

## SPEECH AT THE LAUNCH OF GAUTENG'S 2014 OCTOBER TRANSPORT MONTH CAMPAIGN

Programme Director

MMC and Councillors

Officials from Transnet, PRASA, SANRAL and ACSA

Distinguished Guests

Today marks a momentous occasion as we launch the 2014 October Transport Month campaign in our province. Our theme for this campaign is *Transport, Moving the Economy Forward*. The choice of such a theme is a response to the call of our Premier, David Makhura, for the “modernisation of public transport infrastructure” as one of the ten pillars for the “transformation, modernisation and re-industrialisation” of Gauteng.

It is the vision of the new administration that this, together with “decisive spatial transformation”; the “modernisation of human settlements and urban development” and the further development of “township economies”, will change the spatial and physical landscape in our province. It will forever alter the land use patterns in a manner that will help to create post-apartheid communities. This bold plan of the 5<sup>th</sup> administration is aimed at consolidating our national democratic order and eradicating the remaining socio-economic and spatial vestiges of apartheid.

During this campaign we will focus on the road freight and the rail transport segments as contributors to economic development. We will examine public transport initiatives on the African continent and promote non-motorised transport initiatives in our province.

This approach is entirely consistent with the 25-Year Integrated Transport Master Plan (ITMP25). The ITMP25 is emphatic that we should shift spatial planning away from apartheid land use patterns by building housing developments within the urban edge. Greater housing densification in urban areas and the accommodation of residents on well-located land parcels in close proximity to public transport facilities and other social amenities can change the face of our province. This new spatial paradigm - spurred on by transit-oriented development - would contribute greatly to break the cycle of poverty and the social exclusion of large numbers of our people. It certainly would provide the basis for social cohesion and inclusion into the mainstream economy.

Hence, together with the municipalities, we have developed a set of interventions aimed at transforming public transport into an integrated, reliable, accessible, safe and affordable system. Over the next three to five years, the full development of an integrated bus rapid transit system across the three metropolitan municipalities in our province will become visible. The progress made in respect of *Rea Vaya* and *A re Yeng* in Johannesburg and Tshwane respectively is already changing our people's perceptions of public transport. Work on a similar system in Ekurhuleni has already begun and we are examining the possibility of extending the system to the West Rand. The inclusion of the taxi industry in these processes and the *Hlokomela* campaign of SANTACO will contribute to the integration of the public transport system across the Gauteng city-region and improve the levels of safety on our roads.

Gautrain bears testimony to our ability to deliver on large-scale public transport infrastructure projects. Gautrain has an average daily ridership of 55 000 passengers and 21 000 passengers on its busses and recently it won the Global AirRail Alliance Award for customer service excellence on its airport line. A feasibility study on the further expansion of the Gautrain network is currently underway.

We are particularly excited at the fact that the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) has prioritized the revitalisation of Metrorail in Gauteng. The acquisition of new rolling stock; the renovation of train stations and the development of a new signaling system will transform the day-to-day travel experiences of large sections of our people. At the same time, Metrorail is working hard to improve the current operations of the service and introducing new services on selected routes. In next week, for example, we will visit the park-and-ride facility at Nasrec and work in been done to re-open the Hammanskraal-Pretoria corridor in the near future.

Working together with Transnet, the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA), SANRAL and local government, we will implement the provincial freight strategy with greater vigour and renewed energy. Existing freight and logistics hubs such as the City Deep Terminal are being upgraded. In addition, a number of new logistics hubs are being planned, particularly to stimulate the local economies in the West Rand and in Sedibeng. Importantly, the provincial government, in conjunction with the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, has finalised the 5-Year Aerotropolis Implementation Plan for the creation of an airport city around the OR Tambo International Airport. In modern cities, airports have become major drivers of urban form, economic activity and city competitiveness. The Aerotropolis Implementation Plan aims to take advantage of these changes and to optimise the positive effects the OR Tambo International Airport can have on the Gauteng economy and on

neighbouring communities. This project has the potential to create thousands of permanent jobs and to inject new life into the flagging manufacturing sector in the region.

Cumulatively, these interventions support the re-industrialisation of the provincial economy through strategic infrastructure development. We are confident that the rollout of new public transport and freight infrastructure across the province will revitalise and modernise old, transport industries through the local manufacturing or assembling of busses, trains and locomotives.

