

REMARKS BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR WILLIES MCHUNU DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NTUZUMA MAGISTRATE COURT ON TUESDAY, 28th MAY 2013.

Protocol Observed

In welcoming our Honourable Minister, Mr Jeff Radebe, I must say that it is really a great honour for me to be part of this special event today as we observe a historic event of officially opening the Ntuzuma Magistrate Court. We take this opportunity to thank the Justice Department for the move which in our view at Transport as well as Community Safety and Liaison will strengthen our efforts to reduce crime and criminals in the areas of Inanda, Ntuzama and KwaMashu, which we generally refer to as INK.

The crime levels in INK remains of great concern not only within KwaZulu-Natal but nationally as well. There has been a lot of shocking incidents reported in the three areas. Crime stats, media reports and our own police station evaluations all tell one story of the prevalence of a high rate of criminal activity in INK.

As a result, in 2010 we came here to roll out our Provincial Government programme, which was dubbed 'Building a United Front Against Crime,' under which we have the Operation Hlasela initiative, which simply means waging a war against crime and its perpetrators.

Subsequent to that, we have brought various anti-crime initiatives to INK, which are meant to deal with crime and criminals. The recent one was a drug awareness campaign which was led by our Premier Dr. Zweli Mkhize in Inanda.

Now, with this new justice facility standing in the form of this magistrate court, we believe that our collective efforts to ensure that lawfulness and peaceful coexistence in INK will become a reality.

Anti-crime initiatives like Operation Hlasela may succeed to mobilize and strengthen communities to be aware of criminality and to take a firm stand against it through relevant community strictures that assist in the flow of information about criminals. But without the courts there would be no full realisation and resolution of the individual cases that are handled by the members of the SAPS. The importance of our relationship with communities in bringing criminals to book remains the very reason that we have these anti-crime people-orientated structures. Needless to say, the courts rely on tangible evidence in order to process crime-related cases.

But we would like to urge our communities also to take advantage of services offered by this court, and to utilize them appropriately. They must cooperate with officials and not abuse services.

Many times we have heard people complaining that people get arrested but courts do not convict. Convictions can only be made if members of the public come to testify. It is you who know these criminals - it is you who can help to put them behind bars.

We are encouraged by magistrates who cooperate with the efforts of our traffic law enforcement officers in bringing traffic law offenders to book. We have seen other courts setting an example by giving huge traffic fines to speedsters on the highways. We can only hope that this court will follow suit.

We are now working on a punitive strategy for traffic offenders. We want transgressors who break the rules of the road to not just get away with paying the fine because often they become repeat offenders since they can afford to pay those fines. Our legal team, working with all our partners in the Justice, Crime and Security Cluster are looking into how the legislation can assist us in this regard.

With these few words, we congratulate the communities of the INK area on the new facility and look forward to a mutually beneficial relationship amongst all stakeholders involved in the fight against criminality.

I thank you