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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

The Council met at 14:01.

The Chairperson took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon delegates and special delegates, let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of Minister Barbara Creecy, as well as the presence of Deputy Minister Hlengwa. You are welcome here in our midst today.

We are joined by the delegation from Limpopo, the MEC of Transport and Community Safety, hon Mathye, as well as the chairperson of ... Transport in Limpopo, hon Lebea. We also have hon Nenguda, as well as hon Mohale.

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We are also joined by the chairperson of the portfolio committee on Finance and Budget, hon Van Wyk, from the Western Cape province. He is here with us in the House.

We also want to take this opportunity to welcome one of our own, hon Nxumalo. Hon Nxumalo, you are welcome and we are delighted to have you in the House. If circumstances are that you are unable to sit throughout the sitting, you may recuse yourself, please. We really understand your condition and your apology has since been recorded.

We also wish to acknowledge the presence of the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Premier, Community Safety and Liaison, hon Frazer, who is here with us from the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Of course, we have the MEC for Transport in the Eastern Cape, hon Ngatha, who has joined in on the virtual platform.

We also have MEC Diale-Tlabela for Transport from the province of Gauteng, who has also joined in on the virtual platform.

We also have the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport from Mpumalanga, hon Thomo, who has joined in on the virtual

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platform. Hon Malepeng, who has joined in on the virtual platform, is the chairperson of the Department of Transport.

We also have MEC Lukhele, who has joined in on the virtual platform from Mpumalanga, as well as MPL Ngwenya, who has also joined in on the virtual platform.

From the North West, we have the Chief Whip of the province, hon Ziphorah, who has joined in. We also have MPL Moema, who has joined in, as well MPL Sonakile from the North West.

From the Northern Cape, we have ... No, no, we don't have delegates here.

We are joined by the SA Local Government Association, Salga, representative, hon Cllr De Vos, who has joined in on the virtual platform. Those are our guests for today, colleagues.

Hon delegates, having said that, may I remind you that the rules of the House shall apply on both the virtual platform as well as in the House today. I have been informed that there will be no notices of motion or motions without notice. We shall now proceed to the Order of the Day, which is the Policy debate on Budget Vote No 40 – Transport Appropriation Bill,

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which is a section 77 report. I now call upon hon Minister Barbara Creecy to open the debate.

APPROPRIATION BILL

(Policy debate)

Vote No 40 – Transport:

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Deputy Minister Hlengwa, hon MECs and Cllrs present today and on the virtual platform, all hon members, today we table a budget of R102 billion, a significant sum of money to build a transformed transport system that will equally serve the nurse from Daveyton who must arrive on time for her shift, the student from Khayelitsha who studies at the technikon in Muizenberg, as well as farmers, miners and car manufacturers nationwide who must get their produce to international markets as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This Seventh Administration is committed to building an economy that works for everybody. Consequently, logistics and mobility reform must be at the heart of our programme. An

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effective and efficient transport, mobility and logistics system will unlock opportunities, restore competitiveness, reduce inequality and enable inclusive growth.

Improvements in port, rail and road infrastructure are already increasing throughput to key export corridors. Recent media reports indicate that at the end of last year, vessel traffic at our ports had increased by 9% and cargo throughput volumes by 4,2%, the highest improvement since the 2010-11 financial year. However, external shocks such as fuel price increases and geopolitical uncertainty threaten to undo the gains we have made.

Rail transport is the safe, reliable and affordable public transport alternative. Increased provision of passenger rail services during this financial year will provide a much-needed cheaper option for working South Africans who are already feeling the pinch of the cost of living.

In the 2025-26 financial year, the Passenger Rail Agency of SA, Prasa, recorded annual trips surpassing 100 million, almost triple the figures recorded in 2023-24. Prasa is continuing to reintroduce services to communities around the country. In Gauteng, additional blue trains have been deployed

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to increase the frequency of trips, whilst in the Western Cape, the full recovery of Cape Town's central line has restored connectivity for communities previously excluded from reliable rail services.

With current fiscal shortages, we are in discussion with National Treasury on front-loading mechanisms so that we can conclude the restoration on outstanding priority lines. The reintroduction of the Midway to Lenasia and the Vereeniging lines is scheduled for this financial year.

Refurbished coaches of the previous yellow fleet are being deployed in nonelectrified corridors, with 60 already deployed in KuGompo, Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape. The development of the diesel variant of the new blue trains is being looked at and Prasa is currently in discussions with Transnet regarding the electrification of passenger lines in the Eastern Cape. Members of the select committee have travelled on this central line and have visited the Gibela plant producing the new locomotives.

I am aware that you are also interested in the re-establishment of rapid rail between Gauteng, Mbombela and Musina, as well as eThekweni. Last year, the department and

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the private-sector participation, PSP, unit put out a request for information and we are currently processing that information to find an affordable model that can be released through a request for proposal process.

Last week, Transnet's infrastructure manager announced the names of the first 11 private train operating companies that aim to move up to 24 million tons of freight per annum, starting on the 1st of April next year.

Significant strides have been made in unlocking investment and accelerating infrastructure delivery. The Durban Container Terminal Pier 2 concession has reached financial close and will increase handling capacity from 2 to 2,8 million twenty-foot equivalent units, TEUs, in a year. This milestone establishes a bankable model for future private-public participation.

This year, we will see a robust pipeline of private-sector projects, including the Ngqura Manganese Export Corridor, the Richards Bay Dry Bulk Terminal and the container corridor between Gauteng and eThekweni.

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At the end of the month, I will launch the Ngqura gas terminal in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. The terminal will support gas-to-power generation and industrial growth, as well as support the diversification of South Africa's energy mix.

The development of the Boegoebaai Port is progressing, with technical, environmental and commercial work streams advancing in parallel. This project will establish the Northern Cape's first commercial port, reducing the province's dependence on Namibia and distant local ports for the export of commodities.

Whilst we continue to develop our rail capabilities, we must not stop investing in our road network. Over the medium term, the SA National Roads Agency, Sanral, is expected to receive an appropriation of almost R31 billion.

Projects in the current financial year include the resurfacing of the N3 from Geldenhuys to Buccleuch in Gauteng, improving the interchange capacity at the N3 section 1 from Westville to Paradise Valley in KwaZulu-Natal, road widening and intersection upgrades at the R516 from Toospruit to Bela-Bela in Limpopo, improvements and capacity upgrades at the N2 near George and Wilderness in the Western Cape, special maintenance for the R390 from Cradock to Hofmeyr, widening and improving

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drainage on the R52 from Koster to the N4 in Rustenburg, and upgrading and constructing a newly bound north carriageway along section 16 of the N1 from Scotland to Winburg South in the Free State.

Sanral's roads connect communities throughout South Africa. Over the last few years, more than 13 000 km of roads have been transferred from Sanral by municipalities and provinces. This is not sustainable in the long term and will ultimately impact on Sanral's ability to maintain the national road network.

Next month, we will host a joint Minmec between Treasury and Transport to find a mechanism to front load the provincial roads maintenance grant so that provinces can upgrade more of their priority roads sooner.

This year, together with provinces and municipalities, we are reviewing the road-based public transport grants, including the public transport network grant and the public transport operations grant budget. Our goal with these grant reforms is to establish an enhanced and efficient comprehensive grant that will reduce waste and ensure more cost-effective solutions for commuters.

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The taxi industry remains an important part of our transport ecosystem. This year, we will conclude the taxi recapitalisation grant and continue efforts to regularise and de-risk the industry, allowing operators to access affordable funding and helping to further integrate taxis into transport planning.

Global transformation, driven by electrification, digitisation and rapid mobility innovations is affecting transport everywhere. The real question is not if the taxi industry will face disruption, but rather what form such disruption will take.

We are working on a future-orientated compact with the taxi sector, focused on partnership rather than imposition. This compact will support operators in transitioning to electronic vehicles through targeted financial instruments that make the acquisition of such vehicles affordable. It will work with taxi associations and financial institutions to de-risk vehicle financing, removing the barriers that have long made fleet renewal a burden rather than an opportunity.

Formalisation remains a critical enabler of this transformation. A formalised industry is a protected industry,

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one where operators have access to decent work protections and where commuters have access to accountability. Together, we must pursue such formalisation, not as a regulatory imposition but as economic liberation.

The annual number of people killed on our roads is still unacceptably high. In January, the Deputy Minister and I committed to introducing an amendment to section 65 of the National Road Traffic Act to ensure that drivers cannot drink any alcohol before they get behind the wheel of a car. We hope that once this amendment reaches this House, all hon members will support it as an important way of altering behaviour and reducing the horrific death toll on our roads. The Deputy Minister will give more details in his speech on our ongoing road safety campaign, which is slowly but surely yielding results.

I want to thank all MECs and provincial traffic authorities, as well as traditional authorities, civil society and faith-based organisations, that have worked with us over the last year to spread the message of road safety and ensure that we decrease the number of unnecessary deaths on our roads. It is through such co-ordinated actions that we are endeavouring to record even lower numbers of road fatalities in 2026.

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Unfortunately, this year we have witnessed a number of tragic accidents involving scholar transport. As hon members know, the management of scholar transport programmes falls under different departments. This has led to fragmented implementation.

As part of implementing the National Road Safety Strategy, a special focus will be placed on interventions to improve scholar transport safety. These measures include, amongst others the establishment of a national technical committee to finalise the National scholar Transport Policy, the upgrading of scholar transport drivers, and the licensing and registration of scholar transport operators and vehicles. We are committed to ensuring that our learners are transported safely and that they are provided with a professional and reliable service.

In our efforts to better enforce road safety and decrease our number of annual road fatalities, the department has been allocated R163 million for the present financial year to support the national implementation of the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences, Aarto. Over 16 000 traffic officials have already been trained and the majority of provinces are ready for the implementation of

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phase 2, as over 80% of issuing authorities have received the necessary equipment.

Through this phased and consultative approach, the department reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that the roll-out of Aarto is both sustainable and responsive to the operational realities of municipalities across the country.

In the aviation sector, we aim to meet the target of moving 1, ... million tons of air freight and 42 million passengers through the Airports Company SA, Acsa, on an annual basis by 2029.

Last year, terminal expansion and upgrade projects commenced at three Acsa-operated airports, including Cape Town International. In the coming financial year, we will begin construction on a R5,7 billion midfield cargo terminal at O R Tambo, which will significantly increase our air freight handling capacity.

Additional terminal capacity is also being invested in at Chief Dawid Stuurman International Airport and at George Airport, and we are also planning to build an additional runway at Cape Town International Airport.

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Earlier this year, we gazetted the National Airport's Development Plan for broader public consultation. The plan enables the enforcement of the National Civil Aviation Policy and realises the importance of airport infrastructure in South Africa's ecosystem, as well as aviation's role as a key enabler of both trade and tourism. In this way, regional and smaller provincial aerodromes can be turned into catalysts for enhanced economic activity in underserved areas.

Air traffic navigation services are currently out on tender to replace nine radar systems throughout the country. The majority of these radars included in the tender support en-route services, while two support services at King Phalo Airport and Chief Dawid Stuurman International Airport.

The safety case assessments for the projects will identify the operational impact and hazards associated with all the individual replacements, making sure that we identify and mitigate risks well in advance.

As part of this process, industry stakeholders will be included in these assessments and reviews to ensure safe operations and to minimise operational impact. Once finalised, this will again be consulted with industry stakeholders before

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submission to the SA Civil Aviation Authority for finalisation and approval.

In closing, I want to thank the Deputy Minister and acting director-general for their hard work in seeing that we have a functioning transport sector and that the entities under our control serve the needs of our people. I also want to thank hon members for their oversight and for ensuring that the Department of Transport delivers on its mandate and provides inclusive transport services that leave no one behind. I thank you.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister Creecy, let me repay the compliment also recognising you today. Hon Deputy Minister Hlengwa, hon members, fellow South Africans. Thank you for the opportunity to table the report of the Select Committee on Public Infrastructure and the Minister and the Presidency on Budget Vote 40, Transport and the 2026-27 Annual Performance Plan of the Department of Transport.

The committee considered the department's plans at a time when South Africa's transport sector faces serious challenges, but also enormous opportunity. In our engagement with the department on the 29th of April, one thing stood out

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immediately. The department's own situational analysis was very candid. It acknowledged deteriorating rail infrastructure, port inefficiencies, escalating logistics costs, and excessive dependence on road transport.

That honesty matters, hon members, because South Africans already feel these failures daily. They experience them in delayed trains, damaged roads, congested ports and rising transport costs. Transport is not simply about moving people from one place to the other. When transport works, economies grow. When it fails, growth slows, businesses struggle and ordinary commuters pay the price.

The Department remains responsible for setting strategic direction across roads, rail, aviation, maritime transport, and public transport systems, while overseeing a large network of public entities.

The committee raised concern about governance weaknesses across parts of the transport ecosystem, particularly within state-owned entities. During the deliberations, I specifically referred to South African Airways as a cautionary example of what happens when governance failures, delayed accountability, and weak oversight are allowed to continue unchecked. The

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fiscal costs to the country and the damage to public trust remain significant.

