

MEC VR Shongwe's Key Note Address at the Launch of the Agreement on Regulations of Driving Schools in Mpumalanga at Nuttinghouse on the 27th of May 2016.

The Chief Whip of the Majority Party in the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Honorable J Mkhathshwa

The Executive Mayor of Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality, CLLR B Shiba

The MMC for Public Safety in Ehlanzeni District Municipality, CLLR S Monareng

The MMC for Public Safety in Mbombela Local Municipality, CLLR P Nkala

The MMC for Public Safety in Gert Sibande District Municipality, CLLR A Maboja

The HOD for Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Mr W. Mthombathi

Road Traffic Management Cooperation Representative Mr P Plaaitjies

Mpumalanga Driving School Association President, Mr S Radebe

Southern African National Association of Driving Schools President, Mr R Mncube

All Senior Managers and Regional Managers

Distinguished guest and Members of the Media,

Good Morning,

Program Director, today marks a beginning of a very important chapter and milestone in the fight against road crashes and fatalities. Over the years, I have been questioning the quality of drivers that we were certifying to competent to drive on our roads.

I have maintained that if we continue to give driving licenses to drivers who are not properly trained and not competent enough to drive, our efforts to reduce road carnage were in vain.

I have also made my intentions clear since I came to the Department that the process to regulate driving schools needed to be expedited. It is therefore humbling that today, we are launching the Agreement on Regulation of Driving Schools in Mpumalanga.

Ladies and gentlemen, we will all agree that a properly trained driver is safer on the road than a driver who is poorly trained. To me that driver is a disaster waiting to happen.

The fact that many of the accidents on our road are mainly contributed by human element could easily lead one to conclude that improperly trained drivers contributes significantly.

This agreement we are launching today should allow us more powers as Government to deal harshly and deregister driving schools that are doing shallow work when it comes to training and

those that are not complying to applicable legislations.

You will all agree with me that a stationary car that is standing there, is not dangerous until a driver gets into it. Therefore it is the responsibility of Government to put in place all necessary checks and balance to ensure that any person that obtain a license to drive is properly trained and highly competent to drive.

Therefore, I expect authentic and honest driving schools to appreciate this move by government to put in place control measures to prevent night riders who parade themselves as driving schools during the day and in the process giving a bad name to the industry as a whole.

Ladies and gentlemen, enforcing road regulations alone will never solve the problem of road carnage and we are also emphasizing road safety education and driving schools are the most important stakeholder.

This is so because driving schools have one objective only, that is to train drivers, make them competent to use our roads safely and responsible. Once we drop the ball on the quality of drivers they produce, we shall continue to lose our loved ones, on our roads.

I am therefore appealing to all driving schools in Mpumalanga to protect this industry. This will be better amplified when, you, as driving schools make it your responsibility to expose, name and shame our Officials both in Municipalities and in the Department who are corrupt.

You will be doing this to protect your industry and making a contribution towards reduction of road carnage. It should be a pride of every driving school to be known for producing the best driver not killers of innocent people on our roads.

I want every driving school to take pride on the kind of drivers it is producing and with this agreement, we may consider publishing the names of all bad drivers including the driving schools that trained them to get licenses.

This will force all driving schools to refuse to collide with officials in testing centers to give licenses to incompetent drivers because that will harm their reputation in the eyes of the public.

Program Director, maybe the time has come to name and shame driving schools that produce drivers who cannot drive properly. Our officers must ask all bad drivers about where they trained for their licenses and take note. This information will guide us about the driving schools that produce irresponsible drivers to be targeted for compliance visits.

The principles of ARRTO of changing the driver behavior should find serious expression in the course content you are teaching to your learners and this agreement will give us an opportunity to evaluate you from time to time to check if you are indeed complying.

Program Director, this Department has no intention to randomly and go around the Province deregistering driving school. The Driving Schools compliance Officers will be deployed to check for compliance with applicable prescripts as contained in this agreement.

We want to make an appeal to driving schools never to bribe compliance officer to avoid being deregistered. At the same breath, we will also appeal to Compliance Officers never to take bribe from Driving Schools. Once there is a corrupt relationship between the two, the usefulness of this agreement will be highly compromised and rendered useless.

As you all know, thina sithi **“AKUNA BARRY EZONCENGWA”**. We will sniff out all corrupt officials and arrest them for their involvement in corruption. Any Compliance Officer, Driving School, or Instructor who don't want to go to jail must refrain from corruption. We will not be lenient at all. We will deal with them like Bull Dog, dealing with a Bull Bone.

As a country, we have made a firm commitment to achieving the goals of the United Nations Decade of for Road Safety, by reducing the number of victims by 50% by the end of the year 2020. In pursuing these goals, we support the Road Traffic Infringement Agency (RTIA) in its programme of changing attitudes and behavior of our road users through the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO).

It is our firm belief that this agreement we are signing today will usher in an improved participation of the most important stakeholders in the fight against road carnage, the Driving Schools. The time has indeed come to regulate this industry and move faster towards achieving the goals we have set for ourselves.

Thank you.