

MINISTER'S SPEECH AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE SIGNING OF THE AARTO ACT GAUTENG, SUNDAY 18 AUGUST 2019

Greetings to you and welcome to this momentous occasion. We are gathered here today to witness the ethos of Khawuleza in action. This 6th administration made a commitment to the citizenry, that service delivery will be undertaken with great speed.

Ladies and gentlemen, here we are, welcoming His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa's signing of the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO) Amendment Bill.

On the 9th of July 2019, I tabled the Transport Department's Budget for 2019/20 under the theme "Transport, together moving South Africa into a new dawn". In it, I spoke of one of the interventions which will deal a decisive blow to lawlessness on our roads, the implementation of the AARTO Act."

At that time, it was a Bill, awaiting the Honorable President's signature, I am now proud to say, the wait is over!

Indeed it has been a long time coming. Since the Amendment Bill was developed in 2013, it spent close to two years at NEDLAC, incorporating comments and input by various representatives of Labour, Business and community organisations.

The Bill was approved by Cabinet in 2015 and tabled in Parliament in November 2015, thereafter, it was engaged upon by the Portfolio Committee on Transport.

Recognising its significance, the PCoT invited public comments on 3 separate occasions and also received submissions from various parties. The Bill was then approved by the National Assembly in 2017 and thereafter submitted to the National Council of Provinces.

The NCoP deliberated on the Bill and submitted it to the 9 Provincial Legislatures, which then cascaded it further by engaging members of the public in various districts through public hearings, from 2017 to 2018.

I am proud to say that the AARTO Act is amongst one of the most engaged upon pieces of legislation.

Both Houses of Parliament passed the Bill in March 2019 and submitted it to the President for assent.

The Department of Transport welcomes the President's signing of the bill and look forward to continuing the process of rolling it out throughout the country.

We not only thank the President but we also show gratitude to my honourable predecessors, MECs, Mayors, Members of the Portfolio Committees on Transport, RTIA and RTMC officials, and Members of the Traffic Police for their tireless efforts in ensuring that this Act sees the light of Day.

Because of you, we now have what the Former Transport Minister Jeff Radebe called: "South Africa's first comprehensive blueprint for tackling the problem of lawlessness at its roots".

Upon rolling it out throughout the country, we will be able to adequately address the carnage on our roads. We are burying far too many people as a result of crashes. In 2018 alone, 12

thousand 9 hundred and 21 people lost their lives in road collisions in South Africa. Each death represented an average loss of 4.6 million Rand to the economy, in terms of lost productivity, pain and suffering as well as legal and funeral costs.

We can no longer continue in in this tragectory!

The AARTO Act will usher in 'Business Unusual' on our roads, as it makes way for the following provisions:

- Points Demerit System: This is an objective and fair system of identifying reckless drivers and law breakers so that we can remove them from the driving fold.
- Common penalties: All traffic violations throughout the country will carry the same penal values.
- Electronic service: This means that law enforcement can be effectively supported by technology, servicing documents by electronic means, such as e-mail. Similarly, infringers can exercise their options electronically.
- Infringement Appeals Tribunal: Where Infringers can appeal against the rulings of the RTIA to the tribunal.
- Repeal of court elections: Where Infringers do not have to be burdened by the courts for infringements
- Driver Rehabilitation programmes: Infringers who have their licences suspended can attend rehabilitation programmes before being allowed back in the driving fold. This shows that the AARTO is not just about punishment but has intentions to ensure compliance and change of road user behaviour.

Assessing law enforcement activities in Johannesburg and Tshwane – where AARTO is being implemented, we look forward to further engagements with officials from all spheres of government as we work to put in place the necessary regulations for the roll out.

We have won an important battle, but the war on road fatalities is not yet over. Here is to many victories ahead, as we work together in ensuring safer roads, in this, our beloved South Africa!

I thank you