



**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT,
DR BLADE NZIMANDE, ON THE OCCASION AN IMBIZO AT
NGENETSHENI SPORTS GROUND, KWAKHENCE-
VRYHEID**

16 March 2019

Programme Director, Dr Musa Gumede, KZN HOD of Health
Deputy Minister of Transport, Ms. Sindisiwe Chikunga;
MEC of Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Mxolisi
Kaunda;

Executive Mayor of Zululand District, Cllr Thulasizwe Buthelezi;
Executive Mayor of Abaqulusi Local Municipality, Cllr Jerry
Sibiya;

Councillors present;

Inkosi Zulu, namanye amakhosi akhona;

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

Deputy Director-Generals present;

Chairpersons and CEOs of Public Entities;

Head of Department;

Officials of Government;

The Private Sector;
Members of the media;
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are gathered here in this Imbizo keenly aware of our collective responsibility to build a society based on the provisions of the Freedom Charter and the Constitution of our country which promotes political and human freedoms, socio-economic rights, value systems and identity.

Our founding principles of unity, non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy and our commitment to a nation of shared prosperity, has earned South Africans trust in the ANC government. A trust that has endured over the last 25 years as we strive to build a better life for all.

This year, we are celebrating 25 years of free and democratic South Africa. It is a quarter of a century since the founding father of our nation, Nelson Rolihahla Mandela, stood before the people of this country to declare:

Let there be justice for all.

Let there be peace for all.

Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.

Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfil themselves.

Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world.

We know that the struggle to free all South Africans from all forms of discrimination and oppression continues.

The brave deeds of our forebearers inspire and guide us as we move forward to build a national democratic society.

We can declare with confidence that South Africa has entered an era of renewal and hope than any time before and we should move together as a country to ensure that we protect the gains that we have made thus far.

One of the most important achievements of the past year has been to reinvigorate the process of uniting all South Africans around a shared vision of fundamental transformation.

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

The values of respect, equality, dignity and integrity exemplify this period of working together towards transformation of our society. In line with this task, we are mobilising all social partners behind an economic recovery plan.

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

Business, labour and civil society are centrally involved in government's ambitious investment drive.

This includes 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 greater job creation.

I must also say that government has identified rural and township economies as vehicles for achieving our radical economic transformation.

The face of this transformation is the creation of employment for the youth, empowerment of local businesses and inclusive growth.

Addressing youth unemployment remains a pressing priority for government. We have made it easier for young people to enter the public service by scrapping work experience as a requirement for entry-level jobs.

The ANC-led government has also expanded artisanal training, focused skills development on future areas of work such as aviation, construction, public transport and green transport technology that encourages youth entrepreneurship.

The Youth Employment Service (YES) is a public-private partnership that facilitates the entry of disadvantaged young people into the job market by opening opportunities to gain work experience for a period of one year.

As the ANC government, we have also ensured that we expand free education for students from poor and working class backgrounds as this will now extend to cover qualifying second year students.

We are committed to ensuring that this support continues to extend to accommodation, transport and study materials for qualifying students at public TVET colleges and universities.

As the ANC government, we indeed have turned the time on access to education. There is certainly no reason why our children can be able to receive a better education.

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

As the Minister of Transport, yesterday when I visited the Langeni Combined School, I committed to engage our transport entities and the private sector to assist us to provide computers, libraries and laboratories to the school.

This will ensure that we produce learners that will be equally capable to compete with their peers throughout the world.

Ladies and gentlemen

As the ANC government, we want to work with all of you to reverse the legacy of apartheid.

We want you to produce food for yourselves by ploughing in your land and also to be able to sell your produce in the market place so that you can generate income to better your lives.

Inkosi UZulu informed me about your need for Agricultural implements. I will ensure that I relay your plight to Minister Senzeni Zokwana, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

I am also briefed that there are community Co-operatives that you have established and that you need the necessary training and funding support. I will also relay the message to my colleague, Minister Lindiwe Zulu, the Minister of Small Business Development.

Amongst the other issue that I will relay, is the issue of lack of telecommunication signaling to the Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services, Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams.

One more important thing that I committed to further address is to engage the multinational companies that do business in this area, so that they also commit to the development of local communities, including the improvement of public infrastructure that they also enjoy its benefits.

I am talking of a company such as Mondi, which operates in the paper packaging value chain by using wood. They operate huge trucks that causes serious damage to our roads and also

produces emissions that could potentially harm the environment and those living around their factories.

