



**ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, DR BLADE  
NZIMANDE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE TETA SKILLS  
SUMMIT 2019 HELD AT BIRCHWOOD HOTEL - BOKSBURG**

28 March 2019

TETA Executive, led by the CEO, Ms Maphefo Anno-Frempong

Conference Presenters;

Representatives of Higher Learning Institutions and Research  
Institutions;

Representatives of State Owned Entities;

Transport Sector Organisations and Associations;

Transport Opinion Makers;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen

It is an honour and privilege for me to join you today on this  
important TETA Skills Summit 2019.

The convening of this summit marks yet another important step towards our deeper appreciation of the significance of driving transformative innovation through appropriate skills to boost our economic growth prospects.

Having been deployed previously as the Minister of Higher Education and Training, I fully understand and appreciate the role that education and skills development could play in changing the lives of millions of South Africans and the impact that it could have in growing our economy because transport is the heart beat of the economy.

I must confess that what attracted me the most to address you today is the theme of this Summit, namely, ***“Driving innovation and transformative skills development initiatives bringing sustainable economic growth with global impact”***.

When I got appointed as the Minister of Transport, one of the commitments I made was to be a champion of transport innovation by driving a robust campaign of investment in research and development, technology and innovation in the transport sector. This is important to our ability to sustain and boost our economy.

I committed in my first budget vote last year that I intend setting up transport innovation hubs throughout the country to advance this objective.

Equally, as the Department of Transport, we are leading an initiative to mobilize both public and private sector funding to invest in research and innovation for this sector. One of the things I am hoping to do is to convene the Transport Innovation Summit.

Undoubtedly, the issue of technology and innovation remains critical and we ought to find better ways to build our capacity.

As a department, we are committed to work closely with other government departments, including the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Higher Education and Training, state research institutions like the CSIR, the private sector, institutions of higher learning, and transport stakeholders.

This initiative will ensure that we further bring the necessary development and promote innovation in all our modes of transport, be it in public transport, aviation, maritime, road construction and in the promotion of road safety and green transport technologies.

This process will further be boosted by the Panel of Transport Experts that I have appointed to advise me on mechanisms to further strengthen the role of all the modes of transport in social and economic development of our country

Ladies and gentlemen

South Africa contributes a large portion of its national budget towards education and skills development.

Approximately 1.5% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is contributed towards education and training. Most of this contribution is received by vocational colleges and the National Skills Fund, including the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

For centuries, we know that one of the major factors keeping countries from being able to fight poverty is inaccessibility of to post education and training.

By making training and skills development available to people, be it in the form of learnerships, internships, scholarships, short courses, and workplace training, we can help people to upskill themselves so that they stand a better chance of

escaping poverty and indignity; thus also meaningfully contributing to, and benefitting from, economic growth and development.

One of the most important achievements of government in the past year has been to reinvigorate the process of uniting all South Africans around a shared vision of a new dawn and fundamental transformation as its main platform.

Across society, our people are embracing the 'new dawn' and demonstrate renewed commitment to tackling unemployment, poverty, inequality and corruption, including State Capture.

In line with this task, government has mobilised all social partners behind an economic recovery plan.

This has been demonstrated through the Presidential Jobs Summit, which committed to a series of measures to create additional jobs and protect existing ones.

We have also held the inaugural South Africa Investment Conference which aimed to mobilise significantly higher levels of domestic and international investment as a necessary condition for growth and accelerated job creation.

On the other hand, government has made it easier for young people to enter the public service by scrapping work experience as one of the requirements for entry-level jobs.

However, all of these efforts will come to nothing if South Africans do not acquire the necessary skills and competencies to drive our economic growth strategy.

This skills drive should be supported by a clear understanding and appreciation of the skill requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Innovation, a new era that builds and extends the impact of digitization in new and 'disruptive' ways.

This is the reason that government, in line with the Framework for skills for a Changing World, has expanded the training of both educators and learners to respond to emerging technologies including the internet of things, robotics and artificial intelligence.

As we grapple with the challenges of our recent past, and as we deepen our efforts to overcome the grave injustices of centuries, it is essential that we do so with our eyes firmly fixed on the future, but firmly departing from addressing the current challenges.

In his address to the Presidential and Premier Education Awards of 22 November 1997, President Nelson Mandela said:

***“The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation. Our previous system emphasised the physical and other differences of South Africans with devastating effects. We are steadily but surely introducing education that enables our children to exploit their similarities and common goals, while appreciating the strength in their diversity”.***

That was a commitment to the promotion of excellence, nation-building and reconciliation. These were and remain non-negotiable.

It was also a commitment to policies that make colleges and universities accessible to all South Africans and more so, inclusive places for black people, women and people living with disabilities.