The department's budget over the next three years amounts to approximately R313,5 billion. Transfers and subsidies to entities amount to more than 94% of this allocation. This means that the effectiveness of the department will be ultimately measured not by plans on paper, but by implementation and the performance of the entities receiving these funds.

The committee noted significant allocations to SA National Roads Agency SOC Limited, SANRAL, over the medium-term, including R63,9 billion for the non-toll road network, funding for the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project, the National Route, N2 Wild Coast Project, and the Moloto Development Corridor. An additional R1,5 billion has also been ring-fenced under the Provincial Road Maintenance Grant for reconstruction and rehabilitation following natural disasters.

Road infrastructure remains one of the clearest reflections of state capacity. Poor roads do not only frustrate motorists, they increase logistic costs, damage vehicles, undermine safety, and slow economic activity.

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Programme 4, Road Transport, therefore, remains critical, particularly given the continued high number of road fatalities annually. The committee welcomed the emphasis on maintenance, rehabilitation, and labour-intensive job creation initiatives linked to the infrastructure delivery.

At the same time, members stressed that South Africans must begin to see measurable improvements on the ground. The committee also considered Programme 3, Rail Transport, which remains central to both economic recovery and commuter mobility. Approximately R98 billion has been budgeted over the medium-term, largely through transfers to Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, PRASA, and Transnet.

The committee welcomed continued investment into rolling stock renewal and signalling upgrades. Rail recovery is essential if South Africa is serious about lowering logistic costs and reducing pressure on the roads.

However, members also raised concerns regarding operational stability and implementation capacity. The absence of clear targets relating to PRASA's overall program and the deployment of the legacy yellow fleet was specifically noted. The

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department indicated that the fleet would continue to operate in rural and non-urban corridors where infrastructure permits.

The committee further requested an upgrade regarding the Moloto Corridor Rail Project. The department indicated that there had been limited progress in recent years and that the primary focus has shifted towards adjacent road infrastructure upgrades in Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

Public transport affordability remains one of the biggest pressures facing low-income households. For many South Africans, particularly in rural areas, transport costs consume a significant portion of monthly income. The committee therefore raised concerns regarding fare pressures amid rising fuel costs.

The department indicated that public transport subsidies are intended to reduce these pressures, although they do not fully cover operational costs.

The committee also engaged the department on the implementation of regulations relating to e-hailing services under the National Land Transport Framework. This follows

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ongoing tensions between e-hailing operators and parts of the taxi industry in several provinces.

The department reported that provincial regulatory entities are converting operating licenses and preparing for additional enforcement measures, including vehicle identification requirements. The issue of cash payments through e-hailing platforms was also acknowledged as one of the contributing factors to conflict within the sector.

Members further requested an update on the Go Durban Integrated Public Transport Network. The department indicated that key disputes, including market share arrangements, have been resolved and that the next step would be the establishment of a vehicle operating company to commence operations.

The committee also considered the sustainability of the Road Accident Fund. Members requested clarity regarding the RAF claims backlog and the entity's long-term funding model. The department indicated that claim payments had improved under the new board but acknowledged that the RAF remains financially unsustainable under its current model and continues to operate of a significant annual shortfall linked

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to reliance on the fuel levy. Reform through the Road Accident Benefits Scheme Bill is therefore intended to introduce a blended funding approach.

The committee also considered developments within civil aviation and maritime transport. Programme 5, Civil Aviation, focuses on regulatory strengthening aviation safety, sustainability, and skills development, including plans relating to a national aviation academy and search and rescue strategy.

Programme 6, Maritime Transport, seeks to position South Africa as an international maritime center, supported by investments in port infrastructure and container terminals. However, members noted that long-term success in this sector will depend heavily on implementation and investor confidence.

The committee also noted that Program 8, State-owned Companies Governance Assurance and Performance remains essential to improving oversight, governance compliance and accountability across transport entities. While the program itself carries a moderate budget, its influence across the sector is very significant.

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The committee ultimately adopted recommendations by requesting the department by the 31st of July to submit the following: A report on the return on investment from graduate and training programmes, a report on the growth trajectory of emerging contractors within public entities, and the register of SANRAL concessions, including local participation and skills transfer provisions. These recommendations are intended to strengthen accountability and ensure that public expenditure translates into skills development, transformation, and measurable economic benefit.

The committee will continue to exercise firm but constructive oversight over the department and its entities. South Africa cannot grow its economy on failing logistics, unreliable rail and deteriorating infrastructure.

Transport remains one of the key enablers of growth, investment and opportunity. The real measure of success will not be the size of the budget alone. It will be whether the commuters experience safer roads, more reliable trains improve transport and a transport system capable of supporting economic growth.

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It must be noted at this stage that the MK Party, as per usual, voted against this report, and despite my numerous attempts to educate them that there's a difference between the report and the budget, I've been unsuccessful thus far. Common sense seems to follow them and try and outrun them, but they seem to run faster than common sense the whole time. I thank you.

Mr X E NQATHA (Eastern Cape): Greetings, hon Chair. Due to connectivity, I'm unable to open the video. With your permission, can I proceed?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Yes, you can proceed, hon Ngatha.

Mr X E NQATHA (Eastern Cape): Hon Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Members of Parliament, hon Minister and Deputy Minister, hon MECs from other provinces and all government and parliamentary officials, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. It is a great honour and a privilege for me to take part in this important debate on the budget of the Department of Transport today.

The debate takes place as our country prepares for local government elections scheduled for 4 November this year.

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During this period, the Department of Transport, one of the key service delivery departments will be on the spotlight. Our communities will expect improvements in infrastructure and including construction of more roads and better services.

Today, as we welcome the Department of Transport budget, we have no doubt in our minds that the department will use this budget to benefit the people of our country, especially the downtrodden. In the Eastern Cape, the Department of Transport has already tabled the policy speech for the current financial year, and we committed to improving the lives of citizens in the province despite facing financial constraints. Therefore, our budget as a provincial department of transport may not address some of the challenges confronting our province and our communities, particularly the scholar transport programme. This noble programme has contributed to the province for the 84% matric pass rate in the last academic year.

As indicated in the provincial policy speech, the current model of scholar transport is under immense pressure. Budget constraints require us to rethink sustainability. We will continue to engage stakeholders, improve systems and roll out the learner transport management system to enhance the accountability measures.

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We welcome the pronouncement by the Minister, of measures being taken to ensure that our learners are safe because no child should be denied education because of distance.

Education is the crucial right of every child in this country. We dare not fail our children. The commitment stands firm, rooted in the legacy of our forebears, including the global icon, Tata Nelson Mandela, who once said, "education is the great engine of personal development." It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor and that the son of a mineworker can become the head of that mine, that a child of a farmworker can become the president of a great nation.

It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another. Currently, we are transporting 103 000 qualifying learners, and any reduction in that number would have devastating consequences for the province. Therefore, the department continues to engage the provincial treasurer and office of the premier, including seeking intervention for additional funding, and to fund the Makhanda High Court judgment, which ordered the province to transport all deserving learners.

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Our department is dedicated to creating a safe, reliable and efficient transport system that drives economic growth, creates jobs, and restores dignity to our people. We are making this commitment knowing very well that we are a province with deep structural challenges. Only 10% of our roads are surfaced roads, which is far below the national average. The department is currently facing a backlog of R3,4 billion in road infrastructure due to disasters and climate change.

We are focusing on some of the priority roads in this financial year. We welcome the support that we are getting from national. Already SANRAL has contributed an amount of R20 billion for the N2 Wild Coast development and the building of 18 Welisizwe bridges, which created 270 jobs. We have also set aside as a province R298 million for gravel roads maintenance. There are a number of roads that we are working on.

On the District Development Model in the province, we have also established partnership with municipalities to build and maintain roads, so that we can consolidate our capabilities to dealing with both local and provincial roads – that is access roads, through this model, working with other municipalities,

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in the main, The Makhanda, Great Kai, Buffalo City Metro and other municipalities.

To enhance oversight, we have procured 47 vehicles distributed to our technicians in seven of our districts, so that they can be agile in doing assessment of our roads, especially being a disaster-prone province. Our capability to do assessments of our roads and be able to quantify the financial implications of such becomes very critical.

Public transport remains critical for our people, particularly the destitute communities. We have set aside R839 million to subsidise bus services for Mayibuye Transport Corporation in the province, including Africa's Best 350.

On road fatalities, as a province we have managed to reduce fatalities during the 2025 festive season. We attained a 22% decrease in road fatalities. We attributed this success to the co-ordinated leadership in intergovernmental operations and law enforcement efforts.

Despite the economic challenges, our department, through the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, created over 36 000 work opportunities, surpassing our initial target. However, we

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are now shifting our focus from short-term jobs to sustainable livelihoods. Through training artisan development and strategic partnership, we are cultivating a pipeline of skills for the future. We believe that a working society is a dignified society.

On audit outcomes, we are committed to upholding clean governance and financial discipline. While achieving an unqualified audit outcome is important, it is not our final goal. We will work diligently to continuously improve our audit outcomes.

In conclusion, the Eastern Cape government fully supports this budget as it is intended to change the lives of our people across our beautiful country. Thank you, hon Chair.

Dr I SCHEURKOGEL: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, fellow members and dear South Africans, good day. Transport is the passage to work, education and dignity. In South Africa that passage is littered with cost that so many South Africans can barely afford.

Nearly 6,3 million households surveyed by Statistics SA rely on public transport to get to work. And almost three quarter

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of them their monthly bill is at least R300. The Statistics SA found that transport is the third largest item of household spending absorbing 15,3% of consumption or about R476 billion. The average household spend R21 930 per year, almost R1 830 per month just to keep moving. It is even worse for young people trying to enter the labour market. The Youth Capital report describes how eight in 10 job seekers must choose between looking for work or buying food. Young people spend about R700 per month on transport and R1 496 per month in total to look for a job. Without work this cost becomes a lottery ticket that fuel can afford.

The rising fuel prices aggravate the crisis where petrol is increasing over R6 per litre in April and May. Transport companies will simply pass the cost to the commuters.

Therefore, households that already spend 40% of their income on transport could see that share exceed by 50%. For millions of South Africans transport is not merely a cost of travel. It is a barrier to food on the table and a driver of poverty.

We will continue this model of pumping billions into blotted state-owned entities while commuters watch stations crumble and then we will be here next year again lamenting the same

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crisis. We must prioritise our transport budget to put people first, not failing institutions.

The blue People's Train programme is a proof that new rolling stock can transform commuter rail. The Passenger Rail Agency of South African, Prasa's, replaced the aging yellow and grey fleet which have become unsafe with a world-class blue train equipped with built in safety features and cameras. Commuters now ride without clinching to their possessions because crime has been reduced. That is what safety and dignity look like.

But the blue fleet serves only a handful of urban corridors. While modern trains are being delivered, hundreds of small towns still have derelict stations and abandoned d rail sidings. These assets could be the backbone of local economies. So, why not revive a station programme?

Local municipalities should be empowered through conditional grants and municipal infrastructure bound to refurbish these stations, restore basic services and run yellow fleet shuttle trains between nearby towns. The old yellow rolling stock once overhauled can provide affordable local services. By moving people, we move money. Each revived station could create maintenance jobs, retail opportunities and pride. Investing in

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rail and public transport is not a cost. It is a job creation strategy.

Global experience showed that transport projects can account for up to 12% of the GDP and deliver huge employment multipliers, according to the World Bank in 2026. Every new station or bus depot requires construction workers, artisans, station managers, ticket inspectors, security staff and cleaners.

The Department of Transport rail programme expects passenger trips to increase from 250 000 to 350 million. To achieve this, we will need thousands of train drivers and technicians. When people spend less on getting to work, they can seek better jobs rather than just ones that they can reach on foot or by taxi. If local rail services or public transport are sufficient, costs can be cut in half. It could be the equivalent of a wage increase for the unemployed. Efficient and affordable public transport is a powerful tool against poverty. With commuters already spending 40% of their salary on transport which may see this cost climb beyond their income, investing in rail and local public transport is an immediate way to shield citizens from vital fuel markets.

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Every rand spent shifting freight from road to rail or passengers from cars to buses and trains pay us back in lower fuel imports, less congestion and fewer lives lost on our roads.

Finally, public-private partnerships should be harnessed for local projects. Private operators can bring capital and expertise. Municipalities can contribute to land and infrastructure, and communities can own shares in these ventures. The success of the blue train modernisation delivered by Gibela with local content and job creation shows that it is possible when government partners with the industry. Let's replicate this model on a smaller scale across the country.

South Africans are paying more for less. Young people are priced out of the job market, and our economy is strangled with logistical inefficiency. Within our existing budget, we have the means to revive rail, empower municipalities, integrate our transport systems and create thousands of jobs. When we move people, we move money.

