

**SPEECH NOTES DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON HONOURABLE DR. SIBONGISENI DHLOMO DURING THE OPENING OF D1273 AND KWAMABASO ROAD AT UMSINGA TOP ON FRIDAY 03 DECEMBER 2010.**

Programme Director;

Amakhosi aseNdlunkulu;

Members of the Legislature;

Your worship the Mayor;

Councillors;

Izinduna;

Officials from government departments led by HOD Mr Chris Hlabisa;

All our stakeholders including RRTFs, CRSCs, PTPAs, Vukuzakhe and Zibambeke;

All protocol observed.

I wish to begin by apologising on behalf of my cabinet colleague, the MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, the Honourable Mr Willies Mchunu, who could not be with us here today to address you due to other equally important engagements.

We thank the HOD for an overview of what our government has done and is still to do for this area of Umsinga and Umzinyathi District as a whole. This confirms that we have a government that walks the talk – we always follow up on our commitments.

It is non negotiable indeed that if our budgets are not reaching grassroots communities and making a real tangible difference in the lives of poor people - who are our majority citizens and our majority voters - then we, as government, will have failed in the mandate we have been given by the people of this province.

It is also true that the bridges and access roads are central to the provision of access and the improvement of the quality of lives of our people. We have seen in communities where these were constructed, people bear testimony of how their lives have been much improved.

I am therefore delighted that today another milestone is recorded in the lives of the people of Umsinga, as we officially open the upgraded D1273 and KwaMabaso Roads that have been completed. We congratulate the people of Msinga who now have access to schools, hospitals, clinics and police stations, among other things.

The road D1273 is 30 kilometres in length and will link the communities of Umsinga and Nqutu. The Department has completed the 18 kilometres of upgrade to the tune of R 32 million and is now committed to construct a further 12 kilometres which will meet up with Mlambomunye Road at the Umzimyathi River. The Department is currently constructing 5 kilometres of the additional 12 kilometres and will complete the seven kilometres in the 2011/2012 financial year.

The commitment of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is evident in the Long-term socio-economic benefit, in terms of job opportunities where approximately 30 Zibambele workers will be employed in the maintenance of D1273.

Mbabaso Road is intended to serve as a link in order to accommodate the community of Ezibomvini as they are secluded and deprived from basic essential services due to not having access in a form of a road. Construction commenced in July 2009 and the whole 4.5 kilometres have been completed with an expenditure of R 7 million.

On behalf of the Government of KwaZulu-Natal, the provincial Transport Department has invested approximately R101.5 million for construction works in the DC24 area for the 2010/2011 financial year. I therefore would like to take this opportunity to also congratulate the community of this District on all road and bridge projects they have received and are yet to receive. Our goals are indeed centred around the lives of our people.

What we ask from you is patience. Don't allow negative influence from people who want you to lose hope. Remember that this is not the first time we have government in the history of South Africa, and KwaZulu-Natal in particular. Do not forget also that when our country was transformed into a democracy in 1994, the challenge was not only to address historical imbalances but also to face new challenges such as crime, AIDS, poverty, unemployment etc.

It is a fact that some of the challenges in KwaZulu-Natal had to wait until 2004 to be addressed when this ANC-led Government took over. But at least in six years, as I said earlier, our people are now giving testimony that they see change in their lives through our democratic government's development programmes.

In conclusion, as the festive season begins, which is a period synonymous with increased physical movement of people in their vehicles as locals, visitors and tourists traverse the length and breadth of our province, there is usually an unacceptably high level of deviant driver behaviour which contributes to the high levels of carnage on our roads.

Alcohol abuse is one of the major problems here, and it is quite appropriate that the South African Breweries (SAB) as producers of alcoholic beverage have collaborated with provincial government in bringing road offenders to book. The increasing number of alcohol evidence centres that SAB has sponsored in our province is adequate proof that we have the capacity to tackle deviant conduct that cost us so dearly in terms of valuable human life and property. Our government is committed to such public-private partnerships that help improve our people's quality of life.

It is against this background that we will continue to reinforce our "100 % compliance" policy which includes programmes that inform and educate the community at large about correct road safety behaviour. I appeal to all road users to obey the rules of the road and just do right. Alufakwa KwaZulu-Natal *lubuya nesaphulamthetho!*

**I thank you.**