



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Keynote Address by Transport Minister Ms. Sindisiwe Chikunga at the National Launch of the 2024 Easter Road Safety Campaign on 20 March 2024 in Mkhondo, Mpumalanga**

- **Thank you, Programme Director,**
- **Allow me to acknowledge the following Dignitaries present here today:**
- **MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport in Mpumalanga Province: Mr. Mandla Ndlovu.**
- **MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Mr. Vusi Shongwe**
- **Mayor of Mkhondo Municipality Comrade Ngelosi Ndlovu**
- **All councillors present.**
- **Board Members of the Road Traffic Management Corporation**

- **Deputy Director-General for the Roads Branch: Mr Chris Hlabisa**
- **The Chief Executive Officer of the Road Traffic Management Corporation,**
- **Adv Makhosini Msibi.**
- **Representatives of Transport Agencies and Entities, the taxi and bus industry.**
- **Members of the Interfaith**
- **Senior officials from National, Provincial and Local Governments.**
- **Distinguished members of the media.**
- **Invited guests; and**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is indeed an honour to be here today. This vital event coincides with the closure of schools and a day before the Human Rights Day. It presents us with an opportunity to highlight that road safety is a human indeed a rights issue as it relates to the need to protect life and freedom of movement.

It for this reason that we remind all road users that everyone has the right to be on the road. A failure to respect the rights of

other road users is a violation of human rights and therefore unacceptable.

Our **Fika-usaphila road safety campaign** continues to draw huge public and media attention because the loss of human life on the roads is avoidable and can be prevented by exercising caution and respect for one another.

Our democratic government has since its inception cared for the preservation of life, the improvements in people's health and the safety and security of communities. The National Development Plan also enjoins us to committedly ensure the safety and security of communities and to that effect the safety of road use becomes a commitment we must all share.

Our national roads continue to play a key role in connecting cities, provinces and even countries, as they provide highways to connect with our neighbors in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

As the Human Rights Day falls on Thursday after the closure of schools, we anticipate that our roads will be busier this year. Our assertion is supported by the realization that the Zion Christian Church, (ZCC) will be allowing pilgrims to attend

service in Moria this year, for the first time since 2019 when Covid broke out.

The Border Management Authority also anticipates higher traffic volumes to the borders of Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

It is also common that not only do people travel in across our national and provincial roads in large numbers on the eve of holidays, but that many lives are also lost on the very streets of our villages, suburbs and townships and these are the lives of pedestrians mostly.

For instance, the 2022 road safety outcomes indicate that:

- **(1.4%** was attributed to cyclist related crashes,)
- **(26.8%** was attributed to drivers related crashes)
- **(28.8%** was attributed to passenger crashes), and
- **(43.0%** was attributed to pedestrians)

Pedestrians are therefore the most vulnerable and we need to caution our people to refrain from drinking and using the road, minding texts and other distracting material on phones while walking on the road, jaywalking, letting children play in the street without adult supervision or simply not obeying other rules of the road.

As country, we can ill-afford the costs of crashes given our economic situation, because crashes do not only take lives or limb, but are also a huge economic cost. The harsh reality is that in terms of South Africa, its estimated adjusted **cost of crashes for 2022 was at about R198.79 billion. Hence, we the intensification of our Road Safety and Law Enforcement Campaigns during the off-peak seasons through the implementation of our 365 Days Programme for Road Safety.**

## **COUNTRY INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE**

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

Though we did not perform well globally in the first phase of the Decade Action for Road Safety, it gives me pleasure to report that the Department of Transport and the country at large made great strides towards the realization of the set objectives if the Decade of Action and it would be important if we could surpass our own record of that Decade of Action.

To date, parliament has approved the National Road Safety Strategy, the establishment of the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), transforming the Post Care Agency in the

form of RAF, established a Safer Roads Agency in the form of SANRAL, establishing an agency committed towards safer behaviour through the RTIA, and finally towards Standards and Safer vehicles, there is the C-BRTA.

The work of these five agencies has continued to evolve with deepened approaches to road safety and it is through their joint efforts and the partnerships they have built across society that have yielded greater results.

