



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, MR MKHULEKO
HLENGWA, MP, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE OCTOBER TRANSPORT MONTH
2026 CAMPAIGN**

**HOSTED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS CLUB, 01 OCTOBER 2026, UNISA,
PRETORIA**

Programme Director,
Minister of Transport, Ms Barbara Creecy,
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee,
Members of Provincial Executive Committees,
Acting Director-General of the Department of Transport, Mr Mathabatha
Mokonyama,
Deputy Directors-General of the Department of Transport,
Chairpersons of Transport SOE Boards,
CEOs of Transport SOEs,
Heads of Provincial Departments of Transport,
All government officials present,
The UNISA Management,
Members of the National Press Club,
Partners and stakeholders of the Department and its SOEs,
Ladies and gentlemen.

**October Transport Month is an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of the
transport sector, recognise the progress being made and mobilise the nation**

around safe mobility, responsible road use and improved access to transport services.

As government, we enter this Transport Month with a clear record of progress and a clear programme for the work that lies ahead.

The Department of Transport has strengthened its governance and institutional performance, achieving a **second consecutive clean audit**. This follows the clean audit achieved in the 2024/25 financial year and again in 2025/26. This is an important demonstration of our commitment to sound financial management, accountability and responsible stewardship of public resources.

We continue to strengthen compliance with the Public Finance Management Act and to ensure that good governance is translated into improved service delivery.

Our work is guided by six priority targets which seek to improve passenger, freight and logistics systems over the next four years.

We are working towards moving **250 million tons of freight on the Transnet network by 2029**; improving the speed of loading and unloading ships to the international benchmark of **30 gross crane moves per hour**; ensuring that the rail system provides safe, reliable and affordable transport to workers and families; achieving **600 million passenger journeys by 2030**; growing aviation to **42 million passengers and 1.2 million tons of air freight** through the Airports Company South Africa network by the end of the policy term; and, importantly, reducing road fatalities by **45% by 2029 and 50% by 2030**.

These targets are interconnected. Efficient freight and logistics support economic growth. Reliable rail and public transport connect people to employment, education and opportunity. Aviation supports tourism, trade and investment. Efficient ports strengthen our position as a trading nation. And safer roads protect the lives and livelihoods of our people.

It is therefore appropriate that, while we celebrate progress across the transport sector, we place particular emphasis on **road safety and Target 6**.

We are encouraged by the progress already recorded.

In **2025, road fatalities were reduced by 6.2% compared with 2024**, with the number of fatalities recorded at the lowest level in five years. In 2026, the positive trajectory has continued. From 1 January to 23 August 2026, preliminary data shows **a 9% reduction in fatalities compared with the corresponding period in 2025**.

These improvements demonstrate that our interventions are having an impact. They reflect coordinated work between the Department, the Road Traffic Management Corporation, provincial and municipal traffic authorities, law-enforcement agencies, emergency services and communities.

We must, however, ensure that this progress is sustained and accelerated. Behind every statistic is a family, a community and a future. Every life saved is therefore an achievement that matters.

The October Transport Month 2026 campaign coincides with the implementation of the **Revised National Road Safety Strategy 2026–2030**, recently approved by Cabinet. The Strategy provides government's strategic framework for reducing road fatalities by 45% by 2029 and 50% by 2030.

The Strategy adopts the **Safe System Approach**, which recognises that people make mistakes, but those mistakes should not result in death or serious injury.

This requires a coordinated approach to safer road users, safer roads and infrastructure, safer vehicles, safer speeds, effective enforcement and effective post-crash response and care.

We are strengthening road safety through the identification and treatment of hazardous locations and increased investment in pedestrian infrastructure and safe mobility.

We are insisting on safer vehicles through improved roadworthiness enforcement and stronger learner and public transport safety standards.

Behaviour change remains central to our efforts. Campaigns addressing speeding, drunk driving and distracted driving, together with road-safety education in schools and communities, remain important tools in changing behaviour.

We are also enhancing enforcement, including technology-enabled enforcement and specialised road-policing capacity that ensures greater law-enforcement visibility.

The use of data and technology is becoming increasingly important. The establishment of a National Crash Data Observatory, together with artificial intelligence and data analytics, will assist government in identifying crash hotspots and supporting evidence-based interventions.

RAF

Importantly, road safety is not only about preventing crashes. Government also has a responsibility to support people who are affected when crashes occur.

The Road Accident Fund has therefore continued to expand access to its services through its Extended Reach and Accessibility Programme. This includes an increased footprint in public hospitals and the use of Post Office facilities, enabling earlier engagement with claimants and improving access for communities that may not be located near RAF offices.

