

Eulogy by the MEC for Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, Paul Mashatile on behalf of the Honourable Premier, at the funeral service of the West Rand 15, Swaneville Sports Ground, 07 May 2016

Programme Directors

Members of the Executive Council here present

Executive Mayors and Mayors here present

Councillors here present

Leaders of Political Parties here present

Leaders of Faith-based Organisations here present

Bereaved Families

Families of the Injured here present Fellow Mourners

On behalf of the Premier of Gauteng, Premier David Makhura, the government the people of Gauteng and myself, allow me, once gain, to convey our heartfelt condolences to all the bereaved families including relatives and the loved ones. I stand here this morning reeling with shock as the accident that claimed the life of your loves ones on that fateful day, last Friday, is one of the most tragic in our recent past.

We are saddened by what happened and my heart is heavy. We feel the loss that you have experienced since your loss is our loss. As the Gauteng Provincial Government we say: Dudu! Akwehlanga lungehlanga! Lalani ngenceba!

Programme Directors, we are gathered here to bid farewell to our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles. We are paying homage, in grieve, to our compatriots whose lives were cut short by one of the most horrific motor vehicle accident. Our province and even our country is in mourning due to one of the most gruesome accident to take place recently. A few weeks ago, we were in Ekurhuleni bidding farewell to 19 victims of a road accident and today we are here whilst other South Africans are also burying victims of road accidents in Limpopo and other provinces.

Last weekend was indeed one of the darkest days in our country generally and our province particularly as over forty lives were lost due to road fatalities. A dark cloud descended on us and we are still reeling in shock as lives were lost unnecessarily. We will never forget that day and that weekend when our loved ones who were travelling home after doing some errands met their tragic end. What a fateful day! What a fateful weekend! Families are counting their losses. Our province is counting its losses and our country is counting its losses.

We are here to comfort all those who have lost their loved ones and we hope that bereaved families will find solace in our presence here today and in the knowledge that the entire nation is standing with you. We might not feel the exact pain that you are feeling but that pain is also our pain. Your grief is indeed our grief. Hence, since we heard of that tragic accident that claimed the lives of your loved ones, we have as the Provincial Government sprung into action to provide counselling and other support to all families including those of the injured.

As a caring government, we are here because we share in your pain as we feel the loss that you are experiencing. It is difficult to come to terms with the cutting short of lives especially due to something that can be prevented like road accident.

Ladies and gentlemen, the enormity of your loss has left us wandering about how can this be left? of fatalities due to accidents on our roads is unacceptably high and keeps increasing rather than subsiding. We therefore need to do something to tackle this scourge. To state the obvious, last weekend was one of the most bloodiest in as far as road fatalities are concerned as more than forty lives were tragically lost on our roads. Is it not time to not only say but also act to stop this carnage as one life lost is one too many? What else should happen until we act responsibly on the road? As commuters, as drivers, as law-enforcement officers and as society generally, what will move us to change both our behaviour and attitude on our roads?

We need to indeed take decisive steps to give practical meaning to our declaration that “enough is enough”! Otherwise, our roads will continue to steal our loved ones from us.

As your government we will work with you – communities and road users including the Taxi industry, the police and specifically traffic police to ensure that we reduce substantially fatalities on our roads. It is unacceptable that our roads continue to claim the lives of our people.

We appeal to road users to be careful and patient on our roads. Speed and reckless behavior kills! All of us have a responsibility to ensure that our roads are safe. We therefore need change in attitude and behavior in as far as road usage is concerned. Commuters need to insist on vehicles being roadworthy and drivers behaving responsibly. Drivers need to drive carefully and be patient and courteous and the law-enforcement officers should ensure that laws are enforced and rules of the road are observed, In short, we are saying that law-enforcement officers must ensure that there are dire consequences for bad and reckless behavior on our roads.

A special appeal goes out to the taxi industry and in particular the taxi drivers to take extra care on our roads. You are transporting someone's mother, father, daughter, son - a breadwinner and caregiver. Taxi owners or operators must also ensure that taxis are safe and roadworthy and driver behavior and conduct allows for safe and responsible usage of our roads.

As the government, we will intensify our road safety campaign that will include training and retraining of taxi drivers. The loss of lives on our roads must end. Enough is enough! On a bigger scale, our provincial government is building a modern, reliable and safe public transport system that will integrate the taxi industry.

We will work tirelessly to ensure that our people have a safe, reliable and modern public transport system. Our roads will also be improved and maintained to ensure safety.

In memory our fallen loved ones, let us ensure that every road user behave responsibly as safety is everyones business! Our loved ones should not depart in vain. Once again, our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and we also wish those injured a speedy recovery. We pray to God to provide you with strength to pull through during these difficult times and beyond.

May the souls of our dearly departed, rest in peace.

God Bless you all!