In conclusion, let's stop throwing good money at bad projects. Instead, invest in transport network that truly serves our

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people – from the blue trains gliding between cities to the yellow shuttles bringing workers to work from every village to marketplace. That's how we build a South Africa that moves us forward together. Thank you, Chair.

Ms K DIALE-TLABELA (Gauteng): Hon Deputy Chair, let me pass my greetings to the hon Minister Creecy, Deputy Minister, Ntate Hlengwa, hon members in the House as well as my colleagues from other provinces. As Gauteng, we rise in support of the Budget Vote aligned with the national commitment to building a transport system that is safe, reliable and inclusive.

As the economic hub of South Africa, Gauteng carries a disproportionate share of the country's traffic volumes, freight movement, and commuter demand. This places both pressure and responsibility on us to deliver infrastructure and services that are efficient, responsive and resilient.

Over the 2026 Medium Term Expenditure Framework, the department has been allocated a total baseline budget of R27,8 billion, comprising R10,203 billion in 2026-27, R8,722 billion in 2027-28, and R8,862 billion in 2028-29 financial years. While these allocations reflect a constrained fiscal environment, they enable us to prioritise what matters

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most: Maintaining our existing road network; advancing key infrastructure projects; and improving transport services.

Our immediate focus in Gauteng is twofold: Strengthening public transport; and intensifying road safety interventions. I must say, hon Chair, that this month we are celebrating a clever mover, which is a package for low-income earners, and we have reduced Gautrain fares around 50% for those who earn less than R350 000 per annum. On public transport, we welcome the move towards a unified funding model. However, implementation must ensure service continuity, particularly for working-class communities who rely daily on subsidised transport.

We are advancing the integration of the minibus taxi industry into a safer and more formalised system through: Improved operating licence administration to eliminate backlogs; strengthened compliance and regulation; and support for the transition towards a structured and reliable transport network. At the same time, we are enhancing coordination between buses, taxis and rail to build a seamless and integrated public transport system. Public transport must not only be accessible, but it must also be safe, reliable and dignified.

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While we acknowledge progress at the national level on road safety, the situation in Gauteng, particularly with regard to pedestrian fatalities, remains a serious concern. In response, we are intensifying targeted interventions, including: High-visibility law enforcement operations; road safety education and behaviour change campaigns; identification and upgrading of high-risk accident hotspots; and safer infrastructure design, including pedestrian walkways, crossings and improved signage.

Our ongoing road safety campaigns, including anti-drunk driving initiatives and joint enforcement operations, demonstrate our commitment to saving lives and promoting responsible road use. We fully support the national goal of halving road fatalities by 2030 and are aligning our provincial programmes accordingly to contribute meaningfully to this target.

Infrastructure delivery remains central to both economic growth and road safety. Alongside routine maintenance, we are progressing a number of major road constructions and upgrade projects across the province. These interventions ensure that our road network remains functional, safe, and capable of supporting economic activity.

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We also support the ongoing digital transformation of transport services. The expansion of online licensing platforms and modernised testing systems will enhance efficiency, reduce opportunities for corruption and improve overall service delivery.

In conclusion, the task before us is clear: We must build a transport system that works for our people - one that connects communities to opportunity, supports economic growth and places safety at the centre of everything we do. As Gauteng, we remain committed to working with national government and all stakeholders to deliver on this mandate with urgency, accountability and measurable impact. Transport must be a catalyst for development, not a constraint. I thank you.

Mr T M KAUNDA: Hon Deputy Chairperson, the House Chairpersons, our Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, NCOP, the Acting Chief Whip, and the Programming Whip, the hon MECs present, the Minister of Transport and the Deputy Minister, and fellow South Africans, good afternoon. Hon Deputy Chairperson, it gives me great pleasure to participate in this budget debate. Hon Deputy Chairperson, we regard the transport sector as the nerve of our economy.

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The narrative is backed by the following scientific information. Transport storage and communication sector accounts for approximately 9% contribution to our gross domestic product, GDP, and directly employing more than 1,48 million people. The transport subsector alone accounts for around 6,5% of the GDP, serving as a vital backbone that underpins mining, agriculture and manufacturing and other services.

When the Finance Minister, presented his Budget Speech, indeed it inspired hope which was informed by our state of economy which presented a positive trajectory. If we look at journey we have traversed from the lowest trend in the global growth, COVID-19 disasters, civil unrests and other factors both internal and external. Our economy regardless of all these factors and against all odds, displayed great resilience. The resilience informed by governing stability, policy certainty and our investment in infrastructure. This investment has increased, thus stimulating economic growth and our global competent financial sector which also added as input.

Whilst most economic sectors were still on the journey of recovery from the severe negative impact of COVID-19, our resilience bares testimony through the stability of our rand

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against the dollar. Iran's unanticipated attack has borne negative impact on the performance of global economy clearly expressed on fuel prices and subsequently as direct impact to livelihoods of our people.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, notwithstanding all these challenges, our economic growth prospects are still indicating positive trends regardless of this unnecessary war waged by imperialists.

The ANC-led Government of National Unity, GNU is focused on growing the economy to unleash its potential to create more jobs through industrialisation and localisation and deal decisively with economic disparities which are an apartheid legacy. These imperialists agenda will never deter us from the attainment of the national democratic revolution's strategic objective to create a united, nonracial and nonsexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

We draw our inspiration by tapping into President Thabo Mbeki's wisdom when he said and I quote:

Gloom and despondency have never defeated adversity. Trying times need courage and resilience. Our strength as people

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is not tested during the best times. We should never become despondent because the weather is bad nor should we turn triumphant because the sun shines.

This calls for unity of purpose to move our country from the moment of despair to the moment of hope.

Our electorate delivered major reforms on our country's governance structure. On the formation of the GNU, we are also reminded of the wise words by President O R Tambo when he said and I quote:

We had to forge an alliance of strength based not on colour but on commitment to the total abolition of apartheid and oppression; we would seek allies, of whatever colour, as long as there were total agreed on our liberation aims.

We are indeed on the right track in approving budget that recognises the important of more investment on infrastructure energy, transport and logistic skills revolution, climate change and social cohesion.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, as the ANC we welcome the progressive allocation of the budget of Vote No 40. Total budget of

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R313,5 billion over the next three-year's budget set. We fully align ourselves with the department's priorities for the next five years and we will need to conduct effective oversight into them as follows. We know that the department is charged with the responsibility to deliver on its mandate especially on delivering transport that is safe, reliable, efficient and affordable.

The first one which is to move 250 million tons of freight on the Transnet rail by 2030. Hon Deputy Chairperson, migration on the transportation of goods from roads to rail is no longer an option but a necessity. Freight rail infrastructure decline was a well-designed act as we assured in our democracy. This was a deliberate disinvestment in the rail to make way for trucking industry.

Inefficiency infrastructure, investment and the poor state of the rail system have led to disruptions in the freight over the years.

The department and its entities need to accelerate this investment drive to attain efficiencies in our rail network systems.

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The second one is to increase crane moves per hour at our ports to 30 by 2030. Hon Deputy Chairperson, as we all know Durban use to be the leading port in the Southern hemisphere. The position we intend reoccupying as a country through concerted efforts that have been put in motion which include but not limited to the adoption of the Decongestion Programme which led to the growing Cato Ridge Logistic Hub which has potential investment of more than R18 billion.

The programme has reduced the total truck turnaround time and at the port. Ship turnaround time has also improved following the implementation of an electronic appointment system. Development of the bypass roads and the delivery of new straddle carriers. The new investment on machinery like cranes as necessitated by the demand needs to be accelerated.

We also acknowledge the investment drive which is intended to form public private collaborative efforts in investing in our port infrastructure.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, we have started to observe appetite by both international and domestic investor growing showing keen interest through pledges made in our National Investment Conference which amounted to more than a trillion rand since

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2018 of its initiation. We have already witnessed more than R634 billion investments in factories, mines, data centres, power plants and other infrastructure like ports which create jobs and economic empowerment.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, the next objective is to achieve 600 million annual passenger trips on Passenger Rail Agency of SA, Prasa network by 2030. Hon Deputy Chairperson, increased reliance on road transport contributes to accelerated deterioration of road infrastructure. We welcome the establishment of the Gibela Rail Transport Consortium which operates state-of-the-art manufacturing plant in Ekurhuleni contracted by Prasa to build 600 modern commuter trains of its first kind in the Republic of South Africa. Passenger Rail Agency of SA could not give them a blank check but a very strict mandate to heavily localised manufacturing and drive local skills development and economic opportunities.

As the select committee we conducted an oversight visit to this plant and we saw their productivity levels. There is significant progress which is highly commendable. This intervention has improved peoples' lives especially in townships and rural areas.

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The other outcomes are based on the reduction on late coming for learners and workers when commuted to their respective schools and places of work.

IsiZulu:

Sithi sibonga kakhulu ngalokhu kungenelela ngoba lezi zitimela ziwenzile umehluko ngokukhiqizwa kwazo. Ngqongqoshe lezi zitimela kusho kona ukuthi sehlisa ukuthi abantu bakithi bangabikho emigwaqeni ngobuningi babo, kudale neziminyaminya ezidala izingozi ezinkulu. Kodwa sibonga nje ukuthi sebeyagibela ke manje kusukela kumphakathi wakoKhayelitsha, Mashu, Mlazi. Uma ukhuluma nangoGqeberha, abantu bayawubona umehluko ngoba mkhulu umehluko owenziwa yilo hulumeni wentando yeningi.

English:

There are remaining challenges especially on the late arrival of trains sometimes which affect our communities hence there is allocation on this budget to enhance train schedule. To move 42 million passengers and 1,2 million tons of air freight through the Airports Company SA, Acsa network of airport by the end of this political term of this Seventh Administration.

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Hon Deputy Chairperson, we fully support the Acceleration of Air Freight Strategy for South Africa which is intended to take advantage of Africa Intertrade and the review of air services arrangement with identified markets.

The return of the SA Airways, SAA, with its potential to reclaim the lost ground is really promising. We have observed the progress in relation to governance structure of SAA and its administration of the entity and its financial stability which led to achieving at least a profit of more than R250 million after a long period of deficit to reduce annual road fatalities by 50% by 2030.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, SA National Roads Agency, Sanral, has turned the country into a construction site. We recognise the national roads expansions and upgrades. We welcome the construction of roads which is aimed at ensuring mobility. These roads are strategic links for agriculture, mining linking communities, towns, to economic corridors which stimulates economic growth.

We recognise the number of jobs and economic opportunities unlocked by these road infrastructure investments. The number of roads which have been officially handed over by provincial

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departments and municipalities to Sanral have significantly increased for road maintenance, rehabilitation and construction.

When the time for the review hon Deputy Chairperson through you to the hon Minister, of concessions comes an element of transformation must be continued to be prioritised and be enforced.

We also welcome the transfers to provinces to fix road infrastructure to reduce road fatalities and make our roads the engines of the economy. We call upon prioritisation of the construction and upgrade of low-lying bridges; climate change impact has shown us that we need to proactively identify these bridges to respond to the plight of our communities who become the victims of floods especially in deep rural areas. In the areas of ...

IsiZulu:

... amakhosi akithi aseNdlunkulu.

English:

As they are rural in character.

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As we continue to rebuild roads, and bridges severely affected by floods and civil unrests in 2021, we need to build back better, smatter and resilience of our infrastructure to bad weather conditions should take precedents Scholar transport including distribution of 8 000 bicycles through Shova Kalula Programme have transformed the lives of rural communities and restored dignity which inspires hope for learners who walk more than three kilometres to their respective schools. This intervention has impacted positively on the academic results.

We therefore call upon the evaluation of contracts on the Public Transport Operation Grant where the roads are still feasible and financially viable so that ...

IsiZulu:

... kungezukupha khona ibhasi okuthiwa lithutha umphakathi lolo hambo lube luxhasiwe kodwa lihambe nabantu abane kukhona izindawo eziwadingayo lawo mabhasi zingalutholi lolo sizo lwamabhasi noxhaso olwenziwa uhulumeni lokuxhasa leyo mizila esuke ikhonjiwe.

English:

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We further call for the evaluation of integrated public transport networks from their original objectives and finalisation of from Durban ...

IsiZulu:

... eThekwini sibone ingqalasizinda ke seyikhona. Siyibone iqala ukusebenza. Sikusho konke lokhu Sihlalo ngoba abantu baseNingizimu Afrika nakuba sibhekene nezingqinamba nezinkinga esibhekene nazo kodwa iyabonakala indlela eyaphambili futhi iyakhanya, ekuguquleni izimpilo zabantu bakithi zibengcono. Okusele nje ukuthi abantu bakithi bake bazithathe kancane eNingizimu Afrika, uma kufika abantu bokuhamba, bevakashile, bevakashile izwe lethu, bafika bayincome imigwago yethu, bathi isezingeni.

English:

...at international standard...

