



transport

Department:
Transport
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Opening Remarks by the Honourable Deputy Minister of Transport, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga (MP) on the Occasion of the National Road Safety Summit at the Bolivian Lodge, Limpopo on 16 November 2018

Programme Director

Honourable Premier of Limpopo Province, Mr Stanley Mathabatha;

MEC of Transport in Limpopo Province, Ms Makoma Grace Makhurupetje;

MECs of other Provincial Departments of Roads and Transport;

His Worship, the Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr John Mpe;

Her Worship, the Executive Mayor of Polokwane Local Municipality, Cllr Thembi Nkadimeng;

MMCs of Roads and Transport;

Chairpersons and CEOs of Transport Sector Entities;

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

HODs of Provincial Departments of Roads and Transport;

Deputy Director-Generals of the Department;

Senior Managers and Officials of all Government Departments;

Road Safety Activists;

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen

Introduction and background

Let me begin by acknowledging the different sectors of society represented at this Summit.

I wish to acknowledge the variety of players as a specific confirmation of the supreme notion of “collaboration for road safety”.

The variety of actors, concerned individuals and groups afford us the depth of capability to ultimately eradicate fatalities on our roads.

It is perhaps a platform to critically review the contributions of each of these sectors in relation to capacity and potential role of each set of actors in the road safety sphere.

This is an arena in which we are best placed to suggest further research areas for road safety, to revisit factors we may have overlooked.

This is while we need to continue to search for other partners especially researchers and/or road safety practitioners that exist outside of the scope of our usual business.

This Summit is, I believe, a reflective exercise in which we assess the progress we have made since the last Summit and what obstacles there have been in the implementation of resolutions concluded then.

Mid-Term Report

Programme Director,

In our Mid-Term Report that reviewed our actions in the period 2010 - 2014 we focused on these strategic programmes that had been implemented:

- The implementation of systematic road safety strategies and programmes that are tackling the main risk factors for traffic crashes (speed, alcohol, non-compliance with traffic rules);
- Advancing technical norms and standards for road infrastructure and vehicles; and
- Road safety priorities shifted from motorised urban traffic to vulnerable road users in rural areas.

In that period under review we nevertheless had continued to witness resilient habits that kept fatalities still high instead of falling as a result of interventions carried.

In the light of that disturbing observation, that is, the resilience of fatality numbers over that time, we had resolved to continue improving the implementation.

Over the ensuing period we dealt with different categories of road users and devised further strategies, legislation and policies towards improving road safety.

Centrally at a legislative level came the Adjudication and Administration of Traffic Offences Act which must still be made law after piloting in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

This is meant to deal with behaviour change as overtime it had been discovered that more 75% of all fatalities were a result of human factors, thus a behavioural issue.

We needed to develop better driver behaviour and to that extent the AARTO Act proposes to influence driver behaviour through the Point Demerit System as an instrument of choice towards this purpose.

And we did not end there ladies and gentlemen, we also focused our efforts on developing the following:

- Computerised learner driver's licence test systems, with a view to minimising corruption at the first stage of the licensing process and making the system more accessible in cultural terms.
- Upgrade sub-standard Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs).
- Formalise and regulate the driving school sector
- Tighten the existing practical, theoretical and medical tests for the renewal of the Professional Driver's Permit (PrDP).
- Examine a range of sentencing options for traffic violations, including licence suspensions under the AARTO demerit points system, and – for specific grades of offences – community service sentences and/or mandatory licence re-testing.

Because vehicle safety is a necessary element towards realisation of our road safety goals we resolved to implement the following:

- To attend to all non-compliant public Vehicle Testing Stations (VTSs)

- The development of stringent criteria for owner/manager accreditation and registration, rigorous management standards, clearly-defined examiner competencies and appropriate levels of ongoing refresher training in vehicle safety system changes (which will be required for the compulsory two-yearly re-registration of examiners).

Because pedestrians and cyclists remained vulnerable to road crashes there has been emphasis on the following:

- Ensure full provincial implementation of the new Pedestrian Facility Guidelines and the new SA Road Safety and Speed Limits Manuals,
- Support the commitment by provinces to carry out planned, continuous, multi-disciplinary upgrades of identified urban & rural hazardous locations,
- Expand rural road upgrade/maintenance programmes nationwide supported by systematic funding of emergent construction SMMEs – while at the same time integrating safety training into the process of improving road quality and visibility.

