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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEPUTY MINISTER MOURNS THE PASSING OF CROWN GOSPEL FOUNDER AND BROADCASTING ICON MS ZANELE MBOKAZI NKAMBULE.**

The Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Sihle Zikalala, has expressed sadness at receiving the news of the passing of Ms Zanele Mbokazi-Nkambule, the founder of the popular Crown Gospel Award and radio broadcasting legend.

It is with deep shock and sadness that we have received the devastating news of the passing of Ms Zanele Mbokazi-Nkambule. The news came utterly unexpected and we are still in pain and disbelief. Even though we were aware that she was undergoing health challenges, we prayed and cherished the hope that she was fighting a winning battle and she will soon return to her public responsibilities. I am certain that many of our citizens feels the loss as that of a family member because to many households in South Africa, she was like a family member. She was admired, appreciated and loved like a family member by many of us.

Zanele Mbokazi-Nkambule, will be remembered as one of the giants of the creative industry. When she launched the Crown Gospel Awards, she elevated the South African Gospel music brand from the aisles of our churches and shone the spotlight on artists who otherwise would not be known to the world.

Her vision was to take the Crown Gospel Awards to the rest of Africa, she wanted to place the genre firmly on an international footing. It is difficult to imagine the rise of

gospel to where it is today as the number one of the most popular genres in our country without the massive contribution of Zanele Mbokazi-Nkambule.

I had the privilege to work with her for many years in my previous capacity as Premier and MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in KwaZulu-Natal. Her voice will be missed by the millions of listeners who religiously followed her Sunday show “*Eshilo*” on UkhoziFM.

Zanele was a go-getter who defied the odds of her humble beginnings in the outskirts of Mariannhill and rose to become a successful businesswoman, broadcaster and one of the most recognisable media personalities in our country.

It is why when in April she announced she was not well, we believed in her defiant character that she would conquer the illness and not bow down to the reality of having being diagnosed with cancer, which she said was the "toughest moment of my life".

We are truly saddened by this loss to the nation. To the Mbokazi and Nkambule families we commit your broken hearts at this time to the bosom of the Lord. May He comfort you. May He heal your hearts and give you strength to soldier on in the defiant spirit of your Zanele Mbokazi-Nkambule.

May Her Soul Rest in Peace.

**Issued on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure. For more information contact:**

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**ENDS**