Ladies and gentlemen

The ANC government, is a caring and a listening government. We heard you and also agree with you that we need to decisively fight the scourge of fraud and corruption.

We therefore have taken bold steps to confront corruption and state capture and restore the credibility of public institutions.

Through commissions of inquiry into state capture, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and the Public Investment Corporation (PIC), we confronted some of the key challenges to good governance and the rule of law.

The ANC government has taken measures to strengthen the National Prosecuting Authority, South African Police Service and the State Security Agency, and to restore public confidence in their ability to ensure the safety of all citizens.

Important changes have been made to the boards and senior management of several state-owned enterprises, corruption is

being rooted out and work has begun to ensure they are financially stable and meet the needs of society.

This includes our entities in the Department of Transport where we have appointed Boards in PRASA, RAF, ACSA amongst others.

This is the reason that amongst others I support the decision taken by the Board of PRASA to put various executives on special leave and suspension. This decision by the Board of PRASA supports the call by President Ramaphosa to ensure that get bring back confidence in our state companies and entities.

We are also determined to expose and root out wrongdoing and corruption in the private sector.

We are doing this because, there should be nowhere to hide for those who steal from our people, no matter who they are or what positions they occupy.

Even here at KwaKhence, we want to urge you to work with us and report any forms of fraud and corruption to your nearest police station.

Programme Director

Transport networks are the arteries of the economy, moving people to the workplace and goods to the marketplace.

If the transport sector fails, the whole system collapses because goods and services cannot be moved and people cannot get to their places of work to generate economic activity that so vitally contributes to our Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

On the Maritime sector, we had fruitful and robust Maritime dialogue which raised difficult questions challenging the current status quo in our maritime industry.

Not only did this dialogue raise critical issues, but it also provided valuable solutions for us to achieve an inclusive and de-racialised maritime economy.

As a Department of Transport, we are going to hold further dialogue in all other mode of transport.

As the citizens of KwaZulu Natal, which host the Port of Durban, largest and busiest shipping terminal in sub-Saharan Africa, which handles up to 31.4 million tons of cargo each year, we

have to ensure that working together with our maritime entities, we prepare the youth in this area to embrace these opportunities.

Acting Director General, Mr. Hlabisa, working together with Acting Deputy-Director General, Mr. Ntuli will lead this initiative to ensure that we keep in touch with the province and the municipalities around to make this a reality.

Ladies and gentlemen

Our national road network, which is managed by the South African National Roads Agency, is the backbone of our land transportation system.

Without a well-designed and well-maintained primary road network, we will not be able to attract investments that can serve as catalysts for balanced economic growth, instill business confidence, create jobs and contribute to the fundamental transformation of our society.

Last month in February, I announced our road infrastructure stimulus projects that are in place on the SANRAL network and to give an update on some of them that are “shovel ready”.

Here in KwaZulu-Natal, the planning of upgrades to the N3 between Durban and Pietermaritzburg is at an advanced stage and we envisage that the construction will commence in mid-2020.

The first phase will include upgrades to the road between Cato Ridge and Pietermaritzburg, key ridge alignments and improvements to the EB Cloete interchange to a value of R13-billion.

This is a primary economic artery for our country and the entire Southern African region because of the volume and the value of goods moved by road between the Durban port and Gauteng.

In addition, it carries increasing numbers of passenger traffic – especially during peak holiday periods and during the festive seasons.

Through the S’hamba Sonke Programme, and Zibambele we have maximised job creation in the road sector using our labour intensive methods and cooperatives model throughout South Africa. I intend to introduce this method of road construction here in Zululand.

I have received a list of access roads here at KwaKhence (Ward 3) and surrounding areas.

Councillor Ndlela brief me that you need the construction of the Umkhuze Bridge, the D94 Road, Nkalonthatu Assess Road, the Velaphi road and the construction of Bus Stops.

As national government, we will engage our counterparts here in the KwaZulu Natal province and the municipality to ensure that we work together to deliver these roads to you.

I will request our national roads agency, SANRAL, to provide us with the necessary technical advice of how we can better improve these roads.

I am also made aware of challenges in the provision of Scholar Transport in some schools around this ward.

Joining me today are officials from the national as well as the provincial Departments of Transport, including the Department of Education, who will give us feedback in this meeting on the work that is already been done to deal with this challenge.

This morning, through our Shova Kalula bicycle programme, myself and Deputy Minister Chikunga distributed bicycles to

some of the needy schools in order to further deal with issues affecting learners' transportation.

We distribute bicycles to learners from low income householders and who walk more than 3 kilometers as single trip to school.