The programme has reached communities in Bhambanana, Jozini, Kokstad, Kimberley, George and Ulundi, with 17 outreach activations planned for the 2026/27 financial year.

To date, the programme has attended to more than **1,284 claimant consultations and enquiries**, registered and lodged **82 direct claims**, concluded **54 claim settlements** and paid more than **R35.1 million directly to claimants**. In addition, 36 medical undertakings have been issued, together with assistive devices, including wheelchairs and a prosthetic device.

These are more than statistics. They represent families receiving support, restoration of dignity and government services reaching people who need them.

The RAF has also strengthened its funeral benefits intervention, with qualifying funeral claims targeted for processing within seven days, while the funeral support benefit for indigent families has increased from **R18,000 to R23,000**.

AARTO ROLLOUT AND STRENGTHENING COMPLIANCE

Our road-safety interventions are complemented by the continued rollout of the **Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences, or AARTO**, across the country.

AARTO represents a major reform of traffic law enforcement in South Africa. It shifts the management of traffic infringements from a largely criminal prosecution process to a modern administrative system administered by the Road Traffic Infringement Agency. The objective is simple: to promote greater compliance with road traffic laws, strengthen accountability, and improve safety on our roads.

Following extensive preparations, stakeholder training and system readiness assessments, Phase 2 of the national rollout commenced on 1 July 2026, bringing 62 municipal and provincial areas into the AARTO environment, including major metropolitan municipalities.

The rollout is proceeding in phases:

Phase 1 focused on infrastructure development and the integration of AARTO with the eNaTIS system and has been completed;

Phase 2, which is currently underway, has expanded the administrative adjudication framework to major municipalities and metropolitan areas;

Phase 3 will extend AARTO to the remaining local municipalities across South Africa; and

Phase 4 will introduce the national demerit points system and driver rehabilitation programmes.

AARTO is not merely a traffic-fines system. It is a road-safety intervention intended to improve compliance, strengthen accountability and change road-user behaviour.

The rollout of AARTO supports the objectives of the Revised National Road Safety Strategy 2026-2030, particularly our efforts to improve law enforcement, encourage safer road user behaviour and reduce road crashes, injuries and fatalities.

As Government, we call upon all motorists, public transport operators, freight companies and road users to familiarise themselves with the AARTO system, obey the rules of the road and play their part in building a culture of responsible road use.

AARTO is not merely a traffic fines system. It is a road safety intervention aimed at changing behaviour, improving compliance and ultimately saving lives. Every road user has a role to play in ensuring its success.

As government, we also recognise that transport extends beyond our roads.

SAMSA

South Africa is a maritime nation, and the Department is prioritising the growth of our maritime economy. Through SAMSA, we are placing particular attention on **expanding the South African Ship Register**, strengthening our maritime presence and creating opportunities for greater participation in the maritime economy.

Our international maritime standing has also been strengthened.

During November 2025, South Africa was **elected to the International Maritime Organization Council for the 2026–2027 term**, following a four-year absence from the Council. South Africa had previously served on the Council for 22 years. Our return provides an important platform for South Africa to contribute to global maritime policy and to advance the interests of our country, our region and the African continent.

This demonstrates that our transport agenda is both domestic and international. We are improving the movement of people and goods within South Africa while strengthening our position in international transport systems.

Programme Director, as we launch October Transport Month, we do so with a message of **progress, partnership and responsibility**.

CONCLUSION

We have strengthened governance. We have achieved two consecutive clean audits. We continue to uphold compliance with the PFMA. We have set clear targets for freight, ports, rail, passenger transport and aviation. We are expanding our maritime footprint and have regained our place on the IMO Council.

Most importantly, we are beginning to see measurable progress in road safety.

The reduction in road fatalities in 2025 and the further reduction recorded so far in 2026 demonstrate that when government works collectively, when enforcement is strengthened, when communities participate and when road users take responsibility, lives can be saved.

Our task now is to build on these gains.

Road safety is not the responsibility of government alone. It requires coordinated action by all spheres of government, business, transport operators, civil society, communities and individual road users.

Let us therefore use October Transport Month to move beyond awareness to action—to strengthen road safety, improve service delivery, support crash victims and build a culture in which every road user understands their responsibility.

Our objective is clear: **a transport system that moves people and goods efficiently, supports economic growth and, above all, protects human life.**

Together, we can build on the progress already made, accelerate our interventions and ensure that more South Africans arrive safely at their destinations.

I thank you.