



transport

Department:
Transport
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, DR BE NDZIMANDE, MP, FOR THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MOUNT EDGECOMBE INTERCHANGE, HELD AT THE SQUARE BOUTIQUE HOTEL, IN UMHLANGA, DURBAN

30 October 2018

Programme Director

Honourable Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Willies Mchunu; MECs present here today;

The Executive Mayor of EThekweni, Cllr ZandileGumede;

Members of the Portfolio Committee of Transport;

Acting Director-General of the Department, Mr. Chris Hlabisa;

Heads of Department;

Deputy Director-Generals;

Chairpersons and CEOs of Public Entities;

Officials of Government and Public Entities;

Political Formations, Trade Unions, Civil Society Organizations;

The Private Sector;

Members of the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Honourable Premier

As I greet you on this balmy Durban morning, I am overwhelmed by significant national game-changing developments that have recently taken place just before

this momentous occasion when the Mount Edgecombe Interchange is to be officially opened.

Today's ceremony comes between the significant announcements last Friday of the committed investments totalling R290 billion that will hopefully jumpstart our economy. We are also ending the Transport Month tomorrow, a month during which we have engaged our people and communities as well as showcased the country's transport infrastructure development and services.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has been leading a sterling effort in promoting both domestic and foreign direct investment into our country, with the holding of the historic, inaugural South African Investment Conference, which by all accounts has been a huge success that will hopefully yield thousands of jobs for our people and place our economy onto a higher developmental trajectory.

The President has correctly described the pledged investments as an expression of a shared hope, renewed confidence and a bold statement that we are determined to put behind us the period of uncertainty, discord and state capture so that we inaugurate an era of development, cooperation and partnership.

I am certain that all South Africans will rally behind the President's declaration that we are determined to build a country that is driven by economic development and innovation, to develop an economy that is diverse and resilient and prosperous, and to create companies that achieve sustained returns not only for their shareholders, but also for the workers that drive them and the communities that support them.

Programme Director,

As President Ramaphosa has also correctly observed, the deliberate exclusion of millions of South Africans - particularly as it relates to skills and ownership of assets - has been the single greatest impediment to the growth and development of our economy and society, even a quarter century after the attainment of freedom.

Thus, in an effort to lessen the grinding poverty and paucity of education, health facilities and other basic amenities, Government has placed economic growth and job creation at the centre of the national agenda.

Last week Thursday, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa officially launched the Gibela Train Manufacturing Plant in Dunnottar, Ekurhuleni in Gauteng Province.

The President lauded the plant as a key component of our investment into infrastructure that will boost the economy by becoming the gateway for the manufacturing of trains and rail components. The President further underlined the importance of this investment for skills development for the industrialization of our economy.

During his keynote address the President also pointed out that R400 billion has been set aside for infrastructure developments, and that the building and modernization of rail infrastructure is a top priority of government in this regard.

The Supplier Park and Rail Training School will manufacture, assemble, test, commission and deliver 580 new commuter trains.

This massive investment will include the local manufacturing of parts, maintenance, training facilities, creation of jobs, skills development, the achievement of a 65% local content, and it will promote black economic empowerment and support communities.

The African Union has designated South Africa to be the main country for the manufacturing of trains and rolling stock. We must embrace this opportunity and position ourselves properly as the spin-offs are endless.

For us to create an integrated, sustainable, futuristic, safe, and affordable transport infrastructure, it is rail that will form the backbone of a modernized land transport system.

We need to embrace the opportunities presented to us by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which forms a key pillar in terms of the implementation of the National Transport Master Plan (NATMAP 2050).

Through NATMAP 2050, we have a plan for South Africa that is comprehensive, multi-modal, integrated, safe, affordable, accessible and a dynamic transport network, which provides a sustainable framework not only for implementing transport but also for providing infrastructure and services.

It is therefore critical that government and the Transport Sector entities work hand in hand and not in isolation from each other to move towards the implementation of NATMAP 2050.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is gratifying that all these wonderful economy-boosting events are unfolding during the 13th anniversary of the October Transport Month Campaign which this year has had the theme: "Together we move South Africa Forward".

