

MEC VR Shongwe's Key Note Address on Road Safety Debate on the 25th August 2012

The Head of Department, Mr T. Sibuyi

The Executive Mayor of Mbombela Clr C. Dlamini

Speakers and Members of Mayoral Committees,

General Manager, Traffic Management, Mr S. Nkuna

Representative of Anglo-American, Mr Michael Dugmore

Representative from the Department of Education Mrs P. Mbatsane

The teachers and learners of the different schools with us,

Ladies and Gentlemen, I greet you all.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me take this opportunity and talk to you as an MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison without trying to outsmart the debaters who were debating and arguing their different points of views here.

Today was a festival of ideas and we had an opportunity to listen to young minds taking each other in vibrant debates. The research that went through has highlighted our strength and weaknesses. This young people have proven beyond reasonable doubts that they understand road safety and they also succeeded to draw our attention to other areas that requires more work.

We have listened and I am happy that all the learners that participated in the debates since it started have done research and are today more informed about road safety.

Like others, they have subscribed and are now part of the broad front in the fight against road carnage and safety in general in our Province.

By virtue of participating, this young minds are now an advanced detachment in the fight against road carnage and crime.

Bantwana bami, you are now ambassadors of road safety and you have a responsibility of taking this debate outside. You must engage with your friends, your colleagues, your families and educate them about road safety.

You must talk in the corners and everywhere you happen to be and debate any person who claims to understand road safety and expose their ignorance.

In that way you will be teaching them and making them understand what is road safety all about? In that way you will be living up to the responsibilities and expectations that we have about you as a Department.

You have qualified to join the front against crime and road carnage. We are now all foot soldiers and we must engage and get every citizen of Mpumalanga to work with us, so that we can fully complement each other and gain the much needed strength to successfully declare Mpumalanga a no go area for drunken drivers, speedsters and un roadworthy vehicles.

I am urging the participants in the debate to be the first once to participate in all community structures and make road safety a fashionable debate in society. A highly conscious society and people of Mpumalanga is key in making our roads the safest in the country.

The level of involvement of communities in issues of safety is highly important and the debaters must help us achieve maximum participation of all..

Help us to strengthen our call and appeal to communities and all stakeholders, to work more with law enforcement officers so that this broad front in the fight against road carnage and crime is seen, felt and understood. The broad front which I also think represents an advance detachment should declare the Province of Mpumalanga a no go area for those who have little respect for rules of the roads.

Ladies and gentlemen, maybe I should tell you, who constitute the broad front in the fight against crime and road carnage.

They are the;

Scholar patrol members

Tourist Safety Monitors

The participants and winners of the No.1 Taxi driver of the year

The participants and winners Road safety school debates

Community Road Safety Councils (CRSC's)

Community Policing Forums Members

Members of Mayoral Committees responsible for Safety

The participants and winners of Road Safety Choral Music Competitions

The Police

The Traffic Officers and others

I have said, by virtue of participating, you have now been accepted into the broad front and I have went further to say you are an advanced detachment in the fight against road carnage and crime.

Your actions should speak for themselves. Your attitude and conduct must be exemplary and you cannot be the first once to break the law. If you do that, the law enforcement officers will not hesitate to deal with you.

Young members of the broad front, you cannot be criminals because we are not and will never be friends of criminals.

We can't plan with them, they are not our friends, but they are our enemies.

We are fighting them.

They are our enemies and that clearly indicates to us that we must fight them and force them to retreat. In order for us to do that we must be clean our self and not be vulnerable to blackmail.

They will never retreat if we beg them to do so. The only word they understand is force.

We must forcefully make them to stop speeding, driving un roadworthy vehicles and drinking and driving.

You must help us build a culture where the law enforcement officers are friends of the people of the Province and are enemies of the criminals and law breakers.

This is possible and as we meet here today, we must take our roles seriously and contribute to the effort to fight criminal elements within our communities.

When you go back to your communities, you must participate on campaigns on crime against women and children.

You must help us ensure that there are no tavern and shebeen near your schools. You should mobilize other learners and force those tarvens to be closed down. You must educate them on responsible trading and ask them if they comply with the legislations regulating their businesses.

Lets build a broad front against crime and declare our Province a no go area for criminals and their criminal activities including traffic law breakers.

I thank you.