IsiZulu:

... okusho ukuthi kusekukhulu okusafanele siqhubeke sikwenze ukushintsha izimpilo zabantu bakithi, ngoba ingqalasizinda iyona engumgogodla yokuthi abantu bangene emnothweni. Futhi uma sikhuluma ngezomnotho, akufuneki ukuthi abantu bakithi baqashwe nje kuphela, uma sekuthiwa kunomklamu kodwa abaqale

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kusenesikhathi balungiswe ngokusebenzisa amabhizinisi omphakathi bakwazi ukulungela ukusabalalisa impahla kube yibona abenza umsebenzi osuke uzokwenzeka ezindaweni zabo. Ngalamazwi nje amafushane ngalegalelo lethu singuKhongolose sithi asijiki, asihlehli, asiyindawo. Siyaqhubeka nokushintsha izimpilo zabantu bakithi. Ngiyabonga.

Ms M C FRAZER (KwaZulu-Natal): Hon Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, the strategic role this department continues to play within the broader programme of social and economic transformation must be understood within the historical mission of our democratic state as envisioned, engineered and advanced by its principal architects, the ANC.

From its earliest policy positions, the ANC understood that political freedom without economic transformation, infrastructure development and social inclusion would leave the structural foundations of apartheid intact. The democratic breakthrough of 1994, therefore, imposed upon the state not only the responsibility to govern, but the historic obligation to reconstruct society, expand opportunity and restore dignity to the majority of our people who had been systematically excluded from the development.

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It is for this reason that the ANC, in its historic *Ready to Govern* policy document, committed itself to develop a sustainable economy and state infrastructure that will progressively improve the quality of life of all South Africans. The commitment recognised that infrastructure would become one of the principal instruments through which the democratic state confronts inequality, underdevelopment and spatial exclusion.

Roads, bridges, public transport systems and logistics corridors are therefore not merely administrative assets of government, they are part of the material architecture through which democracy is given practical meaning in the daily lives of ordinary people. It is within this context that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport, under the leadership of the ANC, through the member of the executive council, MEC, Siboniso Duma, continues to position itself, not merely as a department responsible for roads and transport systems, but as a strategic driver of development, economic recovery and social transformation within the province.

The department has increasingly embraced a visible and interventionist approach to governance, recognising that the democratic state must be present amongst the people,

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responsive to community concerns and practical in its implementation of service delivery programmes. Through this approach, the department has steadily distinguished itself as one of the most active and community centred institutions within the provincial administration.

This activism has found practical expression through the widely recognised, #NenzaniLaEzweni operations which have increasingly become associated with direct service delivery and visible government presence on the ground. Across districts and municipalities, communities have witnessed road rehabilitation projects, bridge restoration programmes, potholes repair initiatives, traffic law enforcement operations and integrated engagements with local communities.

Importantly, these interventions have helped restore confidence that government remains capable of responding directly to the infrastructure challenges confronting ordinary people, particularly in rural and historically disadvantaged areas.

The 2026-27 Budget of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport, as presented before the Transport Portfolio Committee on 24 April 2026, continues this broader

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developmental tradition by once again positioning transport infrastructure as a strategic instrument for reconstruction, economic inclusion and social transformation. The budget reflects a department that increasingly understands the centrality of infrastructure in rebuilding local economies, restoring mobility, strengthening provincial competitiveness and improving the daily conditions of ordinary people across both urban and rural communities.

The department tabled before the portfolio committee a budget framework exceeding R13,9 billion for the 2026-27 financial year, directed towards critical priorities such as provincial roads maintenance, transport infrastructure rehabilitation, public transport operations, traffic regulation and labour intensive development programmes. A significant portion of this budget continues to be directed towards Programme 2: Transport Infrastructure, which remains central to the department's developmental mandate.

This focus is particularly important given the extensive damage caused by repeated flood disasters across KwaZulu-Natal, which severely affected roads, bridges and transport corridors in many communities. The department's continued emphasis on rehabilitation and maintenance thereof reflects

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more than infrastructure preservation; it reflects a commitment to restoring economic connectivity, rebuilding affected communities and ensuring that public infrastructure remains resilient in the face of future environmental and climate related pressures.

The budget further demonstrates an appreciation of the relationship between infrastructure investment and inclusive economic participation. Through Expanded Public Works Programme interventions and targeted procurement approaches, the department continues creating opportunities for youth, women and historically disadvantaged groups to participate within the infrastructure economy.

Equally important is the department's continued support for public transport operations through allocations exceeding R1,5 billion toward the public transport operations. In a province where millions of working class people, learners and rural communities rely daily on public transport systems, these investments remain critical in supporting economic productivity, educational access and social mobility.

The budget presented before the portfolio committee also reflects an important institutional focus on governance,

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professionalism and state capability. The department has correctly identified the building of a capable and professional department as one of its strategic priorities, recognising that sustainable infrastructure delivery depends not only on financial allocations, but also on sound planning, technical expertise, implementation discipline and effective financial management.

The work of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport also continues contributing directly toward broader provincial economic recovery. Transport infrastructure remains one of the foundational drivers of investment, industrial activity, tourism expansion and regional trade integration. In a province such as KwaZulu-Natal, whose economy depends heavily on freight logistics, manufacturing, agriculture and tourism, the efficiency and resilience of transport systems become essential for sustaining growth and competitiveness.

In the words of Joe Slovo, one of the great architects of our liberation struggle, who would have turned 100 years old on 23 May this year, I quote: "Therefore, our fight must primarily be a political mass struggle with revolutionary goals." Those words continue to carry profound relevance for the work before us today. They remind us that the task of transformation

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cannot be separated from the material conditions of the people, nor can revolutionary goals be realised without a capable developmental state actively intervening to overcome inequality, exclusion and underdevelopment.

It is through practical delivery, responsive governance and sustained developmental intervention that the democratic state continues giving meaning to the aspirations of our liberation struggle. I, thank you all.

Ms S V MATHYE (Limpopo): Hon Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Minister and the Deputy Minister, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Transport, hon members and distinguished guests, good afternoon. It is my honour to join this sitting of the National Council of Provinces on behalf of Limpopo provincial government and its people. This sitting takes place as the global community reels with shock from economic onslaught of significant financial instability marked by incessant fuel and commodity price increases because of American aggression in the Middle East.

This government continues to outdo itself to caution its people against this economic turbulence and disruption. We have instituted countless intervention mechanisms to lessen

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this hardship on our people, who are already economically burdened. From the inception of this democratic dispensation, our preoccupation has always been about the eradication of poverty, dismantling inequality and unemployment. These are the values that have set our liberation aspirations and propelled us towards the attainment of this freedom and democracy. It is, therefore, for us to continue to use this platform as a site of the struggle in pursuit of a better life of our people.

Hon House Chairperson, the importance of the Public Transport Operation Grant cannot be overemphasised. This grant remains the backbone of subsidised public transport services across our provinces, and it enables bus operators to ferry needy commuters from their homes to various destinations safely and affordably. Through this grant, thousands of commuters can travel to schools, health facilities, towns and places of work daily. For many families, especially the vulnerable and the poor, this support is not merely a convenience, but a lifeline that connects them to opportunities and essential services.

However, hon members, the current allocation of the Public Transport Operations Grant remains uneven and continues to disadvantage predominantly rural provinces such as Limpopo.

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Our province is still unable to adequately cover many rural areas with accessible public transport because Limpopo receives less than 50% of the amount required to meet the growing transport demand of our communities. This funding imbalances, perpetuates inequality between urban and rural provinces and undermines our collective objectives of ensuring equitable access to reliable public transport for all South Africans. We therefore call for a review of the allocation model to ensure fairness, equity and responsiveness to the realities faced by our rural provinces.

Hon House Chairperson, the minibus taxi industry remains a critical component of South Africa's public transport system. It is therefore necessary that the taxi recapitalisation programme be resuscitated and strengthened to improve passenger safety, reliability and the overall quality of service within the industry. Equally concerning is the issue of taxi violence, which continues to strengthen the safety of passengers and destabilise the public transport sector. Taxi violence not only endangers innocent commuters but also undermines public confidence in our transport system.

In Limpopo, we are encouraged by the reduction in incidents of violence experienced thus far. This progress has been made

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possible through the co-operation and collaboration forged between government, the SA National Taxi Council and the National Taxi Alliance. We believe that strengthened partnership, dialogue and co-ordinated law enforcement interventions remain essential in sustaining peace and stability within the industry.

Hon members, we also wish to welcome the introduction of the high-speed rail initiatives aimed at connecting Gauteng with adjacent provinces. Limpopo has already partnered with Gauteng province to undertake the pre-feasibility study for this important project. The high-speed rail initiative presents enormous potential to transform mobility, improve regional economic integration and significantly alleviate the pressure currently experienced on highways connecting our provinces. This intervention will contribute meaningfully to reducing congestion and ultimately lowering the high rate of road fatalities on our national roads.

House Chairperson, the safety of learners during transit to and from schools must remain a non-negotiable priority. Scholar transport services carry the future of our nation, and every learner deserves to travel in a safe and roadworthy vehicles operated by compliant and responsible operators. In

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Limpopo, the monitoring of scholar transport operation for compliance with all safety requirements remains a priority matter. We maintain a firm stance that operators found compromising the safety of learners must face decisive consequences, always including the impoundment of such vehicles. As government, we cannot compromise when it comes to the lives and safety of our children.

House Chairperson, the collaboration between the SA National Roads Agency Limited and municipalities should be further strengthened and fully supported, particularly in relation to the repair and maintenance of municipal roads. These roads play a critical role in facilitating economic activities through the safer and efficient movement of people and goods. Improved co-ordination and investment in municipal roads infrastructure will not only enhance connectivity and mobility, but will also contribute significantly to local economic development, job creation and road safety within our communities.

In conclusion, House Chairperson, we reaffirm our commitment to working collaboratively with national government, municipalities, transport stakeholders and all social partners to build an integrated, safe, accessible and sustainable

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public transport system for all our people. As I conclude, Limpopo supports the budget as passed by the Minister. I thank you.

Xitsonga:

Inkomu. [Thank you.]

Mr L D VAN WYK: (Western Cape): Chairperson, Minister, Deputy Minister, MECs, members of the NCOP and fellow South Africans, I speak today representing the people of the Western Cape, specifically our 1,4 million daily commuters. While we budget for transport in this country, the people in the Western Cape live in a province of idle train sets, ships waiting off our coast, and bus routes that may never be extended to the townships that desperately need them.

The Department of Transport has presented us with a document of strategic shifts moving from road expansion to road preservation, from fragmented rail recovery to corridor modernisation. On paper, these look like prudent decisions, but in managing these shifts, there has to be tangible change for the people of the Western Cape.

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Let me start with public transport, specifically the winding down of the public transport network grant. National government has decided to reduce this grant by R8,6 billion over the medium-term. The reason given is consistent underspending and delays elsewhere. In other words, because some provinces and municipalities failed, everyone must be punished. This department needs to deal with reality.

In the Western Cape, the MyCiTi and Go GEORGE are not failures. They account for 50% of all National Bus Rapid Transit, BRT, passenger trips in South Africa. Weekday trips in Cape Town are estimated at over 66 000, far outstripping Johannesburg's Rea Vaya system. Go GEORGE provides 28 500 weekday trips, equivalent to Tshwane and Ekurhuleni combined.

While this national department has mismanaged oversight of other provinces and cities because it failed to enforce performance and allowed billions to be sunk without accountability, the Western Cape and our municipalities are now told that our expansion to Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha, a R7,1 billion project already underway, is under threat. What message does this send? That success is penalised and failure is subsidised. The working-class families of the Cape Flats who rise before dawn to travel to jobs in the city

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centre will pay the price for management failures in other cities. These very same people are already living in danger because of the failures of South African Police Service, SAPS, to protect our communities, to which we now add further distress. Minister, performing cities should be rewarded while the inefficiencies should be dealt with.

Let me turn to the Port of Cape Town, the gateway for the Western Cape's agricultural and export economy. The budget allocates R1 billion for container terminal expansion, including new cranes and an additional tugboat. These are necessary. But equipment alone does not move cargo. Management does. For years, the Port of Cape Town has been poorly managed. Ships wait offshore for days. Our food exporters, who operate on razor-thin margins and time-sensitive perishables, have lost millions. The department and Transnet speak of the ocean's economy as a great opportunity, but without any execution.

We are told that a senior executive was deployed to Cape Town and that performance has improved. But where is the accountability following years of underperformance? Where are the consequences for missed berth utilisation targets? Where are the timelines, specific, measurable, and binding, for

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reducing ship waiting times to international standards? The Western Cape requires a port that operates on meeting key performance indicators and discipline.

Let us now turn to rail. The department speaks grandly of a 30-year national rail master plan. But while we plan for three decades, we are cutting rolling stock fleet renewal funding by 20% in the medium-term. There is a contradiction here that I hope, through you, Chairperson, that the Minister can explain. Ninety-eight billion rand over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, for rail sounds substantial, but Metro Rail coach refurbishment funding drops to zero after this year. We have not forgotten the R7,5 billion set aside for idle trainsets, a concealed report, lack of accountability. That is not a lack of funds. It is a lack of management.