We distributed 60 bicycles at Elangeni Combined School and Sivulindela Primary School and will be distributing 60 bicycles to Mfefe Primary.

We have also requested the councilor to identify other two schools which will receive its share of bicycles.

We will also provide Road Safety and ridership training before these bicycles are handed over to learners to ensure that they have full understanding of the road safety issues when riding these bicycles.

Ladies and gentlemen

Government remain concerned about the disregard of our road rules by both motorists and pedestrians.

The primary contributory factors in fatal crashes or serious injuries in South Africa includes excessive speed, driving under

the influence of alcohol, fatigue, usage of electronic gadgets and non-wearing of seatbelts.

Motor vehicles, light delivery vehicles and minibuses are amongst the leading three vehicle types highly involved in crashes, with pedestrians accounting of 50% of these crashes. This costs the country more than R14billion annually.

In addition to our 365 Road Safety Campaign, with visible policing and tight law enforcement, we continue to seek partnerships of South Africans at large.

In the top 50 road safety hazardous locations in the country Mlazi, Durban Central, Inanda and Sydenham are amongst the leading area on fatalities.

I am delighted that we now have come to the end of a lengthy process of the finalization of the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO) Bill.

AARTO seeks to effect an efficient road traffic management environment in the country to enhance a culture of compliance through a demerit point system.

Given the increase in the number of road crashes and fatalities on our road, we have taken a decision to increase the number of law enforcement officers on public roads. Our efforts include declaring traffic law enforcement as an essential service.

Through the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), we also have received 300 traffic police recruits who have commenced training on the new higher-level qualification.

The groundbreaking qualification is intended to produce a 21st century cadre of traffic officers who will be equipped in all aspects of traffic legislation, ethics and communication among others.

The RTMC together with provincial traffic authorities have embarked on a consultation processes on the new code for traffic officers and all other law enforcement officers with a mandate to enforce traffic laws.

We are also working closely with the Department of Basic Education to increase the rate in which we conduct road safety education and scholar transport activities throughout the country.

Ladies and gentlemen

Through the Road Accident Fund, we continue to take services to the doorsteps of previously marginalised communities. This is done through the community outreach programme, 'RAF on the Road'.

The programme is an exemplary service delivery project that reached 44 944 beneficiaries and led to the settlement of claims to the value of over R6 million. The programme has also contributed to RAF originating 23 839 direct claims in 2017.

The programme has also led to RAF having its presence in all the Provinces with 101 Hospital Service Centre, 5 Customer Service Centres and 2 RAF Mobi vans (servicing rural areas). Claimants can now access all RAF services as well as lodgement of claims directly.

Please for those who have not as yet visited the RAF Stalls, ensure that you do so before you go home today.

I am also joined by other transport entities and provincial departments, particularly the Department of health and home affairs, who are here to share information with the youth about career opportunities in transport.

Make good use of the opportunity by ensuring that you visit the stalls and get as much information as you can.

This opportunity may indeed change your life. Also ensure that you check your health status at the Department of Health stall and you also visit the Home Affairs stall to apply and collect your Identity Document.

We are gathered here with the full knowledge that there are numerous challenges still facing the majority of the citizens of this province, this city, and this community of KwaKhence as well as the surrounding areas.

Our mandate is clear, **Sithunyiwe**. We are messengers. We have been sent to ensure we listen to the concerns of this community and seek all means to address them, in particular the concerns that revolve around the basic needs of this community.

UHulumeni ongazilaleli izikhalo zomphakathi, kusuke kungewona uHulumeni weningi.

As I conclude, I want to call upon you to join government in the Good Green Deeds campaign, which President Cyril Ramaphosa officially launched in the Buffalo City, Eastern Cape.

Good Green Deeds is a nationwide initiative to encourage South Africans to take responsibility for keeping the environment clean.

Let us ensure that we always keep our environment clean. We too in the Department of Transport, will be ensuring that we join hands with all communities and stakeholders to clean our taxi ranks, train stations, and airports amongst other to ensure a healthy environment for all.

What is also critical, South Africans will head to the polls on the 8th of May this year to elect their representatives in national and provincial government in our country's sixth democratic elections.

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

Let us all ensure that we assist by providing transport and assist other who are unable to go to be voting station for them to exercise their democratic right on the day.

My party, the ANC will contest these elections to achieve a decisive mandate for societal renewal, faster social and economic transformation and national unity.

I here ask you to vote the ANC in these forthcoming elections to ensure that we grow South Africa together.

Nginyabonga

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