As a result of their joint work and collaborative action across societal elements the country was able to reduce the annual crash fatality rate from between **14 000 to 15 000 to about 12 436 currently.**

Our efforts have achieved some success over the past five years, in that the number of fatalities over the Easter period has been reduced from **336 in 2018 to 278 last year.** This was achieved despite an increase in the number of drivers and vehicles on the roads.

## **SAFER VEHICLES**

As government we have continued to make road safety a priority and have strengthened our campaign to cater better for the challenges we see on our roads. Today, we can confirm that we mean business when we say unroadworthy buses, taxis and trucks will not be allowed on the roads.

In the last two weeks law enforcement officers have been visiting bus depots and ranks to inspect these vehicles for compliance with the rules of the road. A staggering 69 percent of tested vehicle in Gauteng were found to be non-compliant and declared unroadworthy and prevented from being used on the road.

This drive will be intensified at places of departure in all provinces ahead of the Easter rush to ensure that only roadworthy vehicles and fit drivers are allowed to undertake long distance trips.

We cannot afford to continue to lose lives and experience the continuous incidents of serious road crash injuries every day. Not only is the pain and suffering immeasurable for victims and their families, but the cost to the fiscus and the economy is enormous.

We need a greater sense of urgency, and today we are sending out an unambiguous message that safety on the roads is not negotiable. It must be clear to our officers and everyone that: **Asikhulumisani, Siyabopha.**

## **ADDRESSING HUMAN FACTORS**

We must continue to strive to increase respect for human life and treat the road carnage with the seriousness it deserves. About 90% of deaths on the roads are attributed to human factors namely negligent driving, speeding, drunk driving etc.

This is a REAL crime, and communities and individuals must take responsibility for their behaviour and the behaviour of members of their families and friends for us to have a successful reduction in deaths.

As a department we have worked with communities, private business, religious and faith-based groups and social groups, while recruiting ambassadors for road safety with the unwavering belief that together we can turn the tide, because this can never be a problem for authorities to solve alone. Together we certainly do more.



I would like to appeal to law enforcement officers today to please plan and undertake their law enforcement actions to address offences taking place on our roads in an ethical, regular and effective manner.

## **SAFER ROADS**

It should be emphasized that as government we have been doing our part by implementing the necessary improvements that must augment on our efforts to save lives and have collectively worked towards ensuring that citizens also take responsibility.

The United Nations Programme of Action for Road Safety to which are party as a United Nations member state, identifies safer driving environments as an important pillar among other pillars meant to arrest carnage on our roads.

To this end, and through engineering and other roles, our company in the South African National Roads Agency (Soc) Limited we has continued to respond to the need to build safer roads through road construction and road upgrades targeted at contributing to the totality of other road safety actions.

## **VALA ZONKE**

The National Department of Transport has continued to intensify interventions addressing challenges relating to road infrastructure, one of the major challenges at present being the potholes that litter our roads sending an extremely bad message of neglect and lack of maintenance commitment. It also threatens our road safety programme.

In addressing the condition of roads riddled with potholes, the Presidential Economic Retreat of 30 May to 1 June 2022 agreed that all roads in bad condition should swiftly be addressed through a coordinated plan of action across the three spheres of government.

A resolution of 2022 by Cabinet therefore approved that “the fixing of potholes be addressed as a national project through SANRAL” and agreed that local expertise be employed and where possible. The programme is also used to develop skills; and includes the paving of rural roads, which are approached as community projects.

To this extent we have not only had to re-evaluate of our approach to the maintenance of provincial and municipal roads

as opposed to the national road network, which is the responsibility of the South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL), but we have equally also deployed resources towards this urgent effort.

Together with the leadership of provincial and local government, we have launched a comprehensive plan to address potholes across all spheres of government. SANRAL is also leading the monitoring and implementation of Vala Zonke, our national campaign to fix potholes on our roads.

Towards effective monitoring and reporting on potholes across the country the Roads War Room was established, with a call centre, for the central oversight and management of pothole repairs in the country at SANRAL's Central Operations Centre (COC).