Since the dawn of democracy science and technology has been put in the centre of development in our country; and schools, colleges and universities have become accessible to all South Africans.

We have observed the growth and successes of our country's basic education sector, especially the increase in numbers of enrolled students and those that complete their National Senior Certificate examinations.

We appreciate the introduction of the Three Stream Model of education whose impact will be seen in its contribution to skills development and economic growth.

We have also noted the positive impact of the implementation of the ANC policies that resulted in increased and expanded participation in higher education.

At the same time, there has been a huge expansion in the number of women studying in higher education. Women are now in majority in our institutions of higher learning.

Indeed, we have experienced the transformation of our universities from insular institutions to open institutions for all.

The growth in financial support to students through the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is one of the greatest advances that took place in the last two decades of democracy under the leadership of the ANC.

The ANC government also expanded free education for students from poor and working class backgrounds to cover qualifying second year students.

Government is also committed to ensure that this support continues to extend to accommodation, transport and study materials for qualifying students at public TVET colleges and universities.

## **Skills for Transport**

Ladies and gentlemen

As the Department of Transport, we are committed to implementing Human Resource Development interventions that are aimed at responding to the government skills development agenda in-line with the National Skills Development Strategy III, National Development Plan 2030, New Growth Path and Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP).

Our commitment is meant to address the skills gap and shortages in both the Department of Transport and the Transport sector generally.

The most important area of intervention and co-operation between our department and TETA is that of undertaking a skills analysis for the needs of the Transport sector now and in the future, especially in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Within this context we also need to undertake such an analysis sectoral, so that we are able to have a better picture of skills needs in all the sub sectors of transport, and these include but not limited to aviation, rail, roads and maritime.

In other words, I am calling for a partnership between my department, the SETA and the Transport sector as a whole to invest into research on skills needs of the sector now and going into the future. I am a great believer that SETAs are uniquely positioned to play a critical role into research for skills development. We also need to undertake skills needs research into the entire value chain(s) of the transport sector and its sub sectors.

As part of driving the agenda of research for transport skill I see an opportunity to mobilize resources so that we promote investment into postgraduate studies in the transport field as part of supporting future knowledge producers, innovators and high end skills for the transport sector. That is why I continue to strongly support the TETA scholarship programme for South Africans to go and study at the United Nations World Maritime

University in Sweden. We however have a challenge to create such programmes in our own university system. This is also important as part of skills production for Operation Phakisa. For instance, within Operation Phakisa, the Department of Transport is responsible for driving maritime transport and manufacturing in these areas.

Whilst on operation Phakisa, it is also important to ensure that our communities in coastal areas are able to benefit from the growth and development of maritime transport and the marine industry generally. One important intervention would be relevant training for our communities to benefit from opportunities associated with coastal economies and livelihoods.

It is also important that TETA incorporates into its own training strategy the production of skills for new economic initiatives and avenues in the transport sector. For example, one of the most promising new area of economic growth is that of promoting coastal shipping.

We do not manufacture ships and we only repair only 3 per cent of ships that visit our shores. I challenge the SETA to look closely into these new areas, including studying the implications of the Maritime Transport Dialogue I recently convened and the declaration adopted there for skills training.

The Maritime and Aviation sectors are notorious for their lack of transformation. I am convinced that one major reason for this is lack of relevant skills, especially poor access by blacks, youth and women. In other words, skills are a crucial component in changing the patterns of ownership and participation in the transport sector.

I am also very keen to work towards the establishment of a public aviation academy in our country. I am going to be inviting the SETA, together with our aviation entities and other stakeholders to work towards the establishment of such an academy.

Children and youth from poor backgrounds are for instance unable to afford training as pilots as all of pilot training in our country is in private hands. This is completely unacceptable particularly 25 years into our democracy. This is another area that TETA can make a meaningful contribution.

Indeed, the SETA must continue its effort in supporting generic skills in support of skills development for transport, including engineering skills for rail, roads, aviation, etc as some of these still remain elusive to significant sections of our population.

In our relationship with TETA we must ensure that we further develop and enhance our Sector Skills Plan (SSP) through learnerships, internships, career outreach programmes and scholarships.

We need to pay particular attention to work placement such that we integrate theory and practice and improve work opportunities. I am still of the view that the SETAs can still do much more in this area.

For instance, I am not convinced that we have sufficient numbers of interns in our sector, and that we can still do much more, including in our very own department.

By implementing these interventions, we intend to contribute significantly towards economic growth and development and poverty reduction through the provision of education, training and development opportunities within the broader transport sector and beyond.

I also urge the SETA to continue and significantly intensify the provision of education and training opportunities for our people with disabilities in the transport sector. This must include the provision of the necessary assistive devices and the creation of

an inclusive environment where people with disabilities are not pitied but empowered to participate meaningfully in our sector.

