

SPEAKING NOTES – 21 NOVEMBER 2021

RTIA WORLD REMEMBRANCE DAY FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS 2021

A CONTRIBUTION TO A NATIONAL AARTO AWARENESS AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

1. AARTO National Rollout is on Track

Over the past few days **AARTO has been in the news spotlight** due to some misplaced narratives driven in the media that the rollout of AARTO must be put on hold as there is no capacity to implement this national road safety intervention.

Currently, our country records close to 14 000 road fatalities every year. **AARTO is designed to make a significant impact** in the national road safety effort to change this state of affairs.

AARTO is formulated **to change, and therefore improve, the behaviour** of the road users. One death on our roads in one too many.

Moving forward, such misplaced statements on halting the AARTO National rollout have no scientific basis and are far from the truth. Government has over the years built all the necessary capacity to rollout AARTO throughout the country. The passing of the AARTO Amendment Act by Parliament in 2019 was a product of a national consultative process by **all stakeholders across the length and breadth** of our country.

Over the years the Road Traffic Infringement Agency (RTIA) has coordinated a national planning programme to prepare all our Issuing Authorities for the implementation of AARTO. All nine provinces, including the two jurisdictions where AARTO is currently being implemented, i.e. Tshwane and Joburg, are part of the **AARTO National Steering Committee (ANSC)**. The ANSC is in contact with all the 213 jurisdictions across the country where AARTO will be implemented to mark the national rollout of this road safety intervention.

The RTIA, including **all nine provincial traffic and community safety departments** possess all the necessary information to motivate for the rollout to proceed as per the various phases announced on 01 July 2021.

Among the critical steps undertaken in the AARTO rollout are the following:

WORLD REMEMBRANCE DAY FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS – AN AARTO AWARENESS PROGRAMME 2021

- Setting of the AARTO Service Outlets in all nine provinces
- Deepening AARTO public education and community awareness across the country as we rollout the setting of AARTO service outlets and other ground clearing activities which include the training of officers.
- Expanding AARTO connectivity to the Natis by all Issuing Authorities
- Enabling collecting agents to accept AARTO payments
- Working towards setting AARTO service outlets in all the jurisdictions across the country

The RTIA and partners are on course to successfully rollout AARTO throughout the country as per the phased approach recently announced on 01 July 2021.

2. World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims 2021

This Sunday, 21 November 2021, marks the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. The commemoration is part of the United Nations global movement to send a message to say we must do all possible to curb fatalities that occur on our roads. **Let us remember the road traffic crashes victims by ensuring none of us die on our roads.**

The World Day of Remembrance is an international day recognised in the calendar of the United Nations road safety initiative, the United Nations Decade for Road Safety 2021-2030. SA is signatory to this UN global pact of reduce fatalities by 50% by 2030.

All motorists across the globe are urged to implement the slogan of the WDoR, **Remember, Support and Act** under the theme for this year which says **Act for Low Speeds on Our Roads / Act for Low Speeds Streets.**

To realise the intentions of this year's theme, the RTIA has partnered with four provinces which are **Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, North West and Western Cape.** This year's AARTO awareness programme marks a full circle of this national programme as last year the rollout of the World day of Remembrance was implemented in the rest of the other provinces.

The WDoR calls upon all of us to keep our people safe on our roads. **Roads are a shared space** – whether you travel as a driver, motorcyclist, cyclist, pedestrian or user of public transport we all have a role in protecting yourself and others from harm.

It is of great concern, especially in a developing country like ours where **almost 50% of fatalities that occur on our roads involve pedestrians.** One death on our roads is one too many.

RTIA is an Agency of the Department of Transport created by this democratic government to administer the Administrative Adjudication of the Road Traffic Offences (AARTO) Act. In the end, all **road users must be safe, feel safe and secure** while using our roads. Through AARTO, the goal is within reach.

3. Promulgation of the AARTO Act

President Cyril Ramaphosa signed AARTO Amendment Bill into law in **August 2019.**

The Minister of Transport Fikile Mbalula **publicly welcomed** the big step taken by the

WORLD REMEMBRANCE DAY FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS – AN AARTO AWARENESS PROGRAMME 2021

President in particular and the South African government in general.

Through the AARTO National Steering Committee we receive regular reports on the state of readiness in **all 213 jurisdictions** across the country.

AARTO National Rollout is set to **change the behaviour** of the road user for the better. It will save our country from the ever-increasing number of people losing their lives on our roads.

Road safety stemming from a deep-rooted **culture of VOLUNTARY compliance** with road traffic laws is our long-term goal at the RTIA.