Last Friday, the Gauteng Transport Commission (GTC) opened its offices in Bedfordview. The Commission is an inter-governmental mechanism of the provincial government and the municipalities to take joint ownership of future transport planning in areas such as rail and bus rapid transport systems, and intelligent transport systems, across the Gauteng city-region. As we know, a city-region represents an administrative area where there are no hard boundaries across the different spheres of government.

We believe that the transport sector is a significant enabler for economic growth and social development, and in our province we must promote continued and sustained investments by government and the private sector across the various modes of transport, namely, non-motorised transport, road, rail and aviation.

#### Freight Sector

As the freight sector is to be the focal point of our campaign, I wish to address a few points in this regard. The National Development Plan recognizes that South Africa's economy is a transport-intensive economy. However, its advantages in terms of natural resources are greatly eroded by the high transport costs and poor freight transport infrastructure. Most of the bulk freight in the country is transported on the existing national roads, and to a much lesser extent, on Transnet's rail network. Ideally, bulk goods and services should be transport on the rail network and not on our roads.

The NDP envisages a strengthened and more developed Gauteng-Durban freight corridor. A critical success factor for a well functioning freight corridor is unrestricted access to the terminals for freight, thereby removing bottlenecks on the road and rail routes, and expanding terminal capacity. Our five year plan is to provide effective freight access to major decentralized freight terminals on the northern and eastern periphery of the urban core of the Gauteng city-region by:

- ✓ Decreasing the heavy freight vehicles numbers in core urban areas and central business districts;
- ✓ Providing adequate linkages outside the province (i.e. Gauteng - KZN Corridor);

- ✓ Supporting infrastructure to freight intermodal facilities; and
- ✓ Aligning freight intermodal facilities with Transnet's Container Strategy for Gauteng and Durban port developments.

It is against this background that our Department; SANRAL, Transnet and the City of Johannesburg have invested in the further development of City Deep Terminal. This terminal is the largest inland port in our country. It handles 84 percent of all container freight on the Reef and most of what is bound for the SADC countries.

City Deep is prioritized for improvements and upgrading so that it can better handle increased demand before it reaches its full capacity over the next few years. The upgrading of the road network is aimed specifically at improving access and mobility in and around the City Deep Terminal. Together with the City of Johannesburg, we are investing R121 million on the road improvements that span seven inter-related projects which include the widening of Rosherville Road; the construction of the Cleveland Road bridge; the construction of ramps onto the N17, and extensions to Houer Road and Vickers Road. Already, the conversion of Rosherville Road into a one- way road has been completed.

On its part, Transnet is investing over R2.7 billion on upgrading the Terminal itself. Rubber Tyre Gantries have been introduced in this Terminal and a modern inland container terminal has been developed with an operational capacity of 400 000 TEUs per annum. The Kascon Terminal will be upgraded to 200 000 TEUs by 2016.

It is hoped that these improvements will provide the opportunity to retain and to establish new light industrial development and office parks around these terminals. This will further create the opportunity for retailers to build and retain their distribution centres at the freight terminals from where final distribution will take place.

For Transnet, the City Deep development is critical to achieve volume growth before the development of "super terminals". Here I must emphasise that the current work that is being done to improve the situation and to expand capacity cannot be done by government alone. Business must also contribute by building appropriate holding facilities for their vehicles and staff. It is only through our combined efforts that we can achieve optimal utilisation of the City Deep Terminal. The private sector (user) must also show commitment by investing and ensuring long term sustainability in our freight infrastructure.

May I remind all of us that this commitment was made by freight companies located in and around the City Deep Terminal when we started work here, but for some reason, the commitments made in the recent past are not being honoured. Later this month, we are to host a Freight Indaba and I hope that of the many issues we will discuss there, we will revisit the matter of the contribution of the private sector in developing the City Deep Complex.

Finally, we will host a number of activities during the month that will highlight the significance of this campaign. The planned activities, include among others, the following:

- UATP Conference on public Transport (14-16 October);
- Women in Transport Summit (16 October)
- Freight Indaba (20 October);
- Inspections of weighbridges to promote the importance of compliance and prevent overloading in the freight industry; and
- The launching of non-motorised pedestrian and cycle lanes in various municipalities.

I want to urge all of us to be active and committed transport ambassadors during our October Transport Month Campaign for this year. Let us give life to our theme, *Transport, Moving the Economy Forward!*

Ismail Vadi

2 October 2014