



ADDRESS BY TRANSPORT MINISTER DR BE NZIMANDE ON THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE 2018 OCTOBER TRANSPORT MONTH, AT THE LAKES HOTEL IN BENONI, GAUTENG

05 October 2018

*MECs of Provincial Departments of Transport;
Ekurhuleni MMC for Roads and Transport, Cllr Petrus Mabunda;
The RTMC Board led by the Chairperson Mr Zola Majavu;
Chairpersons and CEOs of other Transport Sector Entities;
Acting Director-General of the Department, Mr Chris Hlabisa;
The RTMC Executive led by CEO, Advocate Makhosini Msibi;
Deputy Director-Generals of the Department;
HODs of Provincial Departments of Transport;
Officials of the Department of Transport and officials of the Transport entities;
The special guests, the Learners from different provinces participating in the Road Safety Debates and PET;
Educators
Business;
Members of the Media;*

Ladies and gentlemen

I extend my fraternal greetings to you on this national launch of the 2018 October Transport Month (OTM).

What is more important and unique about our launch today is that we are celebrating the launch hosting the finals of the national Debates and Participatory Educational Techniques on road safety.

We are also joining the rest of the world in honour of the role and importance of teachers in the classroom and society, on this Teachers Day.

Today, is the fifth day of October Transport Month (OTM), and as the transport fraternity we have commenced with our heightened transport programmes.

We have the opportunity to showcase our public transport, roads infrastructure and to expose young people to careers in the transportation industry.

Ladies and gentlemen

Today marks the last day in a journey that these learners started a few months ago.

Through their sweat and hard work, they competed against fellow learners from various provinces and were selected to represent their provinces in this national competition.

They survived gruelling elimination rounds from schools to districts and to provincial level.

These competitions allow young people to exchange ideas amongst themselves and to share as well as to learn from each other as peers about road safety.

I have a passion for education and I strongly believe that will enjoy today's session.

As we know, our roads are a shared public space and as such we should exercise caution and maturity when using them, either as drivers, passengers or pedestrians.

It is far better to prevent crashes than to try to deal with their after effect which leaves permanent scars in the affected parties, families and the society at large.

The need to ensure that the situation does not get worse necessitates that the road safety knowledge and skills is enhanced to increase responsible road safety behaviour.

It is for this reason that all learners that participated in this programme are winners, and must return to their respective provinces as Road Safety Ambassadors, championing and promoting road safety.

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 world 5th cause of death.

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.

A cursory look at the causes of these crashes and the loss of lives of young people reveal that their attitude and behaviour are the major contributing factors.

Young people by their nature always explore and try new things. They tend to be involved in risky behaviour with the consequences being serious injuries and fatalities, especially on our roads.

However, today's engagements by young people send a clear message that the future of our country is indeed in good hands. It gives us hope that a South Africa free of serious injuries and fatalities due to road crashes is possible.

Finally, as learners you have for months placed much effort and dedication in coming so far in this competition – I am most certain that you have acquired valuable road safety knowledge and skills.

It is important that you embrace those competencies and continue to be road safety ambassadors in your communities.

The road safety lessons learned through these road safety programmes should definitely put you in good stead as you live your lives.

The fact that you are able to debate these topics with such conviction together with projecting your community road safety problems and solutions can only mean that you are aware of what needs to be done to be safe on the road.

So continue with your superlative efforts and shine young road safety ambassadors of 2018.

May I also take this moment to thank the Educators for having committed themselves to shape and mould the future Road Safety Leaders, well done and never look back in making us proud.

To the Road Safety practitioners in all Provinces and the RTMC you never stop to make us proud and I congratulate you on the work well done, let us never be complacent, we can still do more.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As a sector driving economic development it is imperative that we embrace the opportunities presented to us by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and find ways to stimulate our economy to open a corridor of opportunities and produce more jobs, through the enhanced use of technology.

We need to modernize our transport infrastructure to bring them in line with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Unlike the three previous revolutions, South Africa as a leader on the continent needs to proactively participate in this revolution, to ensure we are at the forefront of change and innovations.

What should really be bothering us as country is that just 0.7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) goes towards research, technology and innovation.

This is even below the continent's average of 0.9%. The average of the highly developed states in Europe sits at about 5%.

This is also a clarion call to business to say that government simply doesn't have the capacity and funding to deliver on everything it has to do within the sector.

Before the conclusion of this year, I will announce a team of imminent professionals who will form part of a Panel of Transport Experts, to advise me on strengthening the

role of all the modes of transport in the social and economic development of our country.

It is important that we all work with these experts, supported by institutions of higher learning, research institutions and business, to solicit solutions in ensuring that we create an integrated and balanced transport sector.

The envisaged national transport hubs that we intend to establish in provinces will also be a source of knowledge on provincial transport needs. So we must ensure that we collectively work together to establish these centres of excellence.

Ladies and gentlemen

When the President of the Republic of South Africa appointed me as Minister of Transport six months ago, he communicated something so profound to me.

He said that to improve regional and continental integration and relations, transport must take centre stage.

On past Wednesday, I attended the Ports and Rail Conference and the Future Mobility Africa Conference in Durban. They provided futuristic views and solutions to tackling the Transport challenges.

As a country and a continent, we have an abundance of mineral resources that should be the driving force of our economic development. However, we are burdened by poor transport infrastructure that hinders our capacity to import and export goods.

As South Africa, we have a national road infrastructure that is not only important to South Africa but to our region - SADC and the entire continent.

We therefore must ensure that we exploit our entire infrastructure to ensure that we create the most needed jobs for our people and our continent.

Domestically, we will continue to engage with the Taxi Industry regarding matters that are of concern to government and the industry including the issuing of subsidies to the sector, vehicle financing, and taxi violence.

As we launch October Transport Month, we launch it in the knowledge that in the National Transport Master Plan (NATMAP 2050), we have a plan for South Africa that is comprehensive, multi-modal, integrated, dynamic and which provides a sustainable framework not only for implementing transport but also for providing infrastructure and services.

Indeed, through the NATMAP, we will ensure that all our modes of transport, namely maritime, aviation, rail and land transport are integrated and respond to the needs of our communities, particularly the poor and the working class.

It is important that we fast-track the finalisation of the Single Transport Economic Regulator (STER), which deals with regulatory and capacity shortcomings across all transport modes.

As the Department of Transport and all our entities, I would like us to host a Transport Innovation Conference early next year to prepare ourselves for the assuring of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and its consequences.

Let me conclude by announcing that as part of our October Transport Month, President Cyril Ramaphosa, will officially launch the Rail Manufacturing factory in Dunnottar at Ekurhuleni in Gauteng on 25 October 2018.

I therefore invite you to come and celebrate with us this ground breaking launch of continental importance.

I Thank you all, let the debate begin