The actions for road safety do not end with driver, pedestrian or vehicle safety, but equally tend to the improvement of our roads through engineering to eliminate hazardous roads.

SANRAL has heeded the call for better roads towards road safety and states the following as its vision:

“To achieve a sustainably safe national road network for all our road users, primarily through engineering, but also through partnerships with education and enforcement authorities and stakeholders”

We have noticed tireless efforts by SANRAL to live up to this ideal. More of the hazardous roads are being re-developed to suit our road safety aspirations.

So too have provinces, although it is clear that not all provinces had effectively used their infrastructure grants for the purpose of building or maintaining roads which has left gaps in the total endeavours for provincial road improvements.

The same can be said for some municipalities.

It is thus pertinent that today as we begin this Summit we must as a matter of urgency also discuss the issue of infrastructure grants and their effective use for the improvement of roads specifically for purposes of road safety.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In hindsight, this Summit is thus meant to reflect firstly on the extent to which we have met the road safety targets committed to in the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety at its inception in 2011.

And secondly to reflect on the extent to which we have had successes on the various targets we mentioned in our mid-term report of 2015.

Recent events

The Summit happens at the back of a very horrific multiple car crash that claimed the lives of 27 people here in Limpopo

It also takes place two days ahead of a significant ceremony on Sunday - the International World Remembrance Day to commemorate those that have tragically passed away on our roads.

It is also just over two weeks after we held the National Wreath Laying Ceremony that commemorated the metro and traffic law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty, protecting us all including those we shall commemorate on Sunday.

These are reminders of the challenges we still face on our roads and that therefore the Summit must produce more ideas for improvement to our strategy.

End of the Medium Term Strategic Framework (2014-2019)

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Summit sits at the end of a term that has seen major legislative and policy enactments and proposals as a part of an accelerated drive to achieve our developmental objectives.

The roads sector has not been spared by that drive,

In the roads sector such pronouncements have had to do largely with the safe, efficient and sustainable use of our roads.

More importantly this term has also been characterised by the vigorous implementation of the National Development Plan which encompasses a wide range of areas for a speedy achievement of developmental objectives.

The NDP has led to the growing realisation that sustainability of road usage by its very nature must entail safety, efficiency, effective planning, environmental improvement and protection, cost effectiveness, and cooperation across government and across society.

The NDP is therefore fully a foundation upon which all government work has been pursued including our pursuit of road safety.

Constitutional Imperative for Road Safety

Fellow South Africans,

All our endeavours in the implementation of road safety actions must naturally also be based on constitutional dimensions to the safety of persons.

This refers also to the principles that must guide human behaviour on our roads with regards to others.

The overriding principle is the constitutionally derived protection of the integrity of the physical and mental well-being of persons.

It is upon the satisfaction of this principle that we must understand the value of road safety actions.

Our role as road safety practitioners becomes therefore to safeguard the rights of others to bodily and mental integrity.

In the past calendar year more than 14000 lives were lost and human factors have contributed to more than 80% of the 14 000 lives lost to road crashes.

In other words 80% of those that lost their lives died as the result of the actions of other persons.

Does this not mean that we need to focus 80% of our resources to deal with the mitigation and arrest of these human factors?

National Transport Master Plan

We are necessarily bound to commit resources to the National Transport Master Plan (NATMAP 2050) which advocates for a comprehensive, multi-modal, integrated, dynamic and sustainable transport framework that is safe for commuters and the environment.

A key component of NATMAP 2050 is a well-managed and regulated transport sector, within a multi-sectoral sphere of effective coordination within and cooperation between government spheres, the private sector civil society and other key stakeholders.

The plan has thus an integrated multimodal and collaborative elements that are essential for a more effective approach to road safety

Stakeholder Involvement

Ladies and gentlemen,

We should look at how we incorporate representatives of other transport modes into the Summit as they are key stakeholders.

We have always indicated that we would like to place rail as the backbone of our Transport system, for transportation for both passengers and freight.