The Mount Edgecombe Interchange, a veritable civil engineering work of art, is a fine example of infrastructure development that has multifarious spin-offs: it is contributing greatly to easing traffic congestion, promoting road safety and is also a significant business enabler.

The interchange which is one of the largest projects presently being undertaken by SANRAL in KwaZulu-Natal is more than a masterpiece of award-winning architecture - it is a vital artery of the greater eThekweni metropolitan highway system.

Due to the expansion of the uMhlanga and La Lucia Ridge areas, the existing interchange had been operating at capacity with vehicles backing up on the M41 and onto the N2 in peak hours.

An additional 40 000 vehicles enter or leave the N2 from the M41 daily resulting in substantial queuing of vehicles during the day.

This, together with expected future expansions and anticipated development of the Cornubia area, required the existing interchange to be upgraded in order to improve the flow to and from the N2 and M41 to the supporting road network.

The new four-level interchange facility provides at least two lanes on each of the major movements. The upgrade includes the implementation of directional ramps, eliminating the need for controlled signaling, thus ensuring free flow of traffic in all directions.

The construction has been jointly funded by national Department of Transport through SANRAL and KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport and has been undertaken by the South African branch of Italian construction company CMC di Ravenna.

Two incrementally launched bridges are part of the interchange upgrade. One bridge which is 948m long - the longest incrementally launched bridge in South Africa - joins the Mount Edgecombe side of the M41 with the N2 South. The other bridge is 440m long and joins the uMhlanga side of the M41 with the N2 North.

The 948m bridge has 23 piers and two abutments and was built from two ends - one portion launched on a curve and the other on a straight.

To provide for the safety of pedestrians, a pedestrian bridge has been constructed over the N2 and will connect to new footways. In addition, lighting has been installed to ensure the whole interchange is lit at night for increased safety. It is indeed important that as we open this interchange we do not lose focus on preventing pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Unfortunately this bridge is

becoming notorious for that and also some of the pedestrian injuries and fatalities are as a result of drug and alcohol abuse.

The multiple engineering achievements behind this mammoth project are testimony to the exceptional skill and abilities of the entire construction team.

The project engaged 80 designers at the peak of the design phase. Not a single road was closed permanently during construction.

Programme Director,

The improvement of roads has knock-on effects - it helps to develop SMMEs and create jobs.

The maximum number of persons employed at a time by the Mount Edgecombe Interchange contractor and sub-contractors was 803 of which 724 were from the eThekweni target area, with a total of R240 million spent on wages to date.

However, I must register my concern that only 47 of the 803 (6%) were women. These numbers are alarmingly low, and we need to commit that with future developments we must bring the gender parities close to 50%. In fact, this should be clearly and articulated in the project scope of work. We must be deliberate in our actions to not perpetuate the status quo and the assumption that women are not cut out for work in construction.

Of the 803 people employed on project 450 were youth, although with only 6% being women, the gender parities were again reinforced even amongst the youth.

A total of 31 sub-contractors have been employed with work to the value of R59 million performed by 21 SMMEs to date.

I am pleased that SANRAL has practically demonstrated its faith in SMMEs as a contributor to economic growth. SANRAL's efforts in SMME development are in line with government's vision to create a conducive environment for economic independence, job creation and social cohesion.

The opening of the magnificent Mount Edgecombe Interchange is significant because it ends a month-long campaign incorporating scores of events in villages, towns and cities arranged by national, provincial and local government transport-related organisations. I am proud to declare that October Transport Month 2018 has been a resounding success.

Transport Month this year hopefully motivated all stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to improving the quality of transport facilities, to addressing service

delivery backlogs in transport infrastructure, to promoting road safety and to encouraging community dialogue about transport.

The enthusiasm by all participants in the various media briefings, exhibitions, seminars, panel discussions, infrastructure handovers, indabas, activations, inter-faith prayer days, signature campaigns, school training programmes and career expos that have been held throughout the length and breadth of South Africa since 1 October bears testimony to the fact that there is greater understanding of the critical role that transport plays in the lives of our people.

The transport sector is at the heart of the country's development and it is my duty to ensure that South Africans have safe, reliable, affordable and convenient public transport.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Road crashes and the unacceptably the high number of fatalities on our roads usually feature prominently in the public's minds during busy long-weekends and holiday periods. The coming summer holidays will, no doubt, require that we have intensified focus on road safety and the well-being of road users.

