON 07 OCTOBER 2010**

Programme Director;

Honourable Premier;

MEC for AEA & RD, Lydia Johnson

Amakhosi

Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Your Worship, the Mayor of Mpofana;

Councillors;

Heads of Departments;

Members of the farming community;

Representatives from different community structures present here;

Distinguished guests;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

All Protocols observed.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all of you who have come to this important gathering. Your presence here is an indication of your passion to make your area a safer and more prosperous place. Today is a day for us to share our ideas, engage each other and emerge with workable solutions for the benefit of all.

Crime is receiving high priority along with other critical developmental imperatives such as health, education, rural development and the creation of decent work. In line with this, there has been renewed emphasis on the relevance of a united, multi-faceted approach in the fight against crime which combines aspects of crime prevention, crime combating, improving socio-economic conditions and strengthening of human solidarity among citizens.

Much work has been done in attempting to create an understanding of the various factors which give rise to the crime levels we see in South Africa today. In light of what we know about the crime challenges faced by KZN, the KZN Government is spearheading a drive to 'Build A United Front Against Crime'.

The programme was launched on 21 January 2010 by our Premier and now the Department of Community Safety and Liaison is rolling it out on a District basis. It is a call for the mobilisation and involvement of all sectors of society in a concerted and sustained campaign to significantly reduce crime levels in the Province. This programme is called 'Operation Hlasela'.

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

We are deliberately moving away from merely seeing the crime challenge as a cause to lament. We rather call for considered, unified, targeted and unwavering action.

### **Recent Incidents of Crime in the Mooi River Area**

Following the recent brutal murder of three people on Sherwood Farm at Rosetta, on Wednesday, 21 July 2010, I visited the farm to pay my respects to the deceased and offer condolences to their family and community. The deceased were: Lorraine Karg, the farmer's 58-year-old wife and Zachues Mhlongo, a 66-year-old farm worker who were stabbed and had their throats slit, and Hilda Linyane, a 34-year-old domestic worker who was shot several times in her employer's kitchen. The incident is believed to be an attempted robbery that went wrong.

But because of time constraints, I was unable to visit the workers' bereaved family. Instead, I instructed the Department to assist this family with the transportation of Mrs Linyane's body to Zimbabwe and ensuring that the family gets the necessary permits to pass the border. The relevant departments were contacted and they all cooperated fully in assisting the family.

It is believed that the attackers distracted the farm owner by setting a grass fire causing the farmers and farm-workers to leave their house-hold to attend to the fire. While the farmer's wife was on her way to fetch the keys to open the container to get equipment to extinguish the fire, they were confronted by criminals inside the house, who stabbed them and slit their throats.

It appears that the robbers were unable to make off with a safe which they had tried to steal. A survivor of the incident, a young man, reported that two assailants assaulted him and locked him in the bathroom. But we want to thank our SAPS members who responded swiftly to arrest the suspects. We congratulate them on efficient and effective policing.

### **Operation Hlasela in the Umgungundlovu District**

Due to this and other serious incidents of crime in the Umgungundlovu area, especially on farms, the Honourable Premier, the Honourable MEC for Agriculture, Environmental Affairs & Rural Development and myself, identified this day to launch Operation Hlasela in the Umgungundlovu District. This will mark the introduction of a model that will galvanise the farming community to fight crime and criminals in the area.

We realise that Umgungundlovu District harbours all forms of crime due to the heterogeneous nature or character of the area. But we have noted now that apart from farm killings, stock theft in the district is a matter of concern as well. Stock-theft can be equated to a cash-in-transit heist. It robs the poor person of their wealth, which they have spent a lifetime building just for survival.

The difference is that businesses are insured against this loss whilst a poor person goes down destroyed. It is our opinion that this crime needs to be elevated as a priority crime and that the police beef up their strength and resources to fight stock-theft. It is our intention as the Department to address those stock theft incidents in an attempt to restore confidence in the SAPS as well as improve relations between farmers, farm labourers and farm tenants.

**Our key objectives are:**

- To promote and initiate crime prevention, peace and stability in the area;
- To prevent and detect crime as well as address crime that has arisen;
- To promote intra- and inter-governmental relations in the fight against crime in the interest of sustainable community development.

In conclusion, we are happy that some of the desired outcomes from today's gathering will be to:

- Implement 'Operation Hlasela' in the Mooi River area;
- Monitoring SAPS investigation and operational teams;
- Promote co-operation between the police and farming communities;
- Strengthen co-operation between JCPS Cluster Departments in the area;
- Host a Mooi River Crime Prevention Symposium;
- Establish a Farming Safety Forum that will deal with peace and stability in the area; and
- Build the capacity of Community Police Forums.

Finally, I have said in other areas where we have launched this programme that evil is triumphant when good people do nothing. Therefore, above all that is said today, please remember that this is a peoples' Programme. It will succeed in proportion to your commitment. We look forward to receiving input from you on what role you can play in bringing about lasting peace for this area.

**I thank you**