



transport

Department:
Transport
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



For Immediate Release
24 June 2019

STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, FIKILE MBALULA, ON TRANSPORT PRIORITIES AND APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL

On the 9th of July we tabled before Parliament our first Budget Vote and outlined our priorities for the 2019/2020 financial year. We also made a commitment to prioritise the stabilising of management in the Department and in the entities we are responsible for.

Khawuleza is the ethos that will characterise our new service delivery model. Over the next one hundred (100) days we will demonstrate how we will accelerate service delivery across all our functional areas.

In exactly two (2) weeks since we made the commitment to stabilise management, we are pleased to announce that we have appointed a seasoned and experienced Director-General to lead the Department and advance our agenda of accelerated service delivery aimed at improving the lives of our people.

The Department has been without a full-time Director-General since 2016.

We are happy to announce that the President acceded to the transfer and appointment of Mr Alec Moemi as Director-General of the Department of Transport, with effect from 1 August 2019. Mr Moemi joins the Department after serving as Director-General for the Department of Sports and Recreation since 2011, a role he has served in diligently and with distinction. He has vast management experience in government with a track record of clean audits in the Department of Sports and Recreation.

I have asked the Director-General to immediately prioritise issues that impact on the department's employees and the filling of critical vacancies, twenty one (21) of which are senior management posts and include six (6) Deputy Directors-General vacancies. The appointment of Boards and CEOs in the various entities of the Department is an equally urgent task to be undertaken to ensure stability and strengthen governance.

The implementation of the commitments we made at the Budget Vote speech

have been packaged into the Annual Performance Plan and a one hundred (100) days plan, which focus on accelerating interventions aimed at improving the lives of our people.

An immediate priority is the urgent implementation of interventions aimed at addressing critical challenges facing PRASA.

A decisive intervention to turn around PRASA and improve its operational performance while re-building its engineering capacity to drive the modernisation programme is in place. This intervention is driven through a Steering Committee and Ministerial War Room which will play an oversight and enabling role over the turnaround strategy.

The Steering Committee and Ministerial War Room will also guide interventions to realise three (3) key objectives. The first objective being Service Recovery to focus on rolling stock availability and reliability, infrastructure availability and reliability and train performance. The second objective is Safety Management, which entails putting in place effective measures to protect critical infrastructure and passengers on board our trains, alongside achieving full compliance with the Railway Safety Regulator permit conditions and directives. The third objective is accelerated implementation of the modernisation programme.

This entails urgently creating capacity for PRASA to manage capital projects and spend its capital budget to achieve effective sequencing of critical infrastructure that will enable the deployment of the new trains in targeted corridors.

Passenger safety is sacrosanct, and we will not tolerate behaviour that places the lives of innocent women and children and other commuters at risk. This extends to the conduct of those who operate services and those who may be taking part in protest or labour action. In this regard, the DG is tasked with developing an all encompassing national policy on safety and security in public transport, this policy must be produced as a matter of great urgency. This exercise must lead to direct in-sourcing of at least 80% of security personnel by PRASA, these security officers must receive their basic training from SAPS, and I have discussed this with Minister Cele.

In 2014, PRASA procured locomotives to improve performance of the long-distance passenger rail service, Shosholozha Meyl. Thirteen (13) of these locomotives were delivered to PRASA in 2015. Following the intervention of the Board, this matter was exhausted in the courts with a finding of corruption and fronting, leading to the liquidation of the main contractor, Swifambo. These locomotives now constitute part of Swifambo assets that will go under the hammer of the auctioneer in September 2019.

This marks the end of a painful episode for PRASA, where a significant investment aimed at improving the Shosholozha Meyl service was corrupted by

unscrupulous people whose interest was to line their own pockets. The consequences will be dire for those who were responsible for this criminality that resulted in a loss of billions to the fiscus. Corruption and criminality will not go unpunished. In this regard, I expect the board of PRASA to urgently litigate to recover public funds from those it was paid to.

As we continue to change the face of public transport, we will be operationalising Integrated Public Transport Networks also known as BRT across five (5) additional Cities of Mbombela, eThekweni, Rustenburg, Polokwane and Mangaung, over the next nine (9) months.

This is in addition to the implementation of the revised Taxi Recapitalisation Programme, which was initiated fourteen (14) years ago. Having scrapped seventy two thousand six hundred (72 600) old taxis and identified a further need to continue with the project, Cabinet approved the continuation of the Revised Taxi Recapitalisation Programme.

We remain extremely concerned that the people of Cape Town, in the N2 bus corridor which carries over twenty thousand (20 000) people remain without a proper bus system due to internal disputes. I am working with the Western Cape MEC to find a lasting solution to this matter as quickly as we can, and I call on all parties involved to put people first before profits.