The inherent dangers of heavy freight on our roads are historical and with such shocking impacts that are normally so severe that almost ninety percent of all accidents involving heavy vehicles results in serious or fatal injury.

We believed at our Summit in 2015 that the nation's vision of moving cargo from road to rail as emphasized by the Presidential Strategic Integrated Programme would indeed go a long way in addressing road safety management.

It is the only way we can cope with the congestion we have on our roads, as well as address the impact of trucks on our roads.

Therefore, in future we should look to engaging both PRASA, Transnet and RSR in particular to form a part of the key stakeholders of this Summit, as some of the solutions lie with them.

With some foresight we might also be able save government billions, as well as conserving our precious environment and having a gradual shift from road to rail, to reduce the heavy load on our roads.

This will also ensure that the majority of commuters use safe and convenient modes of transport.

National Road Safety Strategy

The National Road Safety Strategy was approved on 30 March 2017 and compels us do even better in our stakeholder engagements.

It is important that we continue to engage with communities on challenges experienced in the implementation of the National Road Safety Strategy, with the ultimate goal of curbing road deaths.

We must ensure we implement the strategy in line with the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011 to 2020.

Traffic Law Enforcement

We are working towards the introduction of a 24 hour shift for Traffic Law Enforcement Officers. This will enable us introduce a third working shift for a 24/7 presence of Traffic Law Enforcement Officers on our roads.

We are also consulting key stakeholders within the transport sector, including the labour movement to ensure that this shift is implemented.

Another key intervention is to introduce a three-year Law Enforcement qualification to ensure our officers are equipped on all aspects of safety.

This will ensure that they have both theoretical and practical knowledge that will better equip them to protect themselves, each other and the public.

This long awaited new qualification will be equivalent to a national diploma or National Qualification Framework level 6.

2015 Annual Road Safety Summit Resolutions

While we have reflected on the contents of the mid-term report on road safety and while actions have been implemented over time since then to give answers to the issues still faced we must however also reflect on specific areas.

1. Youth and Road Safety

Given the vulnerability of youth, especially males within the sector it is important that strategies for safety emphasise the inclusion of this category as most affected.

One of the resolutions taken at the 2015 Road Safety Summit was to conduct Provincial Road Safety Youth Summits with the aim to establishing Provincial Road Safety Youth Structures in all nine Provinces,

This would culminate in the creation of a National Structure of Youth for Road Safety.

The question is whether such a structure is being given adequate support and guidance and what has been achieved.

2. Fragmentation

The Summit had resolved to improve harmonisation of traffic law and enforcement. This was to address the fragmentation within the traffic and law enforcement fraternity.

This Summit presents adequate opportunity to evaluate the extent to which this is being achieved and where the challenges are. How has intergovernmental

relations improved in relation to road safety actions by all spheres of government?

3. National Road Safety Practitioners Curriculum

It had been resolved that we need to develop a universally acceptable and credible road safety curriculum for practitioners.

We will need to assess whether such a curriculum provides the requisite capacity for practitioners and whether this curriculum is in line with demands for technological advancement required by the 4th Industrial Revolution and above all by modern road safety demands.

4. Re-engineering High Risk Roads

Ladies and gentlemen,

While SANRAL has committed to the design or redesign of roads that will much safer, we however continue to see the mushrooming of informal human settlements along these roads.

This again needs greater cooperative arrangements with other spheres of government especially municipalities to assist SANRAL in keeping away communities from national roads.

We have noticed also that the mushrooming of settlements forces a push towards the building of foot bridges, which it must be said have also been targets to criminal behaviour especially the theft of bridge material.

This will always be discouraging as it not only forces our hand into state coffers for the refurbishment of these bridges. Our today is to think out of the box and to find lasting solutions to this challenge.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen,

I hope that this Summit will be able to tackle these issues I have raised and that this will be done objectively by all as we try to find sustainable road safety solutions.

This Summit happens closer to the beginning of the festive season and one hopes that from this platform will also emerge plans to tackle the risks that the season holds for us all.

Tomorrow as we remember those that we have lost, let us think of those they have left behind and give them hope that we shall ultimately win this battle.

I wish you all a successful and constructive Summit.

Thank you.