



**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT,
DR BLADE NZIMANDE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE N2
WILD COAST IMBIZO AT LAMBASI VILLAGE, WARD 24,
INGQUZA HILL LOCAL MUNICIPALITY – EASTERN CAPE**

6 April 2019

**Programme Director, Mayor of Mbizana Local Municipality:
Cllr. T.D Mafumbatha**

Premier of the Eastern Cape, Phumulo Masaulle

Inkosi Zanozuko Sigcau

MECs present;

**Executive Mayor of Alfred Nzo District Municipality: Cllr.
Sixolele Mehlemakhulu**

Mayor of Ingquza Hill Local Municipality: Cllr. B.B Goya

Mayor of Ports & John's: Cllr. Nomvuzo Mlombile-Cingo

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

Deputy Director-Generals

The SANRAL Board members and CEOs of other Public Entities;

Head of Departments;

Officials from all spheres of Government, including our SOEs;

The Private Sector;

Members of the community;

Members of the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

This is a great opportunity for me to, once again, visit this wonderful part of the Eastern Cape and to speak directly to you on the N2 Wild Coast - a project that is of immense opportunities for this region, this province and our country.

Today is the 6th April, Kalushi Solomon Mahlangu's 40th Anniversary of his hanging at the Pretoria Central Prison.

When he was taken to be gallows, he said these famous words,

“My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the fight”.

I therefore dedicate this Imbizo in his memory.

Programme Director

This Imbizo brings together all the people that are involved in the planning and implementation of this road project. This is an opportunity to talk through all the issues, address all the concerns and answer all the questions.

I want to thank the communities, the traditional leaders, the elected councillors, the local and district municipalities and the province who have made this event possible. Working together, we can do more.

I also want to thank all of you for attending and express the hope that we can answer all your questions, hear your view and provide you with all the information that you will require to continue to support this important project.

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 fore-bearers 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 achieved to this extend.

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.

Amongst other key elements of the ANC government priorities, is the identification of 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.

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.

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.”***

Fellow South Africans

The South African Government adopted a National Infrastructure Plan in 2012. With the plan, we aim to transform our economic landscape while simultaneously creating significant numbers of new jobs, and strengthen the delivery of basic services. The plan also supports the integration of African economies.

Equally important, as government, we planned to invest R827 billion in building new and upgrading existing infrastructure.

These investments would improve access by South Africans to healthcare facilities, schools, water, sanitation, housing and electrification.

To ensure that as a Department of Transport we align ourselves with the National Development Plan, through SANRAL, we have embarked on a long-term strategy that is designed to use our management of the country's national roads assets to speed up transformation of the South African economy. The strategy, is known as Horizon 2030.

Through Horizon 2030, SANRAL highlight the role that the national road network plays in reducing inequality and eliminating poverty.

The strategy sets out in great detail SANRAL's strategic objectives, the four pillars of Roads, Road Safety, Stakeholders and Mobility and the critical enablers that will make it possible for SANRAL to remain a respected, dynamic and responsive organisation.

Across the world it is recognised that quality road infrastructure is a precondition for economic growth and development.

Most of our economic and social activities take place around the availability of a well-planned, well-constructed and well-maintained roads.

It is a well-known fact that our national road network enables people to access government services, links us to hospitals and schools and pension pay points.

The roads lead to retail opportunities and shops in our towns and cities.

Our farming produce and the goods that are manufactured can only be transported to markets and consumers through our road network.

It is the very same roads that enables us to attract tourists and stimulate the growth of small and medium-side enterprises in the hospitality and services sectors.

But they also connect people to each other, to families, communities, churches, youth groups, women's organisations and all other sectors of society.

Government under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa, recognised the importance of road infrastructure as part of the broader National Development Plan to stimulate balanced economic growth, create jobs and improve skills in our society.

Together with the Department of Public Works, we are working on a comprehensive strategy to plan the implement the labour intensive road intensive methods.

