

**23 January 2018**

**Remarks by MEC Pat Ngomane during a meeting with traffic officers**

The Head of Department, Mr. W Mthombothi

Senior Management of the Department and other officials

The media present here today

And of course the people we are gathered here for today

I greet you all

Yesterday the Minister of Transport, Mr Joe Maswanganyi presented the 2017/2018 financial year Festive Season report. The report include crash statistics and law enforcement operations information. The minister compared information from 01 December to 09 January as well as 01 December to 15 January for both financial years (2016/17 and 2017/18).

This was influenced by the fact that schools opened earlier in 2017 as compared to 2018.

For the province, we felt that it would be a huge mistake to begin the year without appreciating the hard work and effort displayed by each and every one of you during the Festive Season. It could not have been possible without the support of the HOD, senior management of the department, stakeholders such as RTMC, SAPS, different Municipalities and provincial departments and the media that is forever ready to share life-saving messages to our communities.

Our gratitude goes to traffic officers and road safety officials who are forever committed to the safety of our people on the roads in the province. They worked tirelessly day and night, leaving the comfort of their homes and families to make sure that we all reach our destinations safely and that there is law and order and general compliance with traffic rules and regulations.

Ladies and gentlemen, although these numbers represent lives lost and you all know one life lost, is one too many, these numbers mean that we still have a long way to go to successfully reduce road crashes and fatalities. Therefore we cannot celebrate these reductions but we can only build on these reductions.

That however, does not mean we should not acknowledge the good work done by law enforcers because was it not for them, the situation could have been worse. For the period under review we have recorded

7,65% decline in road fatalities as compared to the previous year. 181 fatalities were recorded during this Festive Season while 196 people died during the same period last year.

On the other hand, road crashes increased from 812 to 891. Remember ladies and gentlemen, crashes do not only lead to death on the road but many people who sustain serious injuries while some end with permanent physical disabilities. In total, 1632 people sustained injuries emanating 891 road crashes.

What we have further noted is that the N4 Toll road recorded most of the crashes followed by the R40 and R573. Other roads include the N2, R538, N11, R38, N12 and R555.

Ladies and gentlemen, the increasing number of pedestrians dying on the roads is also alarming and can never be acceptable. There are 61 pedestrians who were killed from 01 December 2017 to 15 January 2018 and it is in this regard that we need to continue to focus more on awareness campaigns and education on pedestrians.

We have also seen that most crashes happens due to human error. While we continue to advocate for harsher punishment to traffic offenders, we are once more encouraging road users to work with us and change their attitude towards road safety.

We still believe that most crashes are caused by speeding, dangerous overtaking, and reckless driving amongst others. Traffic and police

officers must continue to work hard to arrest those who continue to break the law. Those found guilty must be prosecuted and given harsh sentences to send a strong message to other wrong doers.

We also fully support the call to reclassify some of the traffic offences as Schedule 5 offences particularly drunk driving, reckless and negligent driving among others.

We will continue to work with all stakeholders on programmes aimed at enhancing road safety. We will further continue to use all available platforms in order to promote road safety with a hope that our messages gets heard and road users change their behaviour

I am at pains to announce that since the beginning of December 2017 to date; over 700 motorists were arrested in Mpumalanga roads for various traffic violations during law enforcement operations that took place in the province.

509 of these motorists were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, 221 for excessive speeding, eight for reckless and negligence driving, while others were arrested for different violations such as overloading and driving with false documentation.

38581 fines were also issued to motorists for among others exceeding speed limit, overtaking on barrier line, violating road traffic signs, stopping on freeway, using cell phones whilst driving and overloading. Other fines were issued to motorists for driving vehicles with defects

such as cracked windscreens, broken windscreen wipers, worn out tyres and malfunctioning direction indicators and lamps.

This demonstrates that there are people who do not heed to the call made by road safety stakeholders in relation to safe road usage.

We should also extend our gratitude to members of the public who behaved well on the road during the Festive Season and those who continue to work with us in the fight against road carnage. As we approach the Easters, we appeal to all our road users to continue work with us so that we can completely eradicate road crashes.

I thank you