We remain seized with the matter of the funding of the first phase of the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project and the matter of the e-tolls. We are confident that we will meet the end of August deadline to place on the table a viable option on how to resolve the challenges facing us insofar as e-tolls are concerned.

I wish to reiterate that we are mindful of the demand to resolve e-tolls and we are therefore looking at solutions that will balance the need for the country to honour its obligations to pay the debt that continues to increase each year and the calls to reduce the burden on road users.

One of our key priorities is to aggressively drive transformation in the transport sector and open up opportunities for historically disadvantaged individuals, women and youth. Aviation and Maritime sectors remain the exclusive preserve of the privileged few due to high barriers to entry.

We are determined to support and broaden the reach of those who have taken steps and implemented innovative programmes to advance transformation in their respective sub-sectors.

The National Ports Regulator (NPR) plays a critical role in unlocking potential in maritime. Our priorities in this regard include the urgent appointment of the Board and expediting the full implementation of the National Ports Act of 2005 which requires the separation of the National Ports Authority from Transnet and placing

it under the regulatory authority of the NPR. We will engage with the Minister of Public Enterprises to address these matters.

We have made a commitment to arresting the carnage on our roads and committed to re-imagine our approach to road safety and making sure our people arrive alive when using our roads. The implementation of a twenty four (24) hour, seven (7)-day shift structure within the traffic law enforcement fraternity is a key priority that is receiving urgent attention.

Our commitment to root out corruption has never been greater, and we have prioritised the implementation of measures to deal harshly with those who conduct themselves in this manner.

These measures will not only deal harshly with traffic law enforcement officers who undermine our efforts to enforce safety by soliciting or accepting bribes, but we will also go after those who offer or pay those bribes without mercy.

Vehicle testing centres and examiners of vehicles who fraudulently issue roadworthy certificates to vehicles that should not be on the roads are culpable to the deaths caused by these vehicles on our roads, and we will unleash the full might of the law on them.

Similarly, the process of appointing Boards where their terms have expired or where there is an interim Board, is a matter we are seized with. We are determined to ensure that corporate governance is strengthened in all our entities. This will be made possible by appointing to our Boards men and women who are not only adequately skilled, but also those whose commitment to improving the lives of ordinary South Africans is unflinching. We will deliberately seek out young, educated, and talented people, especially women, to infuse new energy and fresh thinking at Board level.

We also announced in Parliament that a number of our entities do not have CEOs and we have urged the Boards to act decisively in ensuring that the recruitment of suitable CEOs is given urgent priority.

The restructuring and turnaround of the Road Accident Fund is a key priority. We will be re-introducing the Road Accident Benefit Scheme Bill to Parliament to expedite this process, among other interventions.

Achieving seamless integration in our public transport system is an important long-term goal of our national transport policy. However, the building blocks of such integration must be implemented in the integrated rapid public transport network projects that are being implemented across the country.

Equally important, our attention will focus on delivering a transport system that enables economic activity and stimulate growth, by giving practical effect to our commitment to lowering the cost of doing business. This starts with eliminating delays and cancellations in our commuter rail network and subsidised bus services, so that those who rely on this mode to get to places of economic activity are able to maximise their productivity by being at work on time.

As we said when we delivered our Budget Vote, we are building on the foundation of the work done by those that came before us. This includes taking forward the implementation of the 130km Moloto Rail Corridor between Siyabuswa in Mpumalanga and Tshwane in Gauteng. We will similarly continue with the work to conduct the feasibility study on the high-speed rail between Johannesburg and Durban. Both these projects are part of a suite of projects identified in the National Transport Master Plan 2050 that was approved by Cabinet, and will be undertaken as Public Private Partnerships, with funding mobilised from the private sector through a number of instruments.

In implementing our priorities, engagements with all our social partners to commit to a social compact that enjoins us to acceleration of service delivery interventions that place the people at the centre of our agenda cannot be overemphasised. We will take our stakeholders and our people along in this journey to grow South Africa together.

One of the major interventions to maximise efficiencies and to cut costs will involve undertaking an investigation on a possibility of developing a Transport campus to accommodate all our entities, where feasible. We will work on this exercise in close collaboration with the National Treasury and the Ministry of Public Works & Infrastructure. Similarly, as we embrace the 4th industrial revolution and define the impact and contribution of Transport in new technologies, we have to pay close attention to cyber security in a serious manner. We will therefore prioritise a holistic cyber policy for the sector and all our entities are required to treat cyber safety seriously.

The Director-General will be instrumental in providing effective leadership and mobilise the capacity of the Department and its entities behind accelerating delivery on these priorities. I have no doubt that Mr Moemi brings to the Department experience, energy and drive that is necessary to give impetus to a new service delivery model that places the people at the centre.

Issued by

Fikile Mbalula
Minister of Transport

More Information

Ayanda Allie Paine
Contact: 074 823 7979