In the Western Cape, we have seen positive steps. The southern line to Simonstown is operational. The Malmesbury line has seen improvements, and the Capstone Clip restoration has been concluded. But the recovery remains fragile. Vandalism and theft persist because security at stations is inconsistent. Train running times are different from before.

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We are aware of the issues of Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, Prasa, and do not need to list them. To achieve passenger growth targets, we need firsthand, active operational management at the local level. I raise the question of devolution. The Western Cape has proven it can run a province with great audit outcomes, better service delivery, and BRT system efficiency. So why can we not have greater authority over regional rail?

The 30-year National Rail Master Plan and the reforms needed provide the mechanism to empower competent sub-national governments. The people of Khayelitsha and Kraaifontein do not need a beautiful plan. They need a train that arrives on time and a station where they feel safe. We need to acknowledge the policy shift toward private train operating freight rail companies. Eleven private operators on forty-one routes, including two on the Cape Corridor for Manganese to Saldanha. This is reform. But a government progress report tells us that 60% of freight logistics reforms are delayed.

Every week of delay means more trucks on our roads, more carbon emissions, more potholes, more accidents. The Western Cape's agricultural sector, our wine, our citrus, our table grapes cannot compete globally if our logistics system

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functions at half speed. These delays impact negatively on our citizens.

In July 2025, the Western Cape launched the Overberg Rail Business Case pilot to revitalise a key agricultural corridor. Currently, 99,8% of freight on this corridor moves by truck, and only 0,2% by rail. The project aims to shift at least 10% of freight from road to rail, removing 40 000 truck trips from the N2 annually and cutting logistics costs by up to 30%. This is exactly the kind of initiative-taking corridor-based management the national department should be proactively supporting. Yet, we are cutting grants for success while idle trains rust elsewhere.

Let me be clear. The Western Cape does not ask for special favours. We ask for fair management. We ask that successful public transport systems be supported. We ask that the port of Cape Town be held to the same performance standards as any competitive global port. We ask that the rail reform move with urgency, from PowerPoint presentations to platform signalling and safety. The people of my province, the commuter in Mitchell's Plain, the farm worker, the exporter, they do not care about political posturing.

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They care about getting to work, getting goods to market, and getting home safely. This Vote has resources, but management, action and accountability is needed, along with a political will to reward performance and penalise failure. The Western Cape stands ready to perform and to prove that transport can work, but we cannot do it alone and we cannot do it with one hand tied behind the back. Thank you.

Mr E NZIMANDE: Hon Chairperson, citizenry, Minister and the Deputy Minister ...

IsiZulu:

... angisukumeli ukuthini, ngisukumela nje ukuzohlaba inhlalo ukuthi hawu! I-GNU yaze yawubulala uMnyango wezokuThutha ...

English:

... due to poor planning and economic surrender. This budget vote is not evidence-based, not informed by credible data, for planning and budgeting to help continuous performance improvement. It has unrealistic targets and projections when our people are living the language of potholes, broken trains, expensive taxis, collapsed roads and ports that are shocking the economy. Admission by the department on freight rail

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decline, port inefficiencies, collapsed infrastructure, raising transport costs crippling the economy conforms a failed state. That is not opposition analysis.

IsiZulu:

Ake nginikhombise nje ukuthi nihlela kabi kanjani. Asibuke nje ...

English:

... the Programme 1: Perfectly exposing the sickness inside the state planning, budgeting and execution. Responding to parliamentary questions is mere activity, not a performance measure aimed at addressing the risk associated with poor government and leakages in the system. Answering the question cannot improve governance and cannot translate into strengthening control systems. The question arises because of the presence of risks associated with governance.

IsiZulu:

Nifana nje nengane ebuzwa kuthiwe, uphasile? Bese ithi: Hhayi, ngathola iphepha elinemibuzo ngaphendula imibuzo kanje, kanje.

English:

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No, we are not concerned about that. We are just concerned about the outcome so that we hold you accountable. Answering the question is not governance, but evidence of governance failure.

Just look at Programme 4: Road transport exposes a government that has normalised, that the government proudly announces that it plans to reduce road fatalities by 45% by 2029 and 50% by 2028. But what kind of government plans for people to continue dying in large numbers?

IsiZulu:

Angeke ngiphike uma kungathiwa ningama-vampire.

English:

A revolutionary state does not manage statistics. It fights to eliminate and prevent deaths. The overall goal of government is to promote the general welfare of the public. The programmes and plans put in place must be responsive to the overall goals for any caring government. Reducing fatalities equates to a non-caring government because people will still be dying because of preventable deaths.

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Strategies employed in plans show that they are not based on credible data or evidence. They are based on incorrect diagnosis and incorrect prognosis. The department itself admits that increased reliance on road freight is accelerating road deterioration. Why? Because the rail has collapsed while trucks increase on the road. Road collapses faster. Transport and food costs are on the rise. The destitute suffer more. Does this government care? They don't care. That is the direct economic violence towards the destitute.

IsiZulu:

Ake nje nginikhombise la.

English:

On provincial road maintenance, the diagnosis and prognosis are incorrect for inferior quality and delays on provincial road maintenance. Front-loading, maintenance grants shall not translate to the quality and completion of road projects on time but encourage the use of money with no interest in quality. An amount of R54,2 billion PRMG allocation over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework does not provide any increase. If you look at the actual amount that was there in 2025-26, it remains stagnant, whereas the problems are escalating. Municipal roads are in poor condition and

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communities across Limpopo, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal still travel on unsafe roads. The problem is poor planning, corruption, poor oversight, weak engineering standards and the absence of consequence management.

IsiZulu:

Awuthi ngike ngithathe nginibeka la ...

English:

... to Programme 3: The rail transport is central to economic recovery. Yet, the government continues to present unrealistic ambitions without matching operational reality. The department wants 600 million annual passenger trips by 2030. Treasury says passenger trips are expected to rise between 250 million and 450 million over MTEF, but commuters know the truth.

Stations stay unsafe, corridors are still vandalised and trains are still unreliable. R98 billion distributed over the MTEF period without state capacity and poor planning shall have no effect on the lives of citizens. South Africa cannot industrialise while the logistics system is collapsing. A serious developmental state will rebuild rail aggressively, localise manufacturing, protect infrastructure and new transport to drive industrialisation and mass employment.

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IsiZulu:

Njengoba isikhathi sesifuna ukuphela, anginishaye la, Uyabona
...

English:

... the app says transport the heartbeat of economic growth social growth, but today that heartbeat is weak because the state itself has become weak, weak in planning and in execution of decision and has no interest in advancing and defending the citizens' economic interests. People are tired of watching funding plans not based to improving their welfare. MKP rejects this culture of managed decline. Citizens do not need government that does not advance the goal of improving their lives. We need a transport system that serves workers, rural communities, townships, economies, and industrial development. Not one that merely manages collapse through annual targets.

IsiZulu:

Ithi nginishaye lana ke ku ...

English:

... programme 7: Public transport exposes another painful truth. Treasury itself admits that the public transport

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network grant did not transform public transport and so underspend. Now the grant is being reduced by R8,6 billion over the MTEF period. What informs that? Thumb sucking. Meanwhile, millions of South African people still depend on taxis every single day.

The taxi industry carries between 65% to 80% of commuters yet this government is treating it as a less important kind of mode of transport. They are talking about recapitalisation. Do you know what that means? They are dislodging our people in the business of transport ...

IsiZulu:

... yabantu bamatekisi. Iyadula itekisi ukuyithenga. Imali ababaxephezela ngayo iwubala futhi amabhange adula kakhulu ngokwezinga lokubolekisa imali. Bamatasatasa ngoba into abafuna ukuyenza yilento abayenzile bahamba nalo Ruppet baya naye le Switzerland kuMongameli wakhona. Mamatasatsa bathengisa izwe ku-Afri-Forum naku lamabhunu okuthiwa yi-DA. Ngiyabonga.

Mr B S MABEBO: House Chairperson, allow me to stand on the protocol which has already been established. The transport sector remains one of the most important drivers of the South

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African economy as it connects people to jobs, social services, markets and economic opportunities through rail, road, aviation, maritime and public transport system.

This is particularly important in a country such as South Africa with a vast geography and an economy that depends heavily on the movement of goods between inland provinces and coastal ports.

Efficient transport infrastructure remains central to economic growth, industrialisation, tourism, trade, competitiveness and regional integration.

The transport and logistics sector continues to contribute significantly to the South African economy and remains a major source of direct and indirect employment.

The Department of Transport budget over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, is projected at approximately R313,5 billion, demonstrating the strategic importance of the sector in supporting economic recovery and infrastructure development. This budget vote takes place at a critical time for the country.

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The department's annual performance plan, APP, correctly identifies several challenges facing the transport sector, including the deteriorating rail infrastructure, port inefficiencies, escalating logistic costs, road deteriorations and governance weakness within the state-owned entities.

However, they are also encouraging signs of progress. Government logistics reforms programme, supported through Operation Vulindlela, an increased collaboration between the public ... indicate improvements in port through freight movement and infrastructure investment.

Transnet has reported improved cargo volumes major pause while reforms to allow greater private sector's participation in freight, rail and progressing. These reforms are important in reducing logistic costs, improving export competitiveness and restoring investors' confidence.

The revitalisation of rail infrastructure remains critical of economic growth and sustainability.

Excessive reliance on road freight continues to place enormous pressure on national and provincial roads while increasing maintenance costs.

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Passenger rail recovery is equally important for working class and poor communities who rely on affordable public transport significantly. Allocations have been made towards Passenger Rail Agency of SA, Prasa, including funding for rolling stock renewal and signalling upgrades.

Continued investment in rail modernisation, signalling system, station infrastructure and commuter safety is necessary to restore confidence in passenger rail services and increase passenger volumes.

Road infrastructure and road safety remains a concern across the country. South Africa continues to experience unacceptably high levels of road fatalities with more than 12 000 deaths annually.

Greater investment is required in law enforcement, driver education, pedestrian safety, road maintenance and public awareness campaigns.

The additional allocations towards the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grants for infrastructure damage by natural disaster are welcome, particularly for the affected provinces such as Eastern Cape, Limpopo and North West.

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At the same time, SA National Roads Agency Limited, Sanral, continues to play an important role in strategic road infrastructure development through investment in national economic corridors and freight roads.

Chairperson, the aviation sector has always shown resilience and recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. Airports Company SA, ACSA, continues to play an important role in tourism, trade and investment. South African airports continue to receive international recognition for service, quality and operational standards.

However, challenges to engage infrastructure, maintenance of navigation systems and long-term infrastructure investment remain important.

Air traffic and navigation systems, together with the SA Civil Aviation Authority, SACAA, continue to play a critical role in maintaining aviation safety and regulatory compliance according to international standards.

The proposed establishment of National Aviation Academy and improvements in aviation for safety, infrastructure and

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positive developments that can strengthen the sector's long-term sustainability.

South Africa's ocean economy continues to hold enormous strategic and economic potential. The increased use of the Cape shipping route due to global geopolitical instability has reinforced the strategic importance of South African ports and maritime infrastructure.

The SA Maritime Safety Authority, SAMSA, therefore, remains critical in ensuring maritime safety, environmental protection and compliance with international regulations.

Government's maritime transport programme aims to position South Africa as an international maritime centre for the investment in port infrastructure, coastal shipping, environment position and improved port governance.

Public transport affordability remains a serious challenge for many South Africans, particularly low-income households and rural facing rising fuel and transport costs. Government's public transport subsidies, therefore, remain important in reducing the burden on commuters.

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Strong governance and accountability within transport entities remain essential. The select committee correctly raised concerns regarding governance failures previously experienced at the state-owned entities and the need for stronger oversight, consequence management, financial accountability and improved operational performance.

Infrastructure investment in transport remains one of the most effective ways to stimulate economic growth, support administration, improve trade competitiveness, attract investment and create jobs.

While challenges remain, there are clear signs that reforms and recovery initiatives are beginning to stabilise and rebuild the sector.

It is important that investment in transport infrastructure continues across all modes of transport to support inclusive economic growth, improve mobility, strengthen region integration and improve the lives of South Africans. The transport sector remains central to economic development and job creation.

So, ANC supports the budget vote on transport.

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Setswana:

Motse re feta wa balala, mme wa baruakgomo re tsena ka one.

English:

I thank you.

Mr O J MOKAE: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister and Deputy Minister, hon members, our new parliamentary leader, hon Michalakis, welcome to the NCOP, fellow South Africans good day. As we debate this Budget Vote, let us note that the Transport portfolio is crucial to our country. It carries the important state function as an enabler of economic development for South Africa. It is at the centre of the infrastructure and logistics ecosystem, contributing over 8% to our GDP.

The transport sector is at the backbone of our economy, directly employing well over one million people and facilitates vital domestic and international trade across road, rail, aviation and maritime networks. This underpins the need to strengthen internal controls and efficient management of the Department of Transport and its entities.