Every year approximately 1, 24 million people die in the world due to road crashes. It is projected that if the situation remains the same, by 2030 road crashes will be the fifth leading cause of death globally.

South Africa like most developing countries experiences large numbers of serious injuries and fatalities due to crashes. Of particular concern is that sixty percent of the crash victims are young people between the ages of 15 - 35 years.

These are future leaders and these constitute a large percentage of the economically active population. With young people dying in large numbers our future is threatened and the country is denied its economically active population thus robbing the country of skills and ultimately affecting the economic growth.

Thus, the Department of Transport, with all its roads entities, views road safety as a daily issue that must be addressed through our dedicated 365-day programme that is sustainable and consistent.

The programme has been structured to align with the United National Decade of Action for Road Safety Global Plan and the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals whose target is to reduce road fatalities by half in 2020.

Targeting road user behaviour through education, legislation and enforcement has been the cornerstone of our improved road safety record to date.

Clearly, we are on the right track in following an integrated response to road crashes and addressing each of the elements of the global action plan on road safety, law enforcement, education and awareness, safer vehicles and

The modern trend in road safety management is to follow a “safe systems approach” in the design of road surfaces, road environments and vehicles. This approach recognises the interrelationship between factors that lead to accidents and places the human being at the centre of the response.

Human error still remains the single most contributory factor to road crashes. Road management authorities and the construction sector are increasingly taking this into account in the planning, design, building and maintenance of roads.

Safer vehicles are becoming the norm as most global manufacturers spend more research and resources to build vehicles that can not only better protect the occupants but also reduce the impact when it collides with pedestrians. We should never forget that pedestrians make up one third of all road fatalities in South Africa and, again, we exceed the global average by more than 10 percent.

Best global practices in design and engineering are increasingly being implemented in many developing countries. South Africa is, indeed, fortunate to draw on the experience and expertise available at an organisation such as the South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) – which is widely-respected among its peers in the industry.

A month ago I returned from Namibia having attended the Southern African Development Community (SADC) meeting, of Ministers responsible for ICT, Information, Meteorology and Transport.

South Africa assumed the Chairpersonship of the Trans-Kalahari Corridor (TKC), which includes South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

This corridor is one of the critical corridors to industrialize and create jobs in the adjacent towns where this road network traverses. More such collaborations need to be seen throughout the continent to broaden our transport networks.

SANRAL, with their expertise and footprint, will play a key role in the development of this corridor. It is therefore important that SANRAL optimizes its investment in this corridor taking advantage of the opportunities they create.

On 16 August 2018 I held an engagement with the Botswana Minister of Transport and Communications, Mr Onkokame Mokaila, about SANRAL involvement in projects in Botswana.

In the same meeting, Botswana indicated that they would like South Africa to help them in the establishment of their own roads agency.

I am extremely excited about the role SANRAL can play in providing roads infrastructure and creating economic opportunities for South Africa, the SADC region and the continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Going forward, our focus will increasingly shift towards the introduction of technology and interventions that can give transport management authorities a better understanding of the environments that contribute to higher road crashes and the interventions that are required to counter this.

This will be linked to the wider roll-out of the intelligent transport systems that can warn road users about imminent dangers and enable response teams to get to the scenes of crashes faster and save more lives.

When all these factors are combined – safer systems, safer vehicles, better trained and informed road users, more effective law enforcement – we will, with no doubt, see a further reduction in the crash rate and a decline in fatalities and injuries.

But statistics can be cold and impersonal. The human impact of road deaths goes beyond that which can be represented in graphs and spread sheets. Every person that does not safely return from a journey on the road is somebody's husband, wife, son, daughter, mother, sister or friend.

This should be the uppermost consideration in the minds of South Africans as we start making plans for our journeys during the coming holiday period and festive season.

Finally, I must thank my colleagues at the Department Transport, SOEs and agencies, as well as the provincial departments of transport for ensuring the success of October Transport Month.

I must also thank the national Department of Transport, SANRAL, the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, EThekweni Municipality and every individual who has been responsible for the Mount Edgecombe interchange upgrade which has changed the landscape forever and is sure to become a well-known landmark in years to come.

I thank you.