The transport sector is particularly notorious for being a male dominated sector 'Emzini Wezinsizwa'. We have and must change this so that women take up their rightful place in the sector.

Additionally, transport sector skills must not only be accessible to youth from the urban areas, but we must intensify our effort to reach out to rural youth. This is an important aspect of seeking to bridge the urban/rural development divide.

As a department, we have also partnered with TETA and other partners from both private and public sector including Institutions of Higher Learning to implement our training objectives.

We have signed Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) with twelve (12) Institutions of Higher Learning who offer transport qualifications for capacity building within the transport sector.

Our grants provided to these Universities cover student funding, curriculum development as well as research.

We have supported financially a total of **953** learners during the 2018 academic year with commitments to continue with such provision for 2019 and beyond.

A total of ±218 students graduate with transport qualifications on a yearly basis. An amount of **R12, 000,000.00** is budgeted yearly for this programme.

These partnerships have led to **4134** student enrolment during the MTSF period of 2014/2019 from the eleven (11) Universities offering various transport qualifications.

Graduates from these programmes are placed within the three spheres of government, our Public Entities as well as the transport industry at large. We urge the SETA to continue playing its role in the work placement of these graduates.

We also have partnerships with Technical Vocational Education and Training(TVET) Colleges. The Department has introduced a transport qualification in Transport Operations, Logistics and Economics at TVET Colleges since 2012. Currently fourteen (14) Colleges are offering the programme and **3 053** students were enrolled for the 2018 academic year.

The graduates from this programme are in the main absorbed by warehouses and logistics companies. Others have opened their own businesses.

TETA plays a pivotal role in placing these learners within the industry for Work Integrated Learning and they also provide capacity development programmes to the TVET College lecturers.

Since 2008, we have also partnered with the Transport Research Activity Centre (TRAC- SA).

This partnership encourages and supports Science, Engineering and Technology learners to undertake Transport-related disciplines at university level.

We managed to reach out to **1496** learners from Grade 10 to 12 throughout the three (3) mobile laboratories in the three provinces of **KwaZulu-Natal**: Kwadukuza region, **Limpopo**: Blouberg region and **Western Cape**: Eerster Revier in Cape town during 2018/19 financial year.

Learners that have been supported through TRAC are currently registered at various tertiary institutions.

In alignment with the National Youth Accord, 2020, annually we recruit interns in-line with our staff establishment.

A total of **74** interns have been recruited for 2018/19 to 2019/20 financial years, where **52** were placed within the department and **22** within various Municipalities across the country, although we can still do much more on this front.

The purpose of this programme is to offer graduates the opportunity to gain meaningful work based experience with the intention to facilitate their absorption in the labour market.

The Department also facilitated learnership programmes for junior staff members without a formal qualification during 2018/19 financial year.

Annually, as a department, we conduct career outreach sessions in school across various provinces in order to sensitize learners on transport qualifications and opportunities available within the transport sector.

This also include provision of career services to the children of the Department of Transport employees as well as implementation of projects such as Take- A-Girl Child to work.

Currently we have reached **6733** learners in the 2018/19 financial year.

Through our multilateral agreements, we provided our employees with international scholarships.

As pointed out earlier, and in collaboration with one of our maritime entity, SAMSA, working closely with TETA, we recruited students to study at the World Maritime University (WMU) in areas such as Shipping, Maritime law and Policy, Maritime safety and Environment administration, Marine Environment and Ocean Management and Maritime Education.

These programmes produced **42** Masters and PHD students in the Maritime environment.

Furthermore, two (2) youth from the Department of Transport, were also recruited to study at the Japan international University.

One of the Japanese scholarship holders completed in 2018 with a Masters programme while the other employee is still abroad.

In an effort to empower women, through the TETA partnership, we produced four female senior managers in the International Executive Development Programme and two female Middle

Managers graduated in the International Leadership Development Programme.

Whilst we acknowledge that progress has been made to reverse the apartheid education legacy, we believe that more still needs to be done to upskill South Africans to improve their chances to have a better life.

President Mandela said it best when he said: ***“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”***

Ladies and gentlemen

The task before us is formidable and above everything else, we must get our economy working again.

As government, as business, as labour and as citizens, let us unite to embrace tomorrow.

Let us grasp our collective future with both hands, in the immortal words of the Freedom Charter: **side by side, sparing neither strength nor courage.**

This task – of building a better South Africa - is our collective task as a nation, as the people of South Africa.

I therefore extend an invitation to you all to join us in the Department of Transport as we transform the transport sector for the better.

Working together as South Africans, we can manage to create the necessary jobs and grow our economy for the benefit of all.

As I conclude allow me to remind you that South Africans will head to the polls on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May this year to elect representatives in the national and provincial government.

Please ensure that we all go and cast your vote for the government of your choice.

I thank you

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