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Office Of The Premier
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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MEDIA STATEMENT

**DATE
TO
EMBARGO**

**12 SEPTEMBER 2013
ALL MEDIA
IMMEDIATE**

CABINET COMMENDS EMPLOYEES, CONDEMNS POLITICAL GRANDSTANDING

The KwaZulu-Natal Cabinet meeting in Pietermaritzburg Wednesday has commended all Government employees for their highly professional and efficient response to two major road accidents that claimed the lives of more than 30 people in the Province in the last week.

On September 1, a bus carrying maidens from the annual Reed Dance in Nongoma overturned, killing 10 people. Last week another road accident claimed the lives of 22 people on Fields Hill, in Pinetown, when a heavy vehicle with suspected brake failure crashed into numerous vehicles.

Government response teams consisting of multi-discipline services, including the South African Police Service, forensic and fire services, private ambulances, Road Traffic Inspectorate, Metro police and emergency medical services were on the scenes within minutes to render assistance.

On behalf of Government and the people of KwaZulu-Natal, Acting Premier Mr Senzo Mchunu thanked all Government employees, as well as volunteers, who came to the aid of the victims under very traumatic conditions.



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He conveyed Cabinet's condolences to His Majesty the King as host of the Reed Dance ceremony, and to the bereaved families.

While appreciating the work done by various Members of the Council who responded to the tragedies,

Cabinet has rejected with the "contempt it deserves", any attempt to capitalize on the misfortune of others to score cheap political points.

Said Mr Mchunu: "We caution against political grandstanding of any nature during this difficult time for the families. It is in fact foreign in our culture that even before the deceased have been laid to rest, some would seek to make political capital out of this very unfortunate incident. Our focus now is on giving the deceased dignified funerals."

The Acting Premier indicated that Cabinet would await a full report from Mr Willies Mchunu, MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison.

"Out of respect for the departed, we will only delve into the circumstances around the accidents after the funerals. That report will be presented to Cabinet and interrogated thoroughly before it is tabled in the Legislature for all parties to give inputs. For now, let us pay respect to the departed."

A memorial service will be held on Thursday (12 September 2013) at KwaNdengezi Sports Ground at 10am, while the mass funeral for 13 of the deceased will take place on Saturday (14 September 2013) at Mpumalanga Sport Field at 10am.

CABINET RECEIVES REPORT ON RICHMOND FIRE

The Executive Council also received a report from MEC Willies Mchunu about the burning of the prefab offices in the Richmond Local Municipality. While noting that it was suspected that an electrical fault had caused the fire, Cabinet has asked the police to conduct a thorough investigation that will provide clarity and diffuse rumour-mongering in the area.



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The Government has commended MEC Mchunu for the swift response in attending to the reports of the fire, and urged the community to remain calm while the investigation continues.

CABINET RECEIVES REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The Executive Council received a further report from MEC Meshack Radebe on the challenges facing the Department of Agriculture. The Executive Council is deeply concerned about the state of affairs in the department, especially in relation to its state of incapacity to carry out its tasks including being without the Head of Department and other key officials.

A resolution was taken to start a process to turn the department around. To this effect, certain corrective measures will be taken by Friday next week.
Issued on behalf of Cabinet

ENDS

Issued by the:
KwaZulu-Natal Executive Council

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