The central oversight "War Room" utilises:

- Mobile APP's – The SANRAL public and road Authority apps has been developed to ensure the digital workflow and tracking for each reported problem (i.e. pothole) and its repair.

- The use of Single Public and Road Authority App needs to be made compulsory to ensure successful implementation
- ITIS Dashboard has built-in capability to centrally track status of each reported problem (i.e. pothole), progress with its repair, etc.

The collectively agreed to involvement of SANRAL to lead the Vala Zonke national project, is due to the resources, expertise and experience at their disposal as an engineering company capable of working in collaboration with provincial and local governments as well as roads authorities.

In its own arsenal of tools for road safety, through its 'Safe System' approach, SANRAL has shown itself to be progressive in identifying and implementing road safety solutions towards a road environment that caters for the needs of all road users, including the most vulnerable.

### **The Freeway Management System**

SANRAL's innovative Freeway Management System (FMS) allows for real-time monitoring and management of the road network. Using intelligent transport systems (ITS) technologies, it relays information on the flow of traffic, which

is then displayed on variable message signs and sent to various radio stations for broadcast to the public and online platforms.

This integrated system also allows for effective engagement with road users in a bid to respond to an array of incidents that occur on busy freeways across the country.

### **Road to Rail Cargo**

The migration of rail friendly cargo from our roads back to rail will help to drastically reduce the risks of congestion by trucks on the roads. It has been our active commitment to reduce the transportation of rail friendly goods from our roads to rail, given the many challenges that have resulted from the unfavorable movement of rail-type cargo such coal from rail to our roads.

This Administration has therefore sought to urgently reverse this situation by bringing about necessary policy reforms that will see us reverse these challenges and getting that cargo back to rail where it belongs. However, our railway system still faces daunting challenges. Ageing infrastructure, inadequate maintenance, and underinvestment have hindered its efficiency and capacity.

In addition, policy and other interventions are being accelerated to urgently improve freight logistics challenges, speed up the reforms in rail to encourage private sector participation in the transportation rail freight and grow air cargo transportation.

### **Safer border crossing**

At our land borders, the C-BRTA, as an entity of the Department of Transport regulates the movement of passengers and goods across the borders, with a great responsibility of ensuring that transportation takes place in a safe manner along the corridors.

The C-BRTA is championing our Cross-Alive Road Safety Campaign meant to promote reliable and safe transportation of passengers and goods across the borders.

### **OUR CAMPAIGN TODAY**

**Ladies and gentlemen, our road safety campaign is not as seasonal campaign that we undertake over the East and Festive Season period. Our officers work hard everyday to save live, deal with intransigent motorists and ensure compliance with the rules of the road.**

**Since the beginning of the year 3 308 roadblocks have been held throughout the country and more than 2 million vehicles were stopped and check. More than 491 00 traffic fines were issued and while 7 671 vehicles that did not comply with the rules of the road were discontinued and 5437 vehicles were impounded.**

**More than 9800 motorists have been arrested for among others drunken driving, excessing speeding, violation of operation permits, producing false driving documentation and ignoring warrants of arrests.**

**Since the beginning of the month, law enforcement authorities have focused on public transport operation in the main transport hubs where transport will be departing from to various destinations. Bus depots have been inspected and public transport vehicles have been stopped and check. Of the 82 vehicles tested in Gauteng, main hub of public transport to different destination, 48 or 59% failed the test and were discontinued.**

**Law enforcement operation will be intensified this week because we know that South Africans are going to treat the coming weekend as a long weekend because the**

**Human Right Day coming tomorrow on Thursday. Drunk driving operation and roadblocks will be staged on all major routes and within residential areas to address deviant behaviors by those who think that long weekends are a license to break the rules of the road and undermine our national effort to make our road safe.**

We are increasing our efforts on all fronts because understand that the Millennium Development Goal of halving unnatural causes of death by 2030 will not be reached if we do not double our efforts to reduce the carnage by a far bigger margin. It is for that reason that we have set ourselves a target to reduce road fatalities by **15% this Easter.**

Every province has been given a target based on the number of fatalities experienced last year. The province of Mpumalanga must reduce the fatalities from **20 to 17**, Limpopo from **43 to 37**, KwaZulu Natal from **64 to 54**, Gauteng from **47 to 40**, Eastern Cape from **41 to 35**, Free State from **21 to 18**, Western Cape from **28 to 24**, North West from **10 to 9**, **Northern Cape from 4 to 3.**



What we wish to emphasise is the fact that this is not a numbers game. All lives matter and every death or severe injury is a tragedy for the individuals, the families, and communities and for the nation.

