

Speech by Tlokwe City Council Executive Mayor at the North West Road to Safety Lekgotla

North West University – Potchefstroom Campus: June 26, 2008

Programme Director

Honourable Premier, Mme Edna Molewa

MEC for Transport, Roads and Community Safety

District Executive Mayor, Mme Pinky Moloji

Tlokwe Municipality MMC for Public Safety; Cnclr. Gaba ka Qhele

District and Local Councilors present here

Members of our Business Sector

Public and Municipal Service Personnel

Members of the academia

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am today pleased to welcome you all to this august Provincial Road Safety Lekgotla being held in the hallowed chambers of this academic institution that has come to have its place of pride in our Province.

The impressive and expansive list of invitees as well as the response thereto clearly demonstrates the importance and seriousness of the subject that has brought all of us here today, road safety.

It is **everybody's business** and I believe the widely representative body of stakeholders and role-players that has gathered here clearly does show an interest in improving safety on South Africa's roads, particularly in the roads of our Province.

The fact that there are so many of us gathered here this morning confirm that there is a massive groundswell of informed and imaginative public support for the cause of road safety in our Province. What we now have to do, using all our collective energies, is to make sure that this Lekgotla on Road Safety becomes not just another 'indaba'; but rather provides a practical guide to action for everyone involved in road transport, road traffic management, safety education and communication.

Programme Director, let me hasten to caution that we need a focused and practical guide to action. The challenges we are facing in the road safety sector are immense and urgent, requiring of us to avoid the pitfall of designing and crafting a grand utopian wish list, but rather a set of carefully balanced and prioritised interventions that are practical, affordable and achievable. I am also aware that we may not forthwith from this lekgotla emerge with ripe, ready – made answers on these challenges.

However, I am certain that this gathering can provide us with sufficient information on the basis of which we can develop specific programmes or sets of actions, and even as well as provide a basis for firm commitment to inter – Governmental collaboration and co-operation, vertically and horizontally, within and between the two spheres.

It has been long recognized that Government alone cannot deliver. Beyond anything that Government does, what is crucially necessary for the strategies to succeed is the conscious and responsible participation of all transport interest groups and all road users, from pre-primary school children right through to government officials, traffic officers, industry associations, labour unions, the private sector and civil society as a whole.

For participation to be effective it must be as broad and inclusive as possible. It must therefore include, as a matter of top priority, the empowerment of public transport passengers and pedestrian road users through structures that ensure operator accountability and give a real voice to the transport and safety concerns of our disadvantaged communities.

I believe that the meeting that we are starting today provides us with the opportunity to look hard at systems and processes as well as a broad range of perspectives on how we can improve the safety of the total road environment.

The basic aims of road to safety are simple should obviously be to reduce the rates of death, injury and economic loss on our roads. To do this we need to go beyond enforcement and communication, important though these activities are.

Programme Director, I won't take up a lot of time by going down to the level of micro-detail on the manner of road safety challenges we face, this is what this gathering is in any event going to address and and try to resolve. I therefore hereby take this opportunity to welcome you all to our beautiful city and this centre of excellence.

I wish you all fruitful and enriching deliberations I am certain that the collective wisdom that is gathered here will deliver a product we all shall be proud of. And I would like to conclude on a note I started with: road safety is the '**unusual business**' of all of us!

Together, let us make it happen.

I thank you.