Stable political and administrative leadership is non-negotiable, not only in the department itself, but across the

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boards of this department. We should prioritise this as a matter of urgency, hon Minister. Leadership squabbles in these entities derail efforts for sound management and attention on the successful implementation of key programmes and projects of this portfolio that are so important for the socio-economic well-being of South Africans.

Hon Chairperson and members, many South Africans and motorists are frustrated with the condition of our country's road infrastructure. We all know too well, hon members, the damage caused to our vehicles due to potholes and the general poor condition of our roads leaving much to be desired. A damning Human Rights Commission report released in March this year and many others lay bare serious challenges regarding the poor conditions of our road network, especially in the rural parts of our country, violating the rights of residents.

Some of the roads are so degraded, from poorly maintained gravel to crumbling ash flood, making it difficult for residents to access services such as healthcare, education and economic opportunities. These are not just isolated and technical failures. They point to a political choice to perpetuate a system where the most vulnerable communities remain isolated.

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After three decades of a democratic state, however, many of these patterns remain visible. We know that the effects continue to ripple and disrupt the everyday life of these communities. While it is a welcome note that more than R140 billion is allocated over the medium term to fund efforts to maintain, upgrade and construct national and provincial road networks through the Road Transport Programme, the DA is deeply concerned about the under expenditure across the spheres of government from local to provincial.

Yes, I know that the narrative will be to take this matter to their respective provincial departments, especially from this House, the National Council of Provinces. However, we implore on the Ministry as the custodian of these grants and funds to be harsh with their provincial counterparts. This department cannot just be a conveyor belt dispersing funds to provincial and municipal authorities.

Most times, provinces also raise the alarm that some of the road networks are allocated to them from Sanral but without the necessary funding. Now this becomes a serious challenge when there is a back and forth between provincial departments of roads and transport and the national department. We all know too well that sadly when the elephants fight, it is the

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ground that suffers. It is the ordinary communities that bear the brunt. It is the motorists who are dealt a blow.

This is untenable and must be given the necessary and urgent attention. Resources must be adequately spent. Gone must be the days when grants are returned to the public purse unspent for one reason or the other. This does not bode well for a democratic government that prides itself on putting the needs of the people first.

What is becoming clear, when it comes to road infrastructure projects, is that accountability and oversight over these projects need to be strengthened. When projects delay and constraints occur, those who are responsible must account. For far too long, government projects have been delayed, and work takes forever to be completed. Sites are abandoned and no one is prepared to take responsibility.

Communities, especially the most vulnerable, look up to us to play our oversight role and hold those responsible accountable. As I mentioned earlier in my debate, this department is at the centre and backbone of our economy. If it fails and is unable to deliver adequately to all South

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Africans, our economy will be weakened and much needed jobs will be shared, deepening poverty and inequality levels.

This, hon members, it cannot be the case for our beautiful South Africa. It cannot be that 30 years into democracy, we are still speaking about poverty and unemployment. We can and must do better. I thank you.

Setswana:

Ke a leboga.

Afrikaans:

Baie dankie.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, hon Mokae, for your input from the side of the Northern Cape, the province of the Augrabies Falls. Hon members, I'd also like to welcome the leader of the DA, hon Michalakis, as he's one of the most loyal supporters of the NCOP. Sir, you are welcome. I think that you deserve the bells. All right. The next speaker on the podium is going to be the Deputy Minister of Transport, hon Hlengwa. Over to you, sir.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister Creecy, hon MEC colleagues, hon members of the NCOP, thank you very much for the opportunity. I just want to respond to one or two things, to indicate that, yes, we do share the concerns around e-hailing and we have set up a war room within the department to speedily resolve the issues and the challenges which are around the new regulations so that there's a speedy implementation of those in the public transport branch is hard at work responding to those issues and interacting and engaging with the app service providers to ensure due compliance. So that matter is receiving attention. Secondly, I don't think hon Van Wyk, the people of the Western Cape share in your pessimism around the improvements that we are doing and seeing, particularly within the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, Prasa. I remember a time when I chaired the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Scopa, when we were trying to resolve the Central Line, and we had to yank the City of Cape Town to participate in that. So, when it's broken, you don't want it. When we have fixed it, you want it. You can't have your cake and eat it.

There is substantial investment being made into Prasa. The passenger numbers are up. We are resolving the challenges around the lines throughout the country. There is an

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investment being done into signalling to ensure that the stock that we are producing in Gibela can run the lines. We have walked and traversed a long and difficult road in turning things around at Prasa, when we had to deal with vandalism. Security has now been rolled out. People were stealing infrastructure. So, I don't think it's correct to now assume that because it's working, all of a sudden, it's right. Let us look back from where we come from, including but not limited to the work of oversight that was done by this House. Hon Nzimande, you know, I like you very much, but today you have shocked me. Under uBaba [President Jacob Zuma], over 13 000 people were dying on our roads. We have now made it a departmental priority to reduce road fatalities. We are at 11 400. Under uBaba, just three weeks ago, you had a meeting with AfriForum. [Interjections.] You are meeting with them, not us.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Deputy Minister, I think that ...

IsiZulu:

... umjovile uMphephethwa.

English:

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On what are you rising on, hon Mphethwa [Nzimande clan name]?

Mr E NZIMANDE: Chair, on a point of order: Narrow minds discuss people.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): No, withdraw that. We cannot afford that. Withdraw that. It is insulting. [Interjections.] No, that is insulting. [Interjections.] No, hon Deputy Minister, will you please take your seat? Hon Nzimande, will you please withdraw that? Will you please withdraw what you said about the Deputy Minister? That he has a narrow mind, please. [Interjections.] Withdraw what you have just said about the Deputy Minister.

IsiZulu:

Mnu E NZIMANDE: Ngihoxise ukuthini? Angizwanga ukuthi ukhuluma ngani.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): What did you say now? On what were you rising on?

IsiZulu:

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Mnu E NZIMANDE: Ngithe ngibhekise kubani? [Ubuwelewele.]

Kulungile, ngiyakuhoxisa engikushilo.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you. Over to you, Deputy Minister.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: I did not mean to vampire the hon member. So now, hon Mokae, you speak about the necessity for stable leadership at a political level. I can assure you the Department of Transport is very stable at that particular level. I also want to indicate that on the challenges you have raised on potholes, you have set up a SA Local Government Association, Salga, working group to ensure that we assist municipalities to properly spend on their municipal infrastructure grant, Mig, and for them to be able to meet the demands of the Valazonke Programme. So that as well is receiving our attention in the department.

Hon Kaunda has assisted in detailing the key strategic priorities of the Seventh Administration in the priorities that he has listed out. And I want to segue by then building on the need for us to reduce road fatalities by 45% by the year 2029, and 50% by the year 2030. This is consistent with

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the United Nations' Decade of Action. These priorities are also aligned with the Government of National Unity's, GNU's, Medium-Term Development Plan 2024-2029. Priorities 1 and 3 are important to the realisation of Priority 6 as they focus on roads to rail for freight and passengers, therefore decreasing our road traffic and associated risks. This is more pertinent when considering the loss of 11 485 lives to road crashes just last year alone, making road safety a national crisis requiring a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and response. According to the Road Traffic Management Corporation's, RTMC's, estimates, road crashes are costing the South African economy R266 billion per year. The preventable crashes and deaths on our roads are a terrible stain on our democracy. The UN's Decade of Action for Road Safety binds us to reduce road fatalities and deaths by 50% by the year 2030, using 2020 as a baseline.

In line with the UN target, we have set our targets as a country as well. And to strengthen and accelerate progress towards these goals, the National Road Safety Strategy 2016-2030 was reviewed in 2025. The revised strategy adopts a comprehensive data-driven and outcomes-based approach focused on safer roads, safer vehicles and road users, and stronger institutions. It further prioritises sustainable funding

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models and partnerships, the establishment of the National Road Crash Data Observatory, predictive analytics, hotspot identification, evidence-based interventions, and stronger anti-corruption measures within licensing, testing, and enforcement centres. In 2025, South Africa recorded a 6,2% reduction in fatalities and a 6,4% reduction in fatal crashes compared to 2024. This is a result of improved collaboration and enhanced enforcement visibility and also contributed to a 5% reduction in the festive season crashes and fatalities. Notwithstanding that, from January to April this year, we have registered a marginal reduction of 3% in fatalities. 2026 is the lowest rate of fatalities in five years for the same period. Mpumalanga has registered a decline of 10%.

We want to thank the MEC colleagues from across the country for ensuring that the entire security cluster, civil society, NGOs and community-based organisations, including our road safety ambassadors, private sector, religious and faith-based organisations, are backing our efforts, ensuring that saving lives on our roads is indeed a priority we share with all elements of society.

In this regard, the weekly Thursday meetings will continue with the MEC colleagues and officials to make sure that we

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continue to save lives. However, pedestrian fatalities remain a major concern, accounting for approximately 45% of annual road deaths. In response, we are implementing a year-long Pedestrian Management Plan focused on targeted data-driven interventions. For the attention of this House, the top 10 districts insofar as pedestrian deaths are concerned, it's Cape Town, eThekweni, Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, Tshwane, Bojanala, O R Tambo, Nkangala, Mgungundlovu and Ehlanzeni. We have already met with the provincial authorities and the municipalities to devise strategies, and the last leg of our interactions will be with Mpumalanga and Limpopo. Law enforcement strengthening is being driven through the shift to intelligence-led data priorities, supported by enhanced visibility, technology and accountability. The Minister has already spoken to scholar transport, and we want to reiterate that this remains an apex priority for the department.

We have instructed traffic law enforcement agencies, including the RTMC National Traffic Police, to intensify their law enforcement operations with a specific focus on scholar transport throughout the country. Furthermore, we want to emphasise that co-operative governance in all efforts is of critical importance and implore this House to hold provinces accountable to the roadmap we have placed on the table to

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ensure that there is safety. The Cross-Border Road Transport Agency has been instructed to focus its attention on cross-border bus operators who continue to undermine traffic and immigration laws. We are engaging with the SAPS, the SA Revenue Service, Sars, and the Border Management Authority, BMA, to strengthen our interventions in this area of traffic law enforcement. During the 2026-27 financial year, the agency will also advance the implementation of the Operator Compliance Accreditation System, OCAS, by accrediting 40 qualifying operators. The OCAS is a modern risk-based compliance framework designed to strengthen market access regulation within the cross-border road transport sector. As part of improved efficiencies in the traffic law ecosystem and to, amongst others, ensure optimal use of limited resources, we are working towards the rationalisation of our efforts. In this regard, we will, in this term, merge the RTMC, the Road Traffic Authority, RTA and the Driving Licence Card Account, DLCA, into a single entity.

On the Road Accident Fund, RAF, in addition to the interventions I've stated above, we are strengthening our partnership with the RAF to ensure that road safety is not only about prevention but also about care, compensation and restoring dignity to victims of road crashes. Through the

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RAF's On the Road Programme, we are taking services directly to communities, particularly in rural and underserved areas, to improve access to claims, support and public awareness. In this regard, the fund has recorded a significant improvement in the claims performance with monthly payments averaging R4,6 billion since September 2025. This marks an improvement from the R2,1 billion average before that. The cumulative settlements during the past financial year are R43,2 billion. Hon chairperson of the select committee, as you are raising issues around the settlements of claims, we are also challenging the ruling on the illegal foreign nationals through the RAF itself. We can also report to the council that the board has resolved to withdraw the reckless and irresponsible litigation relating to the accounting standard. The fund has now rightfully reverted to the correct accounting standard, being GRAP 19. This closes the chapter of impunity and refocuses the RAF on the realities that lie ahead.

The strengthening of the Road Accident Fund, along with prevention and enforcement, is central to our vision of a road safety system that not only reduces crashes but also cares for those who have been affected when tragedies occur. We are committed to ensuring that no victim is left behind and waiting indefinitely for justice and compensation, and that

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the RAF becomes a pillar of support, efficiency and accountability in the road safety ecosystem. As the Minister has already indicated, next month we will be hosting a joint Minmec on the provincial roads maintenance grant, PRMG, to consider mechanisms for provinces to front-load the PRMG. We must report to the council that R17,9 billion has been allocated to PRMG for the 2026-27 financial year.

In 2025-26, the PRMG created 201 558 work opportunities, with 52 900 being full-time equivalent and work opportunities for women being 127 988 and for the youth being 59,000. People with disabilities accounted for 1 806 work opportunities. The RTMC has significantly enhanced service delivery through digital transformation on the native system, successfully processing over 6,9 million cumulative vehicle license renewals and boosting registration accessibility. We are working on the learner's licensing testing, the driver's license testing and the integrated system.

On the challenges that we have had with the driver's license printing machine, the card machine production is in operation, and there is no backlog. For the period of 1 April to 11 May, a total of 263 195 driving licenses has been produced. The Minister has covered significantly the areas around public

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transport, and I want to reiterate our full support for the rationalisation and winding down of grants to ensure that there is a maximum and optimal use of public resources. It is not about punishing anybody; it is about ensuring that the resources work. It is a roadmap towards sustainability.

