SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, FIKILE MBALULA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE PAMPOENNEK ROAD IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE ON 3 NOVEMBER 2020

Master of Ceremonies
MEC for Public Works and Roads in North West, Mr Saliva Molapisi
MEC for Community Safety and Transport in North West, Mr Sello Lehari
MEC for Roads and Transport in Gauteng, Mr Jacob Mamabolo
Director-General of Transport, Mr Alec Moemi
Chairperson of SANRAL, Mr Themba Mhambi
CEO of SANRAL, Mr Skhumbuzo Macozoma
Executive Mayor of Madibeng, Councilor Jostina Mothibe
Honoured guests
Ladies and gentlemen

Roads are an integral part of South Africa’s transport system and an important infrastructure in enabling economic activity and access to social amenities. In playing this crucial economic role, 78.7% of land freight in South Africa is hauled on its roads.
This demonstrates dependence on road infrastructure, which in turn puts tremendous pressure on our road network. This dependence is a further illustration that the condition of our roads has a direct bearing on the ease of movement of goods and people across South Africa, impacting on overall economic growth.

In line with the Khawuleza ethos of the 6th Administration, we are enjoined to accelerate inclusive economic growth and create jobs through our infrastructure build programme, amongst others. Central to this is a need to unravel apartheid spatial planning that stifles optimum economic growth and undo the legacy of fragmented public transport infrastructure delivery.

Our interventions as demonstrated by this project give practical expression to the vision of transport as the heartbeat of South Africa’s economy. This speaks to a fundamental objective to achieve an integrated, smart and efficient transport system that supports a thriving economy and create jobs. A transport system that promotes a healthier lifestyle, provides safe and accessible mobility options. A transport system that socially includes all communities and preserves the environment.
The Pampoennek route we are opening today bears practical testimony to our commitment to decisively unravel spatial planning that sought to exclude our people from the mainstream economy. A transport network that neglected a fundamental need to provide easy access and connectivity among people and communities.

Investments in road infrastructure is not only about economic benefits, but is also about halting the carnage on our roads. When we deliver good roads, we also save lives.

When the Platinum Spatial Development Initiative was launched on 14 October 1996, the N4 Road from Pretoria to Mafikeng was identified as the key anchor project to this initiative. The road component of this Spatial Development Initiative sought to run from the North of Pretoria all the way to Lobatse in Botswana. It further sought to link the communities of Rosslyn, Akasia, Mabopane, GaRankuwa and Brits industrial areas.

Through provision of a safe, reliable and efficient transport infrastructure to the Platinum SDI, we seek to ensure easy access and swift passage of people and goods between communities in Pretoria, Rustenburg, Zeerust, all the way to Botswana.
Within the context of the continent, through the N4 we provide the central section of the East-West development corridor, which runs from Maputo on the eastern seaboard to Walvis Bay on the western seaboard.

Today we, as we gather here to officially open this Pampoennek route, in partnership with the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) and Madibeng Local Municipality, we are making yet another instalment towards dismantling apartheid spatial planning. We are ensuring easy access and swift passage of people and goods between communities, more especially communities in rural and urban spaces as well as communities in Provinces with higher economic activity like Gauteng and communities in the North-West Province.

Through the N4 Route we managed to ensure linkage between the North West province into the Platinum SDI and the northern side of Pretoria. Through this particular project, we are now ensuring free flow of traffic and easy passage of goods and people into the Platinum SDI from the west side of Pretoria and Johannesburg.
The completion of this project is an important milestone in unlocking the tourism potential of the North-West Province. This road provides a more direct connection between the North-West tourism hubs of Sun City, Pilanesberg, Hartbeespoort and Sandton in Gauteng.

On the same vein, this road provides growth potential for Hartbeespoort as a strategic development node of the North-West, known for attracting the Province’s more affluent citizens and providing them with an alternative to migrating to Gauteng suburbs. Not only does it make it possible for those who settle in this area to access Gauteng social and economic hubs, but it also provides easy access to the North-West hubs by tourists and others residing outside the North-West.

Crucially, the completion of this project demonstrates our ongoing commitment in investing in road infrastructure to decisively tackle the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. These investments are equally intended to ensure that investments in our road infrastructure gives impetus to growing the local economy.
SANRAL’s Horizon 2030 strategy is a proactive response to create a national road transport system that serves as an economic artery and delivers a better life for communities within the proximity of its projects.

This road traverses a mountainous terrain in a north-westerly to south-easterly direction. This resulted in a vertical alignment with a sub-section in deep cut and other sub-sections on high fills. The cut has a maximum depth of approximately 19 metres while fills will reach a maximum height of 18 metres. The project also includes the construction of various structures, including a Bridge at the Interchange with Road P123-1 and a Game Underpass South of the cutting.

Madibeng Local Municipality is one of our key stakeholders on this project. Madibeng is in the Bojanala Platinum District Municipality of the North-West Province. The popular tourist area of Hartbeespoort is also located in the municipality. Madibeng consists of several urban and rural areas, villages, farm portions, as well as an established and serviced industrial area. Madibeng is also characterised by diverse economic sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism. Mining is predominant, with the municipality being the world’s third largest chrome producer, which also includes the richest Platinum Group Metals Reserve.
Through the Pampoennek route, motorists will enjoy a free flow of traffic as a result of a better link to between the North West Province from the west of Pretoria and Johannesburg. The completion of the project will also ensure long distance movements do not interfere with local traffic.

Built at a cost of R377 million, the road stretches from the R512 to the west of the Hartbeespoort dam, through Pampoennek, connects directly to the N4 to Rustenburg.

The actual project entailed the Construction of National Route 4 Section 12 (PWV3) between Road P123-1 and Road 980. A new carriageway of a 6km undivided dual carriageway with interchanges at P123-1 and 980 was constructed.

The construction of the Pampoennek route has generated 182 permanent jobs for locals with a R21.2 million expenditure. 180 locals were offered an opportunity to undergo training with an accredited training service provider at a cost of R430 855.25.

Similarly, 12 sub-contractors were employed in the project at a total cost of R74.6 million. Sub-contractors were typically responsible for civil work, traffic accommodation and stone pitching.
Stone pitching was done to blend with the surrounding mountains which had a distinct vertical black line that goes through the stone.

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.