

**SPEECH NOTES FOR THE KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR WILLIES MCHUNU AT THE
LAUNCH OF OPERATION HLASELA IN THE NEWLANDS AREA ON 26
NOVEMBER 2011**

Programme Director;

Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Political Leadership and Councillors of Ethekeini;

Faith-Based Organisations;

Representatives from different community safety structures present here;

Non-Governmental Organisations;

Political Parties Representatives;

Business Sector;

Organised Labour;

Distinguished guests;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

All Protocol 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.

We know that the current Government has given crime 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 is a need to place strong emphasis on the relevance of a united, comprehensive 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 that give rise to the crime levels we see in our areas today. In view of the challenges of crime faced by KZN, as the provincial Government, we are spearheading a drive to 'Build A United Front Against Crime'.

Through this programme, we call for the mobilisation and involvement of all sectors of society in a concerted and sustained campaign called 'Operation Hlasela', to significantly reduce crime levels in the Province.

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 have already been to your neighbours in Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu (INK), where there had been a lot of shocking incidents reported in the area. The crime statistics of 2009/2010, media reports and the local police station evaluations, all were indicating a high rate of fear among the citizens as a result of serious crimes in the INK area.

Crime statistics for the period covering the 1st of April 2010 to the 31st of March 2011, as released by Minister Mthethwa on the 8th of September 2011, revealed that KwaMashu had seen an enormous reduction in murders from 235 in the previous period, to 78 in the latest report.

We want to believe therefore that interventions such as the one we brought here today, have contributed significantly to this reduction. We also take this opportunity to thank our stakeholders, that is, all sectors of society that have taken joint responsibility in addressing crime in that area.

Unfortunately, Newlands has been in the limelight recently with numerous tragic events having occurred, such as Family Murders, Hijackings, Arson and Drug & Substance Abuse.

It is on that score therefore that we want to commend the Newlands Community Policing Forum, in partnership with stakeholders such as SACP activists and other local structures, for initiating the crime fighting initiative which is about 'Building a United Front Against Crime'.

As the provincial Department of Community Safety & Liaison, we are committing ourselves to assist you as you target and focus on all the crime-related challenges that plague this area. We are not leaving until we rid Newlands of the perpetrators of crime.

But for the purpose of today's meeting, we expect you to tell us what you are going to do so that together we win this battle. We are not going to prescribe how the structures you represent should contribute, but we do expect that each and every one of you will come forward and say how they are going to use their influence to help this area get the safety and security it deserves.

At this point, as a Department we have realised that in some instances we become more reactive than being preventative. So, we have deployed our teams that are now based in all ten Districts as well as Ethekewini Metro.

These teams are the eyes, ears, hands and feet of the Department where they are based. They enable us to implement our crime-fighting programmes closer to where people live. They enable us to work close enough with municipalities.

It is my duty as MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, to bring to your attention the fact that as our interventions in fighting crime and saving lives continue, I should remind everyone here that the provincial government is on a mission to revive our people's consciences.

We are saying let each one speak to their conscience as they use the roads or go about their daily business. We say that as we enjoy the festive season, let us not behave as if this is our last festive season on earth.

Consequently, the province of KwaZulu-Natal is rolling out the campaign dubbed 'Operation Val'ingozi'. Operation Val'ingozi seeks to revive our morals and consciences as individuals who contribute to societal safety and well-being or lack of it. Our message is clear: 'Speak to your conscience, don't break the law, don't kill people'.

Following the official launch of Operation Val'ingozi in Durban earlier this month, we decided to roll out this campaign so that it reaches all our stakeholders as we engage each other in building partnerships, promoting high moral values, respect for the rule of law and educational campaigns on road safety.

This meeting has therefore become a proper platform to take forward this campaign – recognising as we do, that we come from different structures. This means that as we will be discussing and sharing ideas, we have to come up with measures that will assist us in taking this initiative forward.

What we also say with this campaign is that communities must work with the police in the fight against crime and most importantly, please protect our men and women in blue. You can save their lives by speaking out when you know that there are plans to murder our officers. Please protect them – they are your savours – without them you are without protection. It is your duty to pre-empt any move that is aimed at undermining their good work in society by exposing it in good time so that it can be stopped or prevented.

We therefore call upon you to join hands with us in strengthening community safety structures like Community Policing Forums (CPFs), street committees, etc. Collaborating with the police in isolating criminals in society is the only way we can hope to achieve social stability in our communities

Let us be careful not to take the law into our own hands, but use proper structures to bring the perpetrators who abuse women, children, elders and the disabled in our communities to book.

In conclusion, this is a call for greater innovation and commitment in our partnerships and joint initiatives.

Needless to say, for such collaboration succeed, it is imperative that all sectors of society take joint responsibility for addressing crime. Our response to crime can only succeed if we are able to harness every possible resource to address the challenges which face us.

Most importantly, individuals, families and communities can and must play a greater role in building the type of society we want to live in and bequeath a safe world to the next generation.

Therefore, above all that will be said today, please remember that this is a peoples' Programme. It will succeed in proportion to your commitment, participation and ownership of the programme. We look forward to hearing from each sector what role you can play in bringing about lasting peace for this area.

I thank you