It is a responsible use of public funds, and I don't think the City of Cape Town, once again, shares in the pessimism of the hon Van Wyk. We have to remain optimistic, we have to remain responsible, and we have to remain focused, so that we stretch the rand as far as possible to the service of our people. Lastly, we will also undertake a comprehensive review of the Shova Kalula Programme, our non-motorised transport initiative aimed at addressing mobility challenges in underserved communities where learners still walk long distances to ensure that the programme is fit for purpose and is consistent with the prevailing realities.

South Africa remains a strategic maritime nation and an active participant in the International Maritime Organization, IMO and its council, and South Africa remains integral in shaping international shipping regulations in their material respects. Our efficiencies at our ports and at sea are to the benefit and growth of our coastal provinces, namely, KwaZulu-Natal,

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Eastern Cape, Western Cape and the Northern Cape, through the ports that these provinces have.

To assure the council, the ongoing instability in the Middle East has shifted shipping patterns and created potential opportunities and increased traffic on the Cape of Good Hope. The SA Maritime Safety Authority, Samsa, and our Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre remain on high alert to provide search and rescue services along one of the world's busiest shipping corridors. We are hard at work. There is no doubt that the transport sector, as you knew it yesterday, is better, bolder and stronger today, and we are ensuring that the money of the people is servicing the people of this country. I thank the Minister and the entire department for their leadership and guidance, and thank you, Chair.

Cllr D DE VOS: Hon Chairperson, I would request that I not use the video for the sake of connectivity challenges in our area.

Hon National Council of Provinces, NCOP, Chairperson ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Cllr De Vos, will you please open your video for a second or two so that we can see that it is the real De Vos that we know.

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Cllr De Vos, will you open your video for a second or two?

Cllr D DE VOS: It is open, I'm not sure whether you ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): This one, we know.
[Laughter.]

Cllr D DE VOS: Thank you, Chairperson, just for the sake of the stability of the network.

Hon Chairperson of the NCOP, Deputy Chair of the NCOP, Minister and Deputy Minister, MECs present, House Chairpersons and hon members, on behalf of SA Local Government Association, Salga, we appreciate the opportunity to respond to the 2026 Transport Budget Vote as delivered by the hon Minister of the Department of Transport, DT.

Salga acknowledges the efforts by the DT to reposition the transport sector as a catalyst for economic growth, logistic reform, infrastructure development and improved mobility for all South Africans. We particularly welcome the continued investments in railway revitalisation, road infrastructure, logistics reforms and public transport systems.

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Indeed, the budget amount of R102 billion is not only significant, but the single biggest transport budget in the Republic. Consequently, it presents the biggest opportunity to transform the entire transport system in the country. It must be managed with care, responsibly and in strategic importance not only to national government, but to all spheres of government. However, the budget alone is not enough to transform the transport industry. Funding must be aligned with effective solutions for meaningful transformation.

Effective solutions can only be developed and implemented by a capable state. On public transport grant reforms and municipal concerns, Salga notes the announcement by the Minister that the department, together with provinces and municipalities, will review the road-based public transport grants, including the Public Transport Network Grant, PTNG, and Public Transport Operations Grant, to enhance efficiency and reduce waste.

While Salga supports the review of these grants, municipalities are concerned about the limited time allocated to engage meaningfully on these reforms. The timelines provided for the municipalities to assess the implications, conduct due diligence and engage affected operators are inadequate. The challenges facing these grants are not only

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financial, but are complex and complicated by many factors, including capacity and public transport regulation, to name a few.

As suggested above, funding must follow good solutions. Salga, therefore, calls for extended consultation periods for municipalities, structured engagement platforms for operators and organised local government, and adequate technical and financial support for municipalities during the grant reform process. Meaningful consultation is critical to avoid disruptions to public transport services and to maintain stability within the sector.

On the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences, Aarto, implementation and municipal financial sustainability, Salga remains concerned that several issues previously raised regarding the Aarto framework remain unresolved.

Municipalities continue to express concern regarding certain aspects of the Aarto regulations and implementation requirements that compel municipalities to utilise prescribed stakeholders or systems during procurement processes. Salga is of the view that such requirements may potentially conflict with the Municipal Finance Management Act, MFMA, Municipal

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Supply Chain Management Regulations and constitutional principles governing local government procurement autonomy.

In addition, local government continues to carry substantial law enforcement responsibilities without corresponding financial compensation under the current Aarto revenue model. Municipalities remain at the frontline of traffic law enforcement and road safety implementation, yet the fiscal arrangements do not adequately support this responsibility. Salga, therefore, reiterates its call for a review of the Aarto regulations impacting municipal procurement processes and their constitutionality, greater alignment between Aarto implementation requirements and the MFMA, and a fair and sustainable revenue-sharing model for municipalities.

Questions remain about the efficacy of the Aarto approach. On the municipal roads funding crisis, Salga remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating state of municipal road infrastructure across the country. Municipalities continue to experience severe underfunding for road maintenance, rehabilitation and upgrades. The R32 billion to be allocated to the SA National Roads Agency Limited, Sanral, is a few times more than the total dedicated road funding for

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municipalities, despite municipalities owning most of the length of the road network.

Salga proposes that dedicated road funding in the urban areas be funded according to use rather than ownership. The users do not distinguish between national, provincial or municipal roads. As with many areas of service delivery, we have a world-class national road system, but an almost unfit-for-purpose municipal road network. Salga, therefore, calls for a review of the entire road funding approach, including the following: Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant, the Rural Roads Asset Management System, the road portion of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant and the portion allocated to Sanral.

The current revenue-sharing arrangements for vehicle licensing functions remain unsustainable as municipalities continue to absorb operational, staffing, infrastructure and compliance costs while retaining a small portion of licensing revenue. This places additional strain on already constrained municipal finances. Salga calls for an urgent review of the vehicle licensing funding model to ensure that municipalities are adequately compensated for the delivery of this critical service.

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The devolution of urban rail. As agreed in Minmec, Salga is ready to engage with the department regarding the Rail Bill and how local municipal government views can be incorporated into the Bill. Salga is also ready to engage with the draft National Rail Master Plan as agreed with the department.

Concerns remain about the separation of the public transport planning between rail and other road-based transport modes. Commuter rail is intended to be the backbone of urban public transport and should be planned together with other public transport modes. The department must consider moving commuter rail to be under public transport. The recent reallocation of budget from the PTNG to the Passenger Rail Agency of SA, Prasa, points to this strong relationship.

Chairperson, in other jurisdictions, access to mobility is appropriately considered as a basic social right, partly because even other basic rights cannot be enjoyed without adequate access to mobility. As a result, the transport system cannot afford to fail. As Salga submitted to the DT, the land transport system needs a fundamental rethink, not just minor changes which have not yet yielded the significant impact necessary.

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Local government plays a significant role in the transport system. Perhaps a bold move, such as engagement with the department even before budget is tabled before this House, is necessary going forward. This will ensure more meaningful opportunity to influence the budget of the department.

Salga appreciates both the political and administrative relationship and leadership because of its commitment to work with local government on transport matters. Salga intends to utilise the task informed by the Minister and the president of Salga to continue to support the department and influence thinking within the transport sector.

We want to thank the hon Minister, Deputy Minister and the department for their continued engagement with local government. We look forward to constructive collaboration in addressing the challenges facing the transport sector. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Afrikaans:

Mev T BREEDT: Voorsitter, daar is 'n bekende aanhaling deur die Amerikaanse president John F Kennedy wat sê:

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American roads are not good because America is rich. America is rich because American roads are good.

Dit is wat vir Suid-Afrika ook moet geld. 'n Land se vervoerinfrastruktuur bepaal sy ekonomiese groei, sy veiligheid, en, uiteindelik, sy mense se lewenskwaliteit.

English:

The 2026-27 Transport budget, therefore, simply cannot be viewed as another line item in the national budget. It is a direct reflection of whether the government is serious about economic growth, job creation and public safety.

Afrikaans:

Die Departement van Vervoer begroot in die mediumtermyn by die R313 miljard vir die sektor, en 94% daarvan gaan aan entiteite en aan subsidies.

Die VF Plus erken die positiewe elemente van hierdie begroting. Die groter fokus op spoorherstel, padonderhoud, en logistieke hervorming is nodig. Ons verwelkom ook die feit dat die departement erken dat die spoorinfrastruktuur verswak het, dat hawens ondoeltreffend funksioneer, en dat logistieke koste die ekonomie knou.

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English:

Minister, acknowledgement alone, however, is not enough. South Africans are tired of plans without implementation, targets without accountability and budgets without measurable outcomes. In the Free State, transport failures are not theoretical debates. They are lived realities. Farmers, truck drivers, small businesses and ordinary commuters experience the consequences every single day.

Afrikaans:

Wanneer spoorlyne nie funksioneer nie, skuif vragvevoer noodwendig na ons paaie. Dit plaas natuurlik in die Vrystaat enorme druk op goed soos die N1 en die N3-korridors by Harrismith, maar ook paaie rondom Kroonstad, Betlehem, en Welkom daar waar die meeste van die landbou, die mynbou, en enige ander ekonomiese spilpunt in die Vrystaat gevestig is.

English:

Minister, it is good that we have decreased road fatalities and crashes. I believe in the festive season of last year that it decreased by 5% and during the Easter weekend, it decreased by 18% and that is good.

Afrikaans:

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Ons kan egter nie toelaat dat dit net 'n statistiek is nie. Dit is families wat geliefdes verloor het. Dit is ekonomiese verliese. Die regering self sê dat ons by die R205 miljard aan ekonomiese investering verloor as gevolg daarvan. Dit wys dat beter wetstoepassing en padveiligheidsveldtogte wel resultate kan lewer, maar dit verander nie die groter probleem nie. Suid-Afrika se vervoerstelsel bly onder geweldige druk, met swak bestuur, korrupsie, en onvoldoende instandhouding.

English:

The FF Plus also remains deeply concerned with the sustainability of our entities such as Prasa, Transnet and the Road Accident Fund, RAF, specifically considering that the RAF has an annual shortfall of R20 billion.

Afrikaans:

Groter begrotings gaan nie alleen die probleem oplos nie. Suid-Afrika benodig beter bestuur, strenger aanspreeklikheid, en groter betrokkenheid van die privaatsektor, daar waar die staat nie die kapasiteit het nie. Ideologie mag nooit belangriker as dienslewering wees nie.

English:

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The FF Plus also believes that rural provinces such as the Free State cannot continue to be treated like afterthoughts in infrastructure planning. Reliable transport networks are essential for agriculture, mining, tourism and economic development.

Afrikaans:

Voorsitter, ons benodig meer as net mooi dokumente. Ons benodig paaie wat veilig is, treine wat werk, hawens wat funksioneer, en belastinggeld wat deur die regering verantwoordbaar aangewend word.

English:

We will support reforms that produce real outcomes, but we will continue to oppose wasteful expenditure, governance failures and empty promises because ultimately, transport is not only about moving goods and people, it is about moving South Africa forward.

Afrikaans:

Ek dank u.

Ms M MAKESINI: House Chairperson, hon Minister and the Deputy Minister of Transport, fellow fighters and hon members, on

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behalf of the EFF, I want to start off by convening our deepest condolences to the families and friends of Councillor Bulelani Yeko and Fighter Emihle Njambatwa from Ward 6, Zone 10 here in Cape Town. The two committed revolutionaries who lost their lives in the tragic car accident on Saturday 16 May 2026 while they were traveling back from the organisational deployment in Saldanha Bay sub region. Their unexpected passing has deeply shocked all of us.

IsiXhosa:

Sithi, lala ngoxolo, Madiba, Mdlomo, Sopitsho, Ngqolomsila nakuwe MaMgcina, Nokwindla, Tyhopho ugqatso lwenu nilufezile.

English:

The functional transport network serves as a backbone of any economy, seamlessly for moving the workforce, raw material, and finished goods. In South Africa, however, this sector has acted as a challenge to economic activity rather than facilitating economic growth. So, the EFF rejects this Transport Budget Vote. We cannot support the financial allocation of the department that holds our entire economic hostage. Instead of helping the people to get work and moving goods smoothly, the department stands on the verge of collapsing. Yet year after year, the state took billions of

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rends to this department and then Ministry celebrate the policy document performative programme that have brought little material change to the lives of our people. A prime example of this failure is Operation Vulindlela, which was first presented as a bold intervention to modernise infrastructure, improve logistics, and unlock economic growth when it was launched in October 2020. Operation Vulindlela was designed to fast-track the structural reform, eliminate irregular bottlenecks, and stimulate the economic growth. However, the initiative has fallen in the short of its measurable objective. And instead, the ordinary South Africans are confronted with the potholes ridden roads, collapsing rail system, dysfunctional port, unrealistic public transport and ever rising transport cost.

