

SPEAKING NOTES BY KWAZULU-NATAL PREMIER MR WILLIES MCHUNU DURING THE ROAD SAFETY YOUTH SUMMIT ON, FRIDAY THE 27TH OF MAY 2016, DURBAN.

- Programme Director;
- RTMC Representatives;
- Youth organisations
- NGO's
- Private Sector representatives;
- Faith based organisations
- Transport stakeholders
- Law Enforcement Agencies;
- Members of the Media;
- Distinguished Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of you to this historic Road Safety Youth Summit. We want to thank the youth of our province for attending this important gathering that we hope will help us develop innovative strategies that will curb road fatalities.

Critically, road safety is one of the fundamental issues of concern that require national consensus, consciousness and action, if we are to turn the tide and save people's lives. Road safety, above all, is paramount, because it is about life and death.

Of course, the process underscores this democratic government's commitment to public participation on matters of national concern. More importantly it demonstrates how we value the views of young people when we craft strategies and policies to take this country forward.

As you gather here you represent active youth among various formations and organisations. Please remember that you carry the mandate of the youth in the province. It is therefore important that you represent the youth well by contributing robustly to the sessions that will occur so that we leave this summit with valuable contributions that we can take to the national sphere as the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

OBJECTIVE OF SUMMIT

We are aware that a series of these Road Safety Youth Summits started earlier this month in Limpopo and are to take place in all nine provinces, culminating in a National Youth Summit on road safety which will take place in June – which is a youth month.

The aim of these summits are also to give a voice to young people on road safety issues so that they contribute to a shift in attitudes and behaviour towards road safety among young people.

We want to hear you views on what you, your parents, community and leaders in society can do to improve road safety. This initiative is very appropriate in that youth are clearly identified as high risk population group because they are inexperienced, overestimate their abilities, their behaviour patterns are strongly associated with expectations and social pressures that promote risk taking on the road, such as none use of seat belts, over-speeding and drinking and driving.

In short youth are risk takers – at times taking rather dangerous risks for the sheer fun of it. Such as racing against each other to see who has the fastest cars- just for mere bragging rights. Bragging rights that can cost your life.

Therefore, if the majority of road fatalities are young people, the youth of South Africa must also lead in formulating road safety strategies to curb road fatalities. It is always energising and refreshing to engage with young people on such crucial issues as they are always full of robust ideas and view issues from a different perspective than older people.

The youth are always able to bring new technologies and innovations to complex challenges. More importantly youth are able to champion better a vision that they were part of building.

As you ponder what new road safety innovations you want to bring to the table we need to first ask ourselves if the Province of KwaZulu-Natal and country at large is on track to reducing road crashes and fatalities by 50% come 2020 as per the UN Declaration on the "Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) of which we are signatories.

Why KwaZulu-Natal's role is crucial?

KwaZulu-Natal's role is very crucial and strategic in this exercise of Road Safety Strategy development. Among others, our province bears the following characteristics that are worth noting:

- We are the country's second biggest province, after Gauteng, in terms of population with approximately 10.5 million people, constituting 19.7 percent of the total national population of 53 million;
- We are the country's second biggest province, after Gauteng, in terms of GDP, contributing more than 16 percent to national GDP;
- We are also the country's second biggest tourism destination, again after Gauteng;
- But we are also categorised among the provinces with the largest rural land area, with a huge road network backlog, and most negatively affected by poverty and unemployment;
- Our province has the third highest number of registered vehicles at approximately 1, 5 million, which is growing annually at an average rate of about 25 percent;
- We have a huge number of international (Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique) and national borders (Free State, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape), perhaps more than all provinces;
- As well, our province, because it has the country's busiest ports, namely Durban and Richards Bay, it has to handle overwhelming traffic of logistics trucks passing through its major national routes, particularly the N2 and N3, to and from the harbours. This traffic burdens our road network from a maintenance point of view but also impacts on traffic management, making our work even more challenging.

