

**SPEECH BY MEC VR SHONGWE DURING THE ROAD
SAFETY PRAYER DAY**

CHIEF ALBERT LUTHULI MUNICIPALITY

MPULUZI, 26 JANUARY 2013

Allocated Time: 30 Minutes

Programme Director

The Deputy Minister of Transport, Ms. LS
Chikunga

Executive Mayor of Chief Albert Luthuli Local
Municipality,

Cllr. BP Shiba

Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District
Municipality, **Cllr. Nhlabathi**

Chairperson of the House of Traditional
Leaders, Kgosi LM Mokoena

Chairperson of South African Council **of**
Churches, Rev Mthembu

Head of the Department, Mr. Thulani Sibuyi

Leadership of the Police Service and the
Department

Invited Guests

All members of the hosting municipality

We are gathered here today, as religious leaders and their congregations from various religious faiths, who have come together to pray with officials from the Department of Community Safety, Security & Liaison, for divine intervention in our efforts to reduce deaths on our roads. As a Department, We shall continue to host series of educational awareness programs to embark on educating our people on road safety to ensure compliance in all our roads.

Representatives present here today, include a number of different faiths such as Christians, African Traditional, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and others, who have decided to join the Mpumalanga Government, particularly the Department of Community Safety, Security & Liaison and unite in prayer, for a safe and accident free road environment.

Although, we all come from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, our common aim today, is to pray to our Heavenly father , Buddha, Allah, Krishna and various other names, Mvelincangi, to assist us in our efforts to reduce deaths on our roads beyond the festive season.

Ladies and gentlemen , I'm calling on all people of the Province to observe the Day of Prayer for Road Safety. This Provincial Road Safety Prayer Day held here forms part of commemoration for remembrance of Road Traffic Victims since the inception and during the festive season to date, to mourn the millions of people who lost their lives and the millions of others who were injured on our roads this year in particular Mpumalanga.

The 2011 theme still continues that is “From Global Remembrance to Global Action across the Decade” Let's make 2011-2020 a Decade to remember!

We are firm on the role of all South Africans in the fight against road carnage: “Road safety is a key priority of the South African government. However, road safety is not only government’s responsibility; road safety is everybody's responsibility.

During this Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, every citizen must become part of the global movement to create a safer road environment for all our people.

let me take this opportunity to say last year, as a Province we took part of the remarkable pilot project conducted in Moloto Road towards curbing fatalities and road carnages in our communities. We identified Moloto Road, R573 as one of the roads in South Africa that has the highest number of pedestrian fatalities, others call it a killer road.

As a Province we have made several attempts with all stakeholders to look at these perennial challenges where our people are killed almost

every day due to various reasons. As part of Operation When Duty Calls during the Festive season 2012/2013 an initiative which was launched in 2010 called: Overall Friday Operations was initiated which is conducted in different cluster areas, areas seem to be contributing significantly to crime and road carnages. This kind of an activity seeks to intensify the fight against crime and road carnages by strengthening already existing partnerships between the Department, the Police, the Community, and other partners with in the Joint Crime Prevention.

Ladies and gentlemen let me commend the exertions displayed by our stakeholders ranging from the community at large, the Police, the traffic officers and liquor Board for their sterling work in support of government to achieve and in reducing crime and road accidents. The work displayed by all role players will not go unnoticed, though it is not

an easy task but together as a team we can curb these challenges affecting our communities.

Despite all the aforementioned issues, the Department will continue to engage various media houses to ensure that we maximize our publicity so that our people in the Province and beyond are aware of these challenges in this roads.

Road Safety Prayer Day is one of the Festive Season Plan activities as a closing ceremony for Festive Season Plan. Road accidents and fatalities have become a serious challenge in the province during the Festive Season particularly from the 1st December to the 31st December 2012. The carnage has claimed 130 lives in the province as a result of 591 accidents during December month and the summary is as follows per region:

- Ehlanzeni South : 21 Fatalities

- Ehlanzeni North : 19 Fatalities
- Gert Sibande : 51 Fatalities
- Nkangala : 39 Fatalities

TOTAL: 130 FATALITIES

Gert Sibande Region has indicated a high number of fatalities during the month of December 2012 which include fourteen (14) fatalities which resulted from a disaster at P1681 road (Between Ermelo and Lothair). Consequently, we decided to conduct the Road safety Prayer Day at Gert Sibande Region especially here in Mpuluzi as it part of Gert Sibande Region.

Some people are hit by cars as when trying to cross a highway, some of the victims underwent surgery and hospitalized for almost three months or more. We believe and ask all

our people to pray so that they recovers well, and also pray for their well being, some they are not hurt badly but they still in shock and having trouble coping with the situation. Speed limits are introduced to ensure greater road safety.

We are encouraging Municipalities to improve by installing pedestrian crossings at more locations than ever before to avoid unnecessary killings.

Pedestrians are vulnerable followed by Head to Rear on many roads. The two highlighted types of accidents dictate speed to be a major contributory factor in this regard. Some of the major challenges facing these areas is the mushrooming of businesses and many liquor outlets near the road which contributes to the increase of fatalities and road carnages. Vigorous attention and priority should be given to these areas so as to reduce the escalating number of accidents

A collective positive attitude and action, and road safety awareness programmes are often required in this regard to instil behavioural change of all road users. The intervention of all stakeholders shall assist strongly in reduction of the said challenges.

More and more people and families are dealing with the loss of loved ones of all ages and there are so many that have no idea how to grieve and how to make the necessary changes in their lives.

Other people loose their only kids by car accident, and their lives takes a different path. In our grief, we discovered that our purpose is to motivate, and support parents and all clients to live to their life potential. Losing a child is horrific, losing an only child brings it up a notch. So what do we do with that kind of experience? We have decisions to make.

We need to decided not only to live, but to thrive. The secret to move forward is Prayer , be around our Friends and Loved Ones, our Family of Choice, Deciding on a Life Purpose, Celebrating the Loved One we lost in a meaningful way through charity, writing, doing. Finding a way to leave our heart print with others. Deciding what is meaningful and important in life. Making life changes.

We are all affected: “The greatest partners in this struggle against road carnage must be those who have lost relatives and friends in road crashes. The second group of partners in this fight must be the very young, who are yet to acquire bad driving habits, to whom wearing a seatbelt, not drinking and driving can still be acquired as a force of habit. The third set of partners must be the religious sector who shoulders the burden of burying the dead every day of the year somewhere around the world. One prominent leader ones said “It is the living who close the eyes of the

dead, but it is the dead who must open the eyes of the living,” .

For What has worked for us and the lesson learnt through all this must be taught to others as the experience is beyond our experience. This event is part on an educational or an awareness tool still to educate our people.

You may consider yourself to be a pretty safe driver, but unfortunately you are also relying on other road users to return the same courtesy

Ladies and gentlemen ,WE CALL TO the MIGHTY THRONE OF GRACE ,to SEND his HOLY SPIRIT TO COMFORT THE affected Families AT THIS TIME OF Losses. MAY his holy hand BRING HEALING TO THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING .

I Thank you