



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, HON
MKHULEKO HLENGWA (MP) AT THE SAB SHARP RESPONSIBLE
PARTNERSHIPS EVENT
8 OCTOBER 2026 | MIDRAND, GAUTENG**

Programme Director;
Leadership of the South African Breweries;
Representatives of Georgetown University;
Leaders from law enforcement agencies;
Government colleagues;
Members of academia, business and civil society;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honour to join you today under the theme: **“Partnerships with Law Enforcement to Elevate Responsible Driving in South Africa.”** This theme could not be more relevant.

Road safety is not merely a transport issue. It is a public health issue, a social issue and an economic issue. Every life lost on our roads represents a family shattered, a breadwinner lost, a child deprived of a parent, and a community left to bear the consequences of a preventable tragedy.

While South Africa has made encouraging progress, road crashes continue to impose an unacceptable human and economic cost on our country. Government remains committed to reducing fatalities and serious injuries and to achieving the targets set out in the Revised National Road Safety Strategy 2026–2030 and the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030.

As the 7th Administration, the target before us is to reduce road fatalities by 45 percent by 2029 and 50 percent by 2030.

This commitment is closely aligned with the Department of Transport's six priority targets. These targets seek to strengthen South Africa's freight, logistics and passenger transport systems, while improving mobility, connectivity and safety.

We are targeting 250 million tons of freight on the Transnet network by 2029; improving ship loading and unloading to international standards of 30 gross crane moves per hour; ensuring safe, reliable and affordable rail services; achieving 600 million passenger journeys by 2030; enabling ACSA to handle 42 million passengers and 1.2 million tons of air freight by the end of the policy term; and reducing road fatalities by 45 percent by 2029 and 50 percent by 2030.

These targets cannot be viewed in isolation.

Road safety cuts across every part of our transport system and has a direct bearing on the strength of our economy.

When a truck driver is killed or seriously injured, freight movement can be disrupted, deliveries delayed and logistics costs increased. When a major crash blocks a strategic route, its consequences can travel through the entire supply chain.

This directly affects our ambition to move 250 million tons of freight on the Transnet network.

The same applies to our ports and maritime economy. Efficient ports require efficient connections between ships, terminals, rail, roads, warehouses and markets. Our target of achieving 30 gross crane moves per hour is therefore not only about what happens at the port. It is also about ensuring that cargo can move efficiently and safely beyond our ports.

Road safety is equally important to passenger transport. Our target of 600 million passenger journeys is about connecting South Africans to jobs, schools, universities, healthcare, businesses and economic opportunities. But mobility must be safe mobility.

Our aviation system also depends on reliable ground connectivity. Passengers and air freight must be able to move safely and efficiently to and from our airports.

This is why Target Six—reducing road fatalities—is not simply another departmental target. It is an enabler of all the others.

Recent statistics remind us both of the progress achieved and the work that remains.

Between 1 January and 27 September 2026, South Africa recorded 7,462 road fatalities, representing a reduction of 677 fatalities, or 8 percent, compared to the same period in 2025.

This is a significant achievement and demonstrates that the combined efforts of government, law enforcement agencies, civil society and the private sector are making a difference.

However, while our target for this period was 7,325 fatalities, we remain 137 fatalities short of achieving the desired 10 percent reduction.

There are important successes to recognise. The Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga exceeded their reduction targets, while the North West recorded the largest reduction nationally, with an impressive 18 percent decline. At the same time, the increase recorded in the Free State reminds us that progress cannot be taken for granted.

One of the most significant contributors to road trauma remains alcohol-impaired driving. Current estimates indicate that alcohol is a contributing factor in approximately 27 percent of road fatalities in South Africa.

It is in this context that I wish to place particular emphasis on the proposed amendment to **Section 65 of the National Road Traffic Act**.

The proposed amendment seeks to introduce a zero-alcohol limit for all drivers, replacing the current permissible blood and breath alcohol thresholds.

This is an important policy intervention.

The message is clear: alcohol and driving should never mix.

The purpose is not simply to increase prosecutions. It is to change behaviour, prevent crashes and save lives. A zero-alcohol approach provides an unambiguous standard for drivers and strengthens the ability of law enforcement to address alcohol-impaired driving.

Once implemented, this amendment will further support enforcement efforts and contribute to a culture of responsible road use.

The scale of the challenge is reflected in our enforcement statistics.

Between March and September 2026, law enforcement agencies arrested 19,829 motorists for drunken driving, representing approximately 34 percent of all arrests made on our roads during this period.