Last year, President Ramaphosa, launched a comprehensive stimulus programme to get our economy working again.

Investment in infrastructure such as roads, bridges, dams and rail are at the core of this approach and President Ramaphosa announced the creation of a R400bn Infrastructure Fund, with the initial capitalisation of R100billion.

More recently, I announced our an “shovel ready” road projects that will become reality within the next weeks and months. These projects are spread across all nine provinces and touches the lives of all the citizens of our country.

This project, the N2 Wild Coast Road from East London to Port Edward is one of those priorities that we have identified.

This is a pivotal initiative that can unlock economic opportunities in some of the most impoverished districts in the country.

Ladies and gentlemen

The Eastern Cape is a prime example of how apartheid spatial planning has left deep scars on our communities and how the lack of quality roads prevented communities from participating in mainstream economic activities in the fields of trade, tourism and agriculture.

These outdated patterns of development cannot be sustained 25 years after we have achieved freedom and democracy in our country and opened the doors to learning and development.

For the Eastern Cape, the N2 Wild Coast will unlock opportunities in the fields of eco-tourism, agri-processing and commerce through improved access to the broader transport network.

Within the wider regional context, the N2 Wild Coast Road will save three hours of travel time between Durban and East London, improve logistical linkages and facilitate the easier and safer movement of people, goods and services.

The two bridges across the Msikaba and Mtentu rivers have been described as the most ambitious civil engineering projects that are currently being undertaken across the entire African continent.

These bridges are masterpieces of design and engineering and will form the core elements of the 'greenfield' section of the road which consists of about 112km of new development.

From Lingeni to the Msikaba Bridge we are constructing a 16.3km new single carriageway and four lanes undivided road with two interchanges. It has a value of **R976-million** and will create more than 480 jobs.

A 17.7km new single carriageway road is being built between the Msikaba and Mtentu Bridges. It includes one bridge and two interchanges at an envisaged value of R1.1-billion with 550 jobs to be created.

We are also allocating **R853-million** to an 11.5km stretch of road, with two bridges and two interchanges from Kulumbe to the Umtamvuna River.

The rest of the **R9-billion** project consists of 'brownfield' development which means the upgrading and improvement of existing sections of the N2, strengthening of bridges and interchanges, and the addition of important features that will improve road safety and reduce the occurrence of crashes that cause unnecessary deaths and serious injuries on a vital stretch of roads.

As the Department of Transport, we are seized with the work to improve our access roads, because it our belief as government that we should also build roads that are used by people daily.

In the past financial year, SANRAL completed road infrastructure and maintenance projects to the value of **R521-million** in the Eastern Cape and upgraded or maintained more than 4 963 kilometres of roads.

Communities across the province from Ntlaza to Queenstown and from Flagstaff to the Baviaans River now have access to safer and more convenient infrastructure, access roads and pedestrian walkways because of the construction activities initiated by SANRAL.

Through these developments we also complement the ongoing growth initiatives launched by the Eastern Cape provincial government. None of these developments would have been feasible without access to the primary road network provided by SANRAL.

The other point I want to emphasise concerns the direct and tangible benefits that this entire project brings to the citizens of this district and this province.

It is the approach of government, the Department of Transport and SANRAL that road construction, maintenance and rehabilitation projects should deliver maximum benefits for the communities that are directly affected by the activity.

But we are going much further with this project by bringing jobs, enterprise growth, skills development, and training opportunities right into this community.

We have set ourselves clear goals to allocate over **30 percent of the R9-billion project** towards **small, medium and micro enterprises** that can deliver the maximum benefits to the community through job creation and skills development.

We will generate about **8 000 full time** equivalent direct jobs and an estimated **18 000 indirect** jobs during the construction period between **2018 and 2023**.

We have set very clear targets for the primary contractors on the allocation of work packages to black enterprises, local labour and companies owned by women, the youth and people with disabilities;

We are also putting in place measures to ensure that semi-skilled and unskilled jobs will be sourced from local communities.