4. New Provisions of the AARTO Act

Among the key changes that the newly signed AARTO Act brings are the following:

- **Common penalties** - All traffic violations throughout the country will carry the same penal values
- **Points Demerit System** – it is an objective and fair system of identifying reckless drivers and law breakers so that they can be removed from the driving fold.
- **Driver Rehabilitation programmes** - Infringers who have their licences suspended can attend rehabilitation programmes before being allowed back in the driving fold. AARTO is not just about punishment but has intentions to ensure compliance and change of road user behaviour
- **Infringement Appeals Tribunal** - Infringers can appeal against the rulings of the RTIA to the tribunal
- **Repeal of court elections** - Infringers do not have to be burdened by the courts for infringements as these will be dealt with administratively
- **Electronic service** - This means law enforcement will be effectively supported with service of documents by electronic means, such as e-mail. Similarly, infringers can exercise their options electronically, with the understanding that we live in a digital world geared towards the 4th Industrial Revolution and service delivery occurring instantaneously.

Since 2010, AARTO has been implemented in parts of the Gauteng Province, particularly the **two jurisdictions of Tshwane and Johannesburg**.

At the centre of the mooted AARTO national rollout is the **reduction of fatalities on our roads**.

South Africa is a **signatory to the United Nations** Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2021 to 2030.

Once again we wish to say, we are experiencing an average of **just under 14 000 deaths** per annum, which equates to about 38 people every single day, who lose their lives on our roads.

The implementation of AARTO is amongst the **critical interventions** to reduce these fatalities and save lives on our roads.

Through AARTO will enable government to:

- overcome the **wide discrepancies in the penalties** imposed by different magistrates (or applied in different jurisdictions) for the same types of traffic

WORLD REMEMBRANCE DAY FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS – AN AARTO AWARENESS PROGRAMME 2021

violations;

- ensure **uniformity in the different sentencing norms** for the majority of serious traffic violations which are generally too low to be adequately prohibitive;
- ensure that sentences are **more appropriately attuned** to the differential capacity of offenders to pay – hence creating the need for alternative sentencing options;
- be **tough on those who do not pay fines** imposed and those who ignore summonses to appear in court.

Under AARTO, **finer and penalties will be standardised** for all traffic violations and will give effect to the Points Demerit System. Furthermore, central to the implementation of the AARTO Amendment Bill is the introduction of the various provisions which include the electronic service of the infringement notices.

The AARTO legislation seeks to ensure that such **infringement notices are served in one or in combination** of the three ways which are, namely, personal, postage or electronic.

The **demerit point system** will greatly assist in identifying and eliminating dangerous motorists from our road network.

Currently, the legislative framework treats road traffic infringements as criminal acts. The AARTO Act **decriminalises road infringements**. However, serious traffic law violations still carry a criminal record.

The AARTO process enables us to **resolve traffic infringements speedily**. We shall not wait for a period of almost two years for an infringer to appear in court.

Section 21 of the AARTO Act on the **loss of possessions has been repealed**. No warrants of execution will be served on the infringers. Neither will warrants of arrest be issued to road users for road traffic infringements.

The AARTO Amendment also introduces an opportunity for habitual infringers to be subjected to **rehabilitation programmes**.

Every suspension provides opportunity to **the infringer to mend his/her behaviour**. No-one would be allowed to operate a vehicle after he/she has accumulated more than the threshold demerit point level, which is currently proposed 15 points without having gone through some evaluation.

The true intention of the AARTO is **not merely to provide for punitive measures**. It is intended to adequately address non-compliant behaviour and contribute to a change in the **behaviour and attitudes** of motorists to one of easy compliance to road traffic laws.

The AARTO Act also provides for the setting up of the Infringements Appeals Tribunal as **an added protection to the infringers**. Whatever ruling made by the RTIA's representation officers can still be challenged.

The AARTO further entrenches everyone's **Constitutional rights** in that an infringer can still subject the decision of the Appeals Tribunal to a Magistrate's Court, pursuant to the promotion of Administrative Justice.

4. AARTO Rollout critical path

WORLD REMEMBRANCE DAY FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS – AN AARTO AWARENESS PROGRAMME 2021

Soon the AARTO rollout will take a giant step forward as we will be embarking on the following:

- a. The gazetting of the AARTO Regulations to effect the implementation across the country
- b. The appointment of the members of the AARTO Appeals Tribunal to take office the day the AARTO amendment Act is proclaimed to take effect.
- c. The proclamation of the AARTO national rollout to effect the AARTO amendment Act
- d. Rollout of AARTO in all the jurisdictions across the country
- e. Expanding the RTIA footprint by setting up more AARTO service outlets in more provinces and local municipalities
- f. Fine-tuning the connectivity of systems to prepare for the introduction of the Points Demerit system on 01 July 2021
- g. To concretise all the institutional mechanisms to implement the AARTO rehabilitation programme
- h. To effect our monitoring and evaluation machinery to ensure that we measure if AARTO achieves the desired outcome to keep road users safe and secure

All our communities need to be educated and made aware about this coming national intervention to **reduce fatalities on our roads.**

The chief aim of AARTO rollout is that we **must all comply with traffic laws** at all times. Law-abiding road users will not be adversely affected by the AARTO rollout.

Through AARTO, RTIA is here to promote **justice in adjudication** of road traffic infringements.

Ends
RTIA Communications
21 November 2021