During the same period, more than 8.5 million vehicles were stopped and checked; over 17,000 traffic law enforcement operations were conducted; nearly 3.5 million traffic violation notices were issued; more than 43,000 vehicles were impounded; and almost 48,400 unroadworthy vehicles were discontinued from operating on public roads.

These figures demonstrate the significant investment government continues to make in protecting lives.

However, enforcement alone cannot solve this challenge.

Sustainable road safety ultimately depends on changing attitudes, influencing behaviour and creating a culture where responsible road use becomes the norm.

While overall fatalities are declining, vulnerable road users remain disproportionately affected.

Since the beginning of the year, 3,091 pedestrians have lost their lives on South African roads. Although this represents a reduction of 722 fatalities, or 19 percent, compared to the same period last year, pedestrians still account for approximately 42 percent of all road fatalities nationally.

Nearly one out of every two people killed on our roads is therefore a pedestrian.

Pedestrian safety remains one of our most pressing priorities. Greater emphasis must be placed on safer road design, improved lighting, visible crossings, community education, effective law enforcement and responsible driving behaviour.

Another area of concern is the increase in major crashes. South Africa recorded 387 major crashes between January and September 2026, representing a 13 percent increase compared with the same period in 2025. Fatalities resulting from these crashes increased by 12 percent.

Approximately 88 percent of major crashes are linked to human behaviour, including excessive speed, loss of vehicle control, driving into oncoming traffic, dangerous overtaking, driver fatigue and driving under the influence of alcohol.

These findings reinforce a fundamental principle of the Safe System Approach: road crashes are not inevitable. Most are preventable.

The Safe System Approach, which underpins the Revised National Road Safety Strategy 2026–2030, recognises that road safety is a shared responsibility. No single institution can solve South Africa's road safety challenge on its own.

That is why partnerships such as today's gathering are so important.

Road safety is ultimately about human behaviour. Every day, road users make decisions that affect not only their own safety but the safety of everyone around them. They choose whether to speed, whether to wear a seatbelt, whether to obey traffic laws and whether to consume alcohol before getting behind the wheel.

Understanding what influences these decisions is critical. This is why the contribution of Georgetown University and other research institutions is so valuable. Evidence-based interventions enable us to move beyond awareness campaigns towards programmes that achieve measurable changes in behaviour.

The Department is also advancing the implementation of the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences, or AARTO. This is an important road safety reform designed to improve road-user compliance and accountability through infringement adjudication, demerit points and targeted interventions for repeat offenders.

It seeks to shift the focus from punishment alone to lasting behavioural change.

Its message is simple:

Know the Rules. Follow the Rules. Own It. Protect Lives.

Public-private partnerships are equally important in supporting national road safety objectives.

The **SAB SHARP Drive Sharp Programme** is an excellent example of how business can contribute to broader societal goals through education, innovation and support for law enforcement.

Particularly noteworthy is SAB's investment in Alcohol Evidence Centres and related enforcement-support initiatives. According to SAB, the Drive Sharp Programme currently supports 34 Alcohol Evidence Centres nationally and has contributed to more than 60,000 drink-driving arrests since 2022.

But our ultimate objective cannot be measured simply by the number of arrests.

Success is when fewer people choose to drink and drive; when crashes decline; when fatalities decrease; and when more South Africans return home safely to their families.

Government therefore encourages continued collaboration in road safety education and awareness, behaviour-change programmes, responsible consumption initiatives, research and data-driven interventions, technology-enabled enforcement and community-based road safety partnerships.

Between March and September 2026, more than 16,500 road safety education and awareness campaigns were conducted nationally, reaching drivers, passengers, pedestrians, scholars and public transport operators across South Africa.

Yet thousands of lives are still being lost every year, and many of these tragedies are linked to behaviours that can be prevented.

That is why partnerships such as SAB SHARP remain so important. They help bridge the gap between enforcement and behaviour change; between awareness and action; and between policy and impact.

Ladies and gentlemen, every crash prevented is a life saved.

But preventing road crashes also protects our economy.

It protects our freight corridors and logistics chains. It protects public transport. It supports our ports, maritime sector and aviation system. It protects workers, businesses and households from the devastating economic consequences of road trauma.

In this sense, Target Six protects all six departmental targets.

Let us support the strengthening of Section 65 so that the message on alcohol and driving is clear: if you are going to drive, do not drink.

Together, we can save lives.

Together, we can make responsible road use the norm.

Together, we can ensure that our transport system supports economic growth rather than allowing preventable road trauma to undermine it.

And together, we can build a safer, more connected and more productive South Africa for all road users.

I thank you.