The cumulative effect of all these factors and statistics, is that road safety is not a simple task and really does require on hands on deck.

KZN Road Safety Strategy

As a province our road safety strategy is anchored and escalated on the "Operation Valingozi" - education and awareness campaigns under our running theme of "*Road Safety is Our Collective Responsibility*". Our approach is to tackle the road carnage by scaling up multidisciplinary and integrated law enforcement, addressing roads engineering, as well as monitoring and evaluation elements.

And we want our youth in the province to be central in this and partner with us. As a matter of fact as a Department we have always championed partnership as they help us to mobilise society behind our vision of road safety. This very same road safety strategy "Operation Valingozi" was conceptualised by POPCRU, the police union, and we as a department adopted it. Our relations with the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) also bears significant relevance in this context - because Operation Hlokomela - is an initiative of the taxi industry. The religious community and traditional leaders also form part of our outreach campaigns. So it is important that as the youth you know that our doors are always open for such partnerships because road safety is our collective responsibility.

Provincial Road Safety Summit 2011 recap

It is also important that I share with you the outcomes of a Provincial Road Safety Summit that we held in 2011 as it might help sharpen the inputs that our province will make from this Youth Road Safety Summit.

Prior to this youth gathering as a province we had already resolved at that Road Safety Summit that youth must be champions of drive behavior. We resolved at our summit that law enforcement strategies need to be harsh, because perpetrators who speed on our roads are usually penalized too lightly. We also resolved to ensure that the Department designs roads and bridges with safety features such as necessary signage, markings, speed humps ect. There was also an agreement to intensify road safety education and campaigns. A need to regulate and standardize services of driving and learning

centers was also identified. We said that they must be monitoring of the implementation of traffic laws and a recognition and training of traffic personnel. Lastly there was need to develop an anti-corruption strategy within the transport industry; and come up with a vigorous pedestrian safety strategy.

ACHIEVEMENTS

We have also implemented some of the resolutions of the summit, including:

- The agreement with the driving school industry to standardise operations and curb corruption in DLTCs;
- Partnership with SANTACO through Operation Hlokomela is being implemented;
- Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI) awards were launched to improve the moral of traffic officers; and
- More than 90 new traffic officers have graduated at the Traffic Training College and are now deployed in various areas.

Also, a significant milestone was recorded in the history of traffic law enforcement in KwaZulu-Natal when we saw the formation of the Integrated Traffic Law Enforcement Committee (ITLEC) that is working towards the attainment of the goal of preventing road crashes and offences that lead to fatalities on our roads. Having been supported by the Justice Crime and Prevention Security (JCPS) technical cluster, and endorsed by the Provincial Cabinet, this Committee was created as a permanent sub-committee of the JCPS, under the leadership of the KZN Department of Transport. The Committee comprises, as major role players, the Provincial Department of Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, the SAPS, Ethekewini Metro Police and the various Municipalities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

I have shared you with just some of the work we have done in reducing road fatalities it is now time to put your thinking caps on and help us come with commitments that we will take to the National Road Safety Youth Summit. All the provincial commitments will eventually be consolidated into a national programme to which our entire youth population will pledge adherence and rally behind.

This summit must provide us with solutions to road safety challenges that will go a long way in ensuring that individuals, youth formations at all levels, the wider society, own the fight against road carnages because the responsibility for safety rests with each and every one of us. It is our priority as this Government to continue to force road-users to worry about not breaking traffic laws more than they do now. Presently, they worry more about being caught than the fact of the possible consequence of committing a traffic offence, which could be injury or death.

It is no coincidence that the National Road Safety Youth Summit will be held in June –a youth month that will see the 40th year commemoration of the brave youth of 1976. Let us emulate that historic generation by displaying activism that they showed in fighting their cause – which was an unjust system. Let us fight the cause of the youth of this generation which among many causes is to eradicate road fatalities.

Let us realise that indeed *Road Safety is Our Collective Responsibility*

I thank you