Many irresponsible drivers have felt the heat here in Mpumalanga. I am certain, comrade Vusi Shongwe and Mandla Ndlovu that the “**Sivuthu’mlilo**” **campaign** will light up the fire for those who take chances on Mpumalanga roads this Easter.

The message is simply that if you are reckless and irresponsible you will be locked up in jail, for in our view you are danger to society. We are saying if you drive drunk, if you drive at excessive speed, you drive a vehicle without number plates, you drive without a driver’s licence. **Asixoxi, Siyabopha.**

Through the Road Traffic Management Corporation, we have allocated enormous resources previously such as patrol vehicles and law enforcement equipment to traffic authorities.

We will continue to invest in road safety as it is necessary and required of us to act, in the interest of the public. We acknowledge the support that Renault South African has

shown to this Easter campaign by providing vehicle to be used to monitor implementation.

Road safety for us is not just an issue during this period. There are daily deaths and injuries on our roads, and the Easter period and closure of schools lend themselves to heightened road safety campaigns.

We have mapped the routes, sharpened our strategies, and prepared our battle plan. All national routes will be heavy with traffic causing delays and impatience for some motorists.

With Gauteng being home to 40% of South Africa's vehicle population we expect a substantial number of motorists to leave Gauteng to different holiday destinations. The N1 towards Polokwane especially the road to Moria City (Limpopo) and to Beit Bridge will be heavily policed.

The N3 to the coastal city of Durban and N1 to Free State, Western Cape, particularly Cape Town to Eastern Cape will be no exception. Here in Mpumalanga, on the N4 we expect heavy traffic especially on stretches leading to border gates and around toll gates. We count on the combined efforts of traffic authorities, SAPS, Cross Border authorities and emergency services.

In terms of analysis of traffic patterns traffic volumes are expected to start picking up on the routes during the following critical days and times on Thursday, 28 March from about 10:00 and will stay high until about 24:00 midnight.

On Friday, 29 March, traffic volumes will start increasing early in the morning and will return to normal after 14h00. Return traffic will commence with worshippers from Moria City and other places of worship on Sunday, 31 March. All other main routes are expected to be extremely busy throughout Monday, 01 April. We appeal for motorists to stagger their traveling.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion let me say we are committed to improving performance on road safety. We will accelerate progress towards attainment of the targets we have in the National Development Plan and the World Health Organization's Decade of Action for Road Safety to reduce road trauma by half by the year 2030. We achieve this by:

- Integrating our law enforcement efforts and avoiding fragmentation.

- Improving community understanding of factors behind road carnages and the role they can play to reduce.
- Placing road safety on national agenda and doing more to save lives and reduce injuries.

We want to thank all those men and women in uniform as you will spend the upcoming holiday period working to keep us all safe. I mean enforcement officers, emergency services, health personnel and all first responders. We thank you for making this sacrifice for the benefit of road safety.

Lastly, we better warn those who are a law unto themselves that they should obey traffic rules or else they will face the full might of the law. Asikhulumisani, Siyabopha.

We call on the religious community, especially those that will be travelling to different places of pilgrimage to ensure that the busses and taxis they hire are roadworthy and fit to be on the roads. Attention must be paid to ensure that the bus has two drivers who will relieve each other during the trips to avoid fatigue. Vehicle must also have proper permits that allow them to travel outside of their normal routes. This will help to avoid conflict with other operators and inconvenience to passengers when the vehicles are stopped by law enforcement authorities.

**I thank you and let's all Arrive Alive!**