



SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, FIKILE MBALULA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER OF THE GAUTENG SECTION OF MOLOTO ROAD TO SANRAL ON 15 NOVEMBER 2019

Master of Ceremonies

Deputy Minister of Transport Mme Dikeledi Magadzi

Gauteng Premier, Mr David Makhura

MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport in Mpumalanga, Mr Gillion Mashego

MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo, Ms Monicca Mochadi

MEC for Roads and Transport in Gauteng, Mr Jacob Mamabolo

Deputy Director-General: Road Transport, Mr Chris Hlabisa

CEO of SANRAL, Mr Skhumbuzo Macozoma

Executive Mayors

Honoured guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is common knowledge that the Moloto Road over the years, has become an embodiment of the carnage on our roads. Some even call it “the road of death”. Many lives continue to get lost on this road, with the latest incident occurring this week with two lives lost and 36 injured.

For years, the Moloto road has had to cope with increasing traffic volumes as result of the phenomenal growth in the residential development along it, yet upgrades have lagged far behind. This road links 33 informal settlements and serves as a primary mobility route, which means there is a great deal of pedestrian movement on it. Moloto road is an

important economic artery connecting the Provinces of Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Gauteng.

The challenges we continue to face in the upgrades of this road include land use and development which was not adequately controlled resulting in many unlawful encroachments on the road and illegal access points. It is equally true that design standards were inconsistent and road users continued to pay scant regard to road safety, resulting in dangerous situations where drivers would drive onto oncoming traffic, performing illegal U-turns and speeding. The fact that the road traverses three Provinces meant that the road was built and maintained at different standards.

Declaring this road a national road is a consequence of collaboration between national government and the three Provinces, placing the interests of the citizens and road users at the centre. We have listened to the pleas of local communities and road users and have responded by transferring the Moloto road to SANRAL, and allocating more resources for its upgrade. We have thus allocated close to R4.5 billion to this project over the next 5-years.

The Mpumalanga and Limpopo sections of the Moloto road were incorporated into the SANRAL network in July 2015 and construction of the first phase on those sections is nearly complete. The scope of work for the first phases included the construction of four traffic circles. Three in Mpumalanga and one in Limpopo. Other phases both in Limpopo and Mpumalanga are currently either at design stage or have just started. We are satisfied with the progress being made in both the provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

Ladies and gentlemen, today we are here to witness the handing over of the Gauteng section to SANRAL. The incorporation of the Gauteng section into the national network completes the cycle and will go a long way in ensuring a single standard is applicable in the maintenance of the road, irrespective of which province one may be driving on.

Indeed, the Moloto road improvement is one of government's flagship's projects insofar as road infrastructure is concerned. Gauteng, as a major recipient of the 150 000 people who use the Moloto road daily, could not be left out of the loop. For the people of KwaMhlanga and surrounding areas who travel daily to Gauteng for work, the Moloto road is a vital transport artery.

We know that the benefits of the upgrades we are doing on Moloto Road are self-evident, especially to those who use the road. But we dare not take that for granted. The benefits of the upgrades we are doing on this road include:

- Reduced travel time between destinations, thus eliminating the need to travel at unsafe hours.
- Contributing to healthy family and social relationships by minimizing time spent on the road.
- Improved safety through state-of-the-art traffic management features.
- Linking seamlessly with broader transport plans and the Moloto development Corridor Initiative, and
- Becoming a development spine, attracting new investments and broadening the economic base of the surrounding districts.
- When we build new or upgrade existing roads, we are always mindful of the economic impact. We have no doubt that the Moloto road will draw more economic activity into the area, enable small farmers to bring their produce to markets, be a route for tourists who want to visit game reserves and natural attractions and facilitate the movement of people, products and services.

It is important to emphasise that in building or upgrading a road, such activity must bring tangible economic benefits to the communities who live alongside that road. People cannot simply be spectators when infrastructure development is being rolled out in their communities and not benefit therefrom. It is for this very reason that local procurement and participation are part of government's policies aimed at empowering the historically disadvantaged.

We commend the efforts SANRAL has put in implementing local procurement and participation in the works related to the Moloto road upgrades thus far. We have also seen the project training 135 SMMEs together with 185 NGOs from the Tembisile Hani Municipality in order to improve their chances of participating in the project and in the construction industry in general. Furthermore, a number of jobs have been created and we project that over the lifespan of the project some 12 500 jobs will be created.

As we will be starting work on the Gauteng section, the same approach should be followed. The people and businesses of Gauteng active in the roads sector should benefit. I know that projects of this nature and the resultant competition for resources can be a challenge, which at times can lead to project disruptions. However, if SANRAL works together with the Province, stakeholders and local municipalities, as they did in Limpopo and Mpumalanga, some of these challenges can be addressed even before they arise.

In conclusion, our commitment to improving the lives of our people require a social compact with communities, who must join us as partners in ensuring the success of projects such as this.

Our commitment to accelerated service delivery will find expression in the manner with which we implement the upgrades we have committed to on this road. Collaboration between spheres of government and partnership with communities enables faster delivery of services.

I thank you.