



# transport

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Department:  
Transport  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, MR JOE MASWANGANYI  
AT THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF THE JOHANNESBURG – MUSINA LONG  
DISTANCE TRAIN SERVICE, HELD AT THE PARK STATION  
JOHANNESBURG**

23 February 2018

Gauteng Roads and Transport MEC, Dr Ismail Vadi;  
All Municipal MMCs for Transport present;  
PRASA Board Members, led by the Chairperson, Advocate Nana Makhubele  
Prasa;  
Acting DDG for Rail, Mr Ngwako Makaipea;  
PRASA Acting Group CEO, Mr Cromet Molepo;  
PRASA Acting Rail CEO, Mr. Mthuthuzeli Swartz, and other CEO's present  
Representatives of Labour;  
Leaders of Rail Commuter Forums;  
CEOs for Rail Engineering Firms;  
Members of the SAPS;  
Distinguished Guests;  
Members of the Media;  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Programme Director, our presence here today to re-introduce the Main Line Passenger Services, our long-distance passenger rail service between Johannesburg and Musina (via Polokwane) effective from Wednesday, 28 February 2018, marks our recommitment and endeavour to speed up implementation of our integrated public transport system.

The re-launch of the long-distance passenger rail service today, could not have come at any better time than now when the majority of South Africans relies on public Transport for their livelihood.

This also comes at a time when the government of South Africa has taken a decision to dedicate 2018 to remember the life of one of the most remarkable leaders this continent and indeed the world has ever had.

Delivering the State of the Nation Address; President Cyril Ramaphosa said that this year South Africa and the people of the world will unite once more in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

Our decision to re-launch this service will indeed live up to the assertion made by President Mandela when **addressing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) 15th anniversary summit, in Johannesburg 13 September 1995. He said:**

**“We owe it to all the peoples of the sub-continent to ensure that they see in us, not merely good leaders waxing lyrical about development, but as the front commanders in the blast furnaces of labour, productive investments and visible change”**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2018, two days ago, I was addressing the event marking Transnet handing over of the rail rolling stock to the National Railways of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo.

I reflected that amongst the main challenges hindering growth and trade amongst African countries remain the issues of poor infrastructure, low density across transport networks, inefficient border processes and fragmented regulatory environments.

The re-introduction of this long distance services will ensure that we create a seamless, cost-effective and a fully integrated solution not only to facilitate human movement but also to strengthen our economic ties with the rest of Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen, some of you might be aware that according to the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS 2013), barriers to mobility in our country have been reduced in the last ten years, yet several challenges remain. Rural households are now having better access to public transport with reduced travel times.

According to the Survey, there has been a general increase in the percentage of households who used taxis (from 59% to 68,8%), buses (16,6% to 20,1%) and trains (5,7% to 9,9%). This reflects a general increase of the percentage of travellers in the country during 2003 and 2013.

These figures ladies and gentlemen, reflected a clear challenge of how our transport services and infrastructure are expected to be focused, planned and budgeted for.

No economy in the whole world can sustain growth without a credible and sound public transport system.

The National Household Transport Survey 2013 indicates that the percentage of car ownership has risen from 22.9% in 2003 to 32.6% in 2013. Despite this huge volume of car sales and use, public transport remains a dominant factor in the day-to-day activities of the majority of South Africans with regard to mobility.

Huge numbers of South Africans rely on public transport and must be transported to work, schools, clinics and centres for services on a daily basis.

It is against this background that the Cabinet approved the Public Transport Strategy and Action Plan 2007 to 2020. The implementation of this strategy is our measurement of how effective can we address transport challenges amongst our people. Our efforts to propel growth and development would be identified by the success and efficiency of our transport system that should be geared towards economic growth.

In fact, our efforts to transform our public transport system is gaining traction and it underpins our ambitions as Government to promote economic and social development of our people through safe, reliable and efficient public transport, using improved infrastructure and advanced transport technological systems.

Ladies and gentlemen, I must mention that although the transformation of our public transport system requires more work to be done, our milestones for a better public transport has shown the benefits of coordinated work between the three spheres of Government. The spirit of teaming up together to produce better services will always remain at the core of the ANC led government.

When we launched PRASA in 2009, it was indeed a momentous milestone for public transport in our country. We made a commitment as the ANC Government that we will work for a better public transport for all South Africans.

We made a strong commitment that public transport should facilitate greater access to economic and employment opportunities for the rural and urban poor of our country alike and that we must integrate our national economy with the rest of Africa and the world.

Among the key interventions adopted back in 2004 included the strategy to arrest the decline in commuter rail service. I am glad to report that we have managed through these interventions and focused investments, managed to stabilize commuter rail services.

Amongst the main interventions is the launch of the new Metrorail trains, the People's Trains, which began the 20 year Modernisation Programme in response to the mandate to modernise passenger rail. The Modernisation Programme espouses the National Development Plan's vision 2030 that aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030.

We now have the Train manufacturing and maintenance factory at Dunnortar at Ekurhuleni ready to be formally unveiled.

There are indeed still many challenges facing our people commuting on the rail system and it is our intention and commitment as the ANC Government, to accelerate the process of change and ensure that we have a rail system that fulfils its role and responsibility as the backbone of our transport system.

I am confident that we are on course to restoring this mode to its historic position so that we are able to meet the challenges of the future.

The re-launch of the Main Line long-distance passenger rail service by PRASA today constitutes continuity in the change the ANC Government has embarked upon since April 1994 and the tasks we set for ourselves as the governing party. The ANC Government created PRASA as a vehicle, an instrument to champion and advance its efforts aimed at the transformation of our public transport system.

PRASA has an important role to play in creating the platform from which its business units: Metrorail, Shosholozha Meyl, Autopax and Intersite will be expected to deliver high-quality and low-cost transport services. PRASA also

presents us with the real possibility to provide frequent public transport services in the rural areas.

PRASA should focus on ensuring that these corporate entities established under its wing deliver on our commitment for service excellence whilst its primary role is one of investment on transport infrastructure and capacity to meet current and future passenger demands.

PRASA is expected to manage and develop its assets and ensure that these are really exploited fully to meet its own operating costs. This includes PRASA property arm, Intersite, to begin to focus on unleashing the value in its property portfolio through the continued commercial development of its stations and landholdings, both as a way of enhancing passenger's experience and generating income from the exploitation of its assets.

In conclusion, I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the Portfolio Committee on Transport. The Portfolio Committee played a major role in playing an oversight of our work as government and by passing enabling legislation I would also like to thank the role played by the Transport MINMEC in achieving such very important development goals, the PRASA Board of Control and the Acting Group CEO and their entire PRASA Employees who worked tirelessly to ensure that we re-launch this important service.

I thank you ladies and gentlemen,