

SPEECH NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL TRANSPORT HEAD MR CHRIS HLABISA AT THE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS CEREMONY ON THURSDAY, 07 APRIL 2011

All Protocol Observed

I would like to take this opportunity to apologise on behalf of our MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, the Honorable Mr Willies Mchunu, who would have loved to be a part of this occasion, but unfortunately, he is unable to be with us today due to another equally important commitment.

It is always encouraging to know that this Department of Transport has staff who are dedicated and committed to striving for excellence in our service delivery.

We know that initiatives such as the Service Excellence Awards seek to encourage public servants to be service orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit themselves to continuous service delivery improvement.

This is a simple, transparent mechanism, which allows citizens to hold public servants accountable for the quality of service they deliver.

One cannot help but feel pride therefore, for the work the Department of Transport has done over the past years since this awards initiative was introduced. You will remember that in 2005 and 2006 when these awards were entered only at interdepartmental level, this department was the only one which walked away with gold, silver and bronze in each year.

We want to thank also our RTI – Pietermaritzburg, Durban Regional Office and Stanger Cost Centre for having flown the Department's flag in the provincial competition respectively in 2007, 2008 and 2009. They all walked away with the golden award.

We know that we come from an era where public servants were distrusted by the majority of our people – our employees have consciously worked to build up the confidence of the community they serve.

Highlighting a key challenge facing the public service, the State of the Nation Address of 2005 stated that: "There are many employees whose main concern is how to do as little as possible, to go home as early as possible, but to draw a salary that is as large as possible at the end of the month".

Now, we need to ask ourselves whether this is the situation for some of us in the Department of Transport. And if that is the case, let us ask ourselves whether people will remain patient as they continue to see resources being wasted by and on lazy and inefficient individuals in the civil service.

Further more, President Jacob Zuma when assuming office on 9 May 2009 said: "To achieve all our goals, we must hold ourselves to the highest standards of service, probity and integrity. Together we must build a society that prizes excellence and rewards effort, which shuns laziness and incompetence."

He added that: "We must build a society that draws on the capabilities, energy and promise of all its people. From this common purpose we must forge a partnership for reconstruction, development and progress."

The Batho Pele principle is meant to address this by creating a positive perception of the public service to staff and citizens alike. The general public forms a perception of government from the nature and extent of the services and behaviour it experiences at the hands of public service.

Do not forget that the President has also established National Planning Ministry under Trevor Manuel as well as Monitoring and Evaluation Ministry under Collins Chabane, to ensure that we plan properly, implement our plans and monitor and evaluate our results.

There has to be cautious use of scarce resources to maximize service delivery and improve the quality of life of all citizens in the province.

Today, as we celebrate the Service Excellence Awards ceremony, we should take this opportunity to thank those men and women who have contributed to the fine institution that this Department has become.

We know that some of our work is no bed of roses. We have people who work under the most difficult and dangerous conditions, and their daily duties include things most of us would avoid doing in a lifetime.

Our achievements thus far have shown what can be done when we work together to pursue the common goal of a better life for all. We are proud of these achievements, but we do not underestimate the difficulties that still lie ahead.

In conclusion, there are many people who are not honoured here this evening but who deserve to be saluted. I encourage them all to persevere in their good work and to continue building the Department and the province to a better place we are all proud of.

Congratulations to you all!

I thank you