

**SPEECH NOTES FOR KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR WILLIES MCHUNU ON THE
NATIONAL POLICE DAY IN KZN ON FRIDAY, 27th JANUARY 2012.**

Programme Director;
Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee;
Members of the Provincial Legislature;
Provincial Commissioner;
Divisional Commissioner of Crime Intelligence Nationally, Masimula
Head of Metro Police;
All Deputy Commissioners;
Labour unions, POPCRU and SAPU;
Business Against Crime;
All our social partners including ABI, MTN and ASSUPOL;
Faith-based organisations;
Representatives of CPFs;
Departmental officials and police officers;
Distinguished guests;
Members of the media;
Ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for allowing me to join you here today as you celebrate the National Police Day. This day of the 27th of January was approved by National Parliament in 2008 to be used to remember our police officers who have passed on, particularly those who died in the course of their duty.

As we are gathered here, all nine provinces countrywide are having similar activity. We are doing it concurrently in line with the national directive.

This day has become an annual calendar event which gives us the unique opportunity every year to focus our attention on giving the necessary recognition and praise to the brave men and women in blue.

We acknowledge you for your daunting task because you always put your lives on the line to ensure that peace and stability prevails. Everyday, you risk your personal wellbeing for the rest of us.

These men and women are in the forefront of the fight for the safety of our communities, for the protection of our homes, properties, businesses and for the security of our families, more especially our children and women.

Just think what would happen if they did not exist, if they were unwilling to answer the calls for help, if they did not stand between criminals and their victims. Surely these unsung heroes and heroines deserve our recognition, respect and praise for the work they do.

But as I was on my way to this event, it just came to my mind that in fact, it is very unfortunate indeed that we had to have this day which resulted from the fact that in this country we lose our police officers whilst executing their duty. It is in some ways an admission that something has gone wrong in our society.

However, Ladies and Gentlemen, the past year 2011 has been a hectic period but it has also brought renewed hope to the people of KwaZulu-Natal.

I would like to convey my deepest appreciation and give credit to all our police officers, whose tireless devotion to duty has ensured that the majority of the citizens and visitors in this province are safe during the festive season. We acknowledge your determination to go beyond the call of duty.

The progress that we are making in dealing with crime is manifest in the ongoing reduction in the rate of criminal activities, especially the most serious crimes. We all know by now that this past festive season has been the safest in recent years.

The trend in the past financial year which has seen a decline in the rate of crimes such as murder, car hijacking and robbery should continue and in fact improve in subsequent years.

This should be a clear indication that Government is working tirelessly to make sure that South Africa, and particularly our province of KwaZulu-Natal, becomes a better place for all.

However, as Government we have always maintained that in order to adequately fight all forms of crime, a concerted approach by all sectors of our society is urgently required.

It is on that score therefore that I regard this gathering today as a part of the on-going provincial drive to promote and sustain a culture of safety in society.

The provincial Department of Community Safety and Liaison has been able to give meaning to the constitutional political responsibility that entitles provinces to monitor the police conduct, to oversee the effectiveness and efficiency of the police service, including receiving reports on the police service and to assess the effectiveness of visible policing, amongst other things.

The evaluation processes undertaken by communities together with our departmental officials, assist us in assessing the performance of our police stations. The desired goal here is to maximise effective police visibility and enhance interaction and participation amongst local stakeholders. We aim to see how communities are mobilised and engaged in the fight against crime.

Our police stations must be in touch with local issues, structures and the communities. They must be seen to be working together in order to be able to seize control of the streets from criminals.

You will remember that the annual MEC's Excellence Awards was conceived with the objective of identifying and rewarding police stations for their outstanding service to the community.

On the other hand, ladies and gentlemen, we are already seeing results of our broader anti-crime strategy, called Building a United Front Against Crime, which seeks to rally communities behind the crime fighting cause. This programme uses Operation Hlasela as a vehicle to roll out the strategy throughout the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Operation Hlasela is impacting positively on the Criminal Justice System in that through mass community mobilisation, greater confidence is being built between the police and the community resulting in communities being more willing to give critical crime-related information to the police, much of which has led to the arrest of criminals.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to thank those men and women in blue, past and present, the living and the dead alike, who have contributed to correcting the perception about this profession and those who are determined to turn the delivery of services around.

As Government, we want to encourage SAPS members to make use of the existing platforms to take care of their psychological needs as they sometime get traumatised while enduring the hazards of their job. Male or female, we are human beings who can break and be emotionally unstable. Hence, we all need psychological intervention.

And finally, on behalf of our government, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to all of you who have continuously remained true partners in the fight against crime and criminals.

The contribution of the ABI, MTN and ASSUPOL, among others, is not only encouraging, but also a clear sign that working together we can succeed in the fight against crime. We will continue to strengthen our partnerships with different stakeholders in our multi-pronged strategy to defeat criminality.

I thank you.