We are giving preference to local suppliers and local businesses for the delivery of goods and services across all elements of the project.

We see this Wild Coast Road project as an opportunity for enterprises owned by black South Africans, women, the

youth and people with disabilities to participate and gain vital experience that will enable them to tender successfully for other infrastructure projects in the future.

Communities located near the road will also greatly benefit from the new interchanges, pedestrian walkways, underpasses and bridges that will improve mobility and contribute to the safety of all road users, including pedestrians.

As the Department of Transport, we will be getting closer to this project so that we provide the necessary direction and the necessary oversight.

As part of the project, SANRAL will implement a number of legacy projects to benefit communities at large, including the **construction of community halls and sports fields and the upgrading of local access roads.**

Some of these initiatives are already in place and delivering benefits to communities:

- In Ndwalane and Caguba villages, outside Port St Johns we have provided training to local SMMEs and unskilled workers. Job opportunities in the construction of community access roads were created for 10 SMMEs who employed

100 individuals. We have contributed to the refurbishment of the Mkhazini Community Hall, the provision of desks at the Mkhazini Primary School and upgrading of the driveway and stormwater management at Gungubele Combined School.

- In Mzamba in the Mbizana Local Municipality our training programmes enabled 10 SMMEs to receive their SAQA accredited NQF Level 4 certificates. The community hall was refurbished, a new fence was erected and access to the hall was upgraded. Ten graduates and interns in the field of financial management were employed to assist SMMEs with financial planning and administration.
- The completion of community access roads and haul routes between two villages in Lusikisiki, provided training for 11 SMMEs and 11 supervisors of which 73% were youth-owned SMMEs and 36% were women-owned SMMEs. In addition, there were 165 jobs created, and training was given to 165 employees who were subsequently awarded NQF Level 2 certificates.

These are but some examples of the progress we have already made in terms of job creation, skills development and local economic participation in the early stages of the project.

We intend to duplicate it across the entire length of the 410km stretch of road, including here in the Ingquza Hill local municipality and the O R Tambo District of the Eastern Cape.

I want to emphasise the fact that this road is the project of lengthy, extensive and detailed consultations between the Department of Transport and SANRAL and all the identified stakeholders.

This include the provincial government of the Eastern Cape, the various districts and local municipalities, traditional leaders, community leaders and you, as the members of the community, organised labour, chambers of commerce, professional organisations, academics and researchers, environmental and activists.

Our meeting today is yet another indication of our commitment to freedom of information and transparency.

We are gathered here with the full knowledge that there are challenges experienced in the implementation of this project and I would like after Imbizo to agree on the way forward.

Our mandate is clear, Sithunyiwe. We have been sent to ensure we listen to your concerns and seek all means to address them.

UHulumeni ongazilaleli izikhalo zomphakathi, kusuke kungewona uHulumeni weningi.

However, our concerns should not be the reason to stop the very same development government brings to change our lives for the better.

As communities, we must stand united and condemn anyone who is against our development.

As the ANC government, we are a listening government and have committed ourselves to find solutions to any challenges confronting our communities at all times.

However, we should stop conflicts and narrow selfish interests and work together for the success of this project and the development of our communities.

As you might be aware, we are now being unnecessarily sued because of the delays that were caused on these projects.

Together we can grow South Africa. So, let us defend our democracy against anyone who want to take us backward.

Let us ensure that at the end of this Imbizo, with one voice we will say ***FORWARD WITH JOB CREATION, LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT.***

As the Minister of Transport and the entire Department, we are committed to work with everyone to ensure the success of this project.

As I conclude, I want to call upon all of you to go and vote on the 8th of May to elect your representatives in national and provincial government.

As for me, my vote is not a secret. I am voting the ANC. I ask you to ensure that we all ensure that the ANC achieve a decisive mandate for societal renewal, faster social and economic transformation and national unity.

Ngiyabonga

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