And the reality on the ground is that our people waste hours traveling in unsafe with taxis and buses while the freight rail continue to deteriorate, forcing more trucks on the damaged road. And the community in rural areas and towns areas remain isolated because the roads are not maintained and filled with potholes while the commuters have faced a delay on overcrowding on a daily basis.

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Millions of potholes across South Africa are not just an annoying part of the daily lives, they are a sign that the government is planning and executive have completely broken down. According to the reports, we are looking at the millions of the potholes across the country, and the numbers are climbing fast. It is not just because of the rainy season, but it was the challenges of the bad engineering and also the zone that maintenance is not maintained and a total of mismanagement. Like the province of Bukone Bophirima in North West. Last week we were there, there is no road in that area. Local road entities are functionally bankrupt. For instance, Johannesburg Road Agency openly admitted that infrastructure backlogs require over R115 billion, yet they receive mere function that is amount annually.

In the province where I come from, the Free State, for instance, a province which has major trucks driving between Gauteng and the coast, road like R70 and R708 were never built to handle the kind of weight. The provincial government has completely failed to police the truck weight and leaving the rural farming community to cut off by road.

In the province of KwaZulu-Natal, Inanda, hon Kaunda, a province that often experience extreme weather, especially

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massive floods over the last few years, poor workmanship makes things 10 times worse in that province. The same can be said about the Eastern Cape province where the provincial roads in the former Transkei of Tata hon Nonkonyana, through you Chairperson, as well is a problem in the municipality of Buffalo City Metropolitan. Province across South Africa is in the state of collapse since the local infrastructure kept crumbling. The benefit of the national reform never actual reach ordinary citizen local business. There are just not enough engineers working in the local municipality to check if a job is being done by right or whatever that before they even paid them. It also does not help that the tenders are often handed out to the political connect person instead of experienced road builders. This contractor does not even bother to cut straight the edge or compact the whole tire properly so that the purge fails within a week. To try and save the situation the national government has been taking over thousands of kilometers of provincial roads and handing them to the SA National Roads Agency, Sanral. Even that, it is not sustainable Minister as if Sanral spent all its money to fix the broken suburb and regional road. The aim of National highways will eventually collapse because you are just putting more pressure to Sanral.

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Minister, we will patiently wait for you to brief us about billions that were looted and mismanaged by the white company in Sanral. And also, Minister, you must come clean and disclose the exact amount of the public funds squandered on this superficial intervention.

This continue to collapse by freight rail, and port system is crippling the economic activities and destroying jobs. Mining exports are delayed, agricultural products cannot move effectively, and manufacturing industries continue to lose competitive because the logistic failure, workers ultimately pay the price through retrenchment and rising cost of transport. The example of transformation that, hon Kaunda, was talking about, there was no transformation in that department. I want to give example, in Free State, there is a company called Intercape Budget liner. It received a tender in 1998. They were running a contract forever and after three years that contract was renewed without going to Minister and Members of Executive Council, MINMEC, so that they can get extension. After the expiring of that contract, they got back the contract and that again was not approved by MINMEC. There is no resolution. Also, they get another two years of irregular contract last month. So, the negotiation with that company, maybe with the government of free State, they just

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get the tenders without following the proper procedure. We just hope the Minister and the Deputy Minister, will check the issue of Intercape in Free State. At the same time, the public transport remained deeply unequal. The working class continue to be subsidised. Millions wake up at 3am to travel the distance because apartheid spatial planning remain intact and the government has failed to be integrated and affordable safe public transport system.

And because of the formal public transport is unreliable, the taxi industry has also filled the gap. The taxis keep on moving by this department has completely failed and not formalised and not even safe for the commuters that are traveling. Right now, there is a taxi industry ploy by violence road in dispute, intimidation, mafia like extortion, and the commuters and law abiding citizens, especially drivers are often caught in the crossfire because the Department of Transport has not been able to roll out the proper safe regulatory framework, our most people from the public transport operators completely outside the formal economic planning.

The budget before us does not confront these material realities. Instead of deceiving the state-led investment, the

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government continue to open the strategic sector to private interests under the disguise of reform. The EFF really reject this budget of this transport infrastructure and outsourcing the state's responsibility to profit-driven cooperation. The transport is not about moving the goods and the people. It is about the economic justice, spatial justice and human dignity. The EFF therefore call for massive investment passenger and rail infrastructure, urgent high-quality rehabilitation and professional municipal roads, expand and safe, affordable, reliable public transport for working-class community, the insource of the strengthening of the state technical capacity instead of endless outsourcing, increase security and protect the real infrastructure against vandalism and criminal syndicate, and full transparency of all Vulindlela transport sector expenditure.

Again, I want to bring to your attention, between 2016 to 2017, the same Intercape Bus liner in Free State was sold for Imperial company for 55% while the tendering in the province according to the Public Finance Management Act, PFMA, if the shareholder become more than 51% by the then tender was supposed to be awarded to the Intercape Bus liner, not Imperial and when this process was done, the Minister was not approached and the process was not presented to the bid make.

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We request the Minister to investigate and get to the bottom of this company who has a shareholder in Free State and manipulating the process. There is no competitive for other people to bid, to have access to get to the business.

A functional transport system is a backbone of economic development. Without reliable road, rail transport and public transport, there cannot be a meaningful industrialisation, no sustainable job creation and no economic freedom. The people of South Africa do not need more announcement. They need trains that work, they need roads that are safe, they need ports that are functional and effective. They also need transport costs that they can afford. The EFF reject this budget. Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr T S THOMO (Mpumalanga): House Chair, let me take this opportunity to greet the Minister, the Deputy Minister Hlengwa, and the hon delegates of the National Council of Provinces. House Chair, from the province of the rising sun, Mpumalanga, we also take note of the Budget Vote as presented by the hon Minister of Transport.

We appreciate both the strategic direction and policy detail reflected in the budget. And we are encouraged by the

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continued commitment towards the strengthening of transport infrastructure and enhancing connectivity as part of advancing inclusive economic growth.

Hon Chair and members, the transport portfolio occupies a uniquely strategic position within the architecture of the developmental state as it provides the infrastructure foundation, ... [Inaudible.] ... regional integration, industrial expansion, social mobility, and trade competitiveness are ultimately sustained.

As the Mpumalanga province, we therefore welcome the continued commitment by the national Department of Transport and its public entities towards maintaining, rehabilitating, upgrading, revitalising and expanding South Africa's road and rail infrastructure over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period.

Hon Chair, for provinces such as Mpumalanga, transport infrastructure is inseparable from economic growth and industrial expansion. Our province occupies a strategic geographical position within the economy of Southern Africa, serving as a critical gateway linking South Africa to neighbouring states such as Mozambique and Eswatini, while

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simultaneously connecting inland production zones to the ports of Maputo and Richards Bay.

It is precisely because of this strategic positioning that we regard transport infrastructure not merely as an administrative function but as a critical instrument of economic development central to trade facilitation and export competitiveness.

In this regard, we recognise the continued strategic importance of the funding in architecture advanced by the national Department of Transport, particularly through instruments such as the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant, which is the PRMG, which remains indispensable in supporting provinces.

Hon House Chair and members, the current fiscal environment demands innovative and collaborative approaches towards infrastructure development. It is for this reason that Mpumalanga has deliberately pursued strategic partnership with mining houses to supplement limited public resources and accelerate infrastructure delivery.

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We are particularly encouraged by the partnership currently underway on Road P171/1 between Mashishing and Roossenekal, where mining houses have committed substantial contribution. This model of cooperation demonstrates that developmental progress is accelerated when the state and the private sector act in pursuit of shared economic and social objectives.

Hon House Chair and members, the continued investment by the national Department of Transport through SA National Roads Agency, Sanral in strategic corridors across Mpumalanga represents a decisive intervention in strengthening the productive capacity of the economy, in particular the multi-billion rand upgrade of the N2 corridor between Ermelo and Mkhondo, which stand as a strategic economic investment of both provincial and national significance.

This road remains a critical linking inland production zone to the Richards Bay port, thereby strengthening freight mobility. Hon House Chair and members, the transfer of more than 1 000 kilometres of strategic roads to Sanral has already begun yielding measurable outcomes through accelerated rehabilitation, maintenance, and upgrading intervention.

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As the province of Mpumalanga, we also continue to witness progress in advancing regional integration across border logistic efficiency. In this regard, we commend the continued investment along the N4 corridor, and the interventions undertaken at the Lebombo Border Post between South Africa and Mozambique.

The continued oversight engagement undertaken by the Minister Barbara Creecy jointly with the Mozambican counterparts to assess operation at the Lebombo Border Post of entry demonstrate the growing importance of coordinated regional cooperation in strengthening logistics integration.

Furthermore, the improvement of Kilometre 7 track facility in Lebombo border will improve cross-border movement and enhance the efficient transportation of perishable goods and strategic mineral resources to the ports.

Hon Chairperson and members, the growing impact of natural disasters continues to place enormous pressure on the transport infrastructure. It is therefore encouraging that the national Department of Transport has announced an additional allocation of R1,5 billion in the 2026-27 financial year

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towards the reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure damaged by natural disasters.

In this regard, we commend the repair works by Sanral, which is currently underway in the R40 corridor, linking Bombela and Limpopo, including critical interventions aimed at addressing structural and slip failures affecting this critical road.

Similarly, the repair works by the provincial department underway along the P33/4 road between Sabie and Hazyview form part of our broader tourism roads preservation initiatives. This corridor remains strategically important in providing access to global recognised destinations such as God's Window and Blyde River Canyon and several heritage and ecotourism sites.

Hon House Chair and members, we note with appreciation the progress being made by the Department of Transport towards the conclusion of the review of the Taxi Recapitalisation Grant, which represents an important step in strengthening the long-term sustainability and modernisation of the taxi industry.

This work undertaken through structured engagement between the department, taxi associations, and financial institutions

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reflects a collaborative and pragmatic approach aimed at de-risking the cost of new vehicles and improving access to affordable financing for taxi operators.

In pursuit of equity, inclusion, and spatial justice, Mpumalanga continues to subsidise more than 4 million commuter trips across key municipalities through an allocation of approximately R890 million. This intervention reduces transport costs and elevates household economic pressure.

Hon Chairperson and members, in thoughts of the development economist, Thandeka Mkandawire, we are reminded that development is not a passive outcome of market forces, but rather results of deliberate state capacity, coordinated investment, and purposefully institutional action.

Hon Chair, this insight speaks directly to the transport mandate before us, because infrastructure is the most tangible expression of the developmental state in motion. It is through roads, rail, ports, and logistic corridors that we can convert policy intentions into economic transformation, regional connectivity, and inclusive economic growth. Hon Chairperson, the presented budget is fully supported by the province of Mpumalanga.

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I thank you.

Mr M M PETER: Hon House Chair, greetings to the hon Minister, the Deputy Minister and the House in general. Hon Chair, the challenges surrounding the Department of Transport have exclusively been affecting the majority of black people, particularly those who reside in townships and rural areas. South Africa's economy has been in decline for more than a decade. Prices for groceries and transport have been overwhelmingly high. This department is meant to ensure that our people get to their places of work with affordable transport prices but it fails to do so. Chairperson, this is not acceptable.

After more than a year without passenger rail services, Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, Prasa, has only managed to bring back one weekday train in the entire Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality. That is far from enough for thousands of commuters who rely on public transport daily. Many residents were forced to spend more money on taxis or to abandon their jobs because transport costs became too high. This highlights how ordinary people carried the burden while government delayed restoring the services.

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The other metro lines that have long distances have not been brought back yet. Prasa keeps announcing the return of long-distance routes but services continue to fail because trains break down, are delayed for hours or get suspended again shortly after reopening. This shows poor planning and weak management. Funding for new locomotive is expected to drop from R12 billion to R6 billion while refurbishment funding is being removed completely.

The City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality experienced major breakdowns between October and December 2025 during which more than 2 700 minibuses were impounded. Around 4000 Uber and Bolt vehicles were also impounded during the same period because of ongoing problems in the transport sector. Taxi operators found operating without valid licenses faced heavy release fees, including about R7 000 for the first offense and R10 000 for the second offense and R15 000 for repeated offenses. While these penalties are meant to enforce the law and improve compliance, they have also increased tensions between transport operators and government authorities with many commuters suffering because they rely on this service every day.

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Mphathiswa noSekela Mphathiswa, phambi kokuba ndiluxhase olu hlahlomali lwenu, amehlo abantu baseMpuma Koloni ajonge kuni. Kudala sicenga ukuba sakhelwe iiblorho neendlela. Sicela nisancedise kuba nanamhlanje sisajonge enkalweni. Sinethemba kakhulu Sekela Mphathiswa kuba noko ungumntu ontsundu kwaye ukhulele ezilalini noko unolwazi ngobomi basezilalini. Sicela ke noko nisihlangule khonukuze singanyolani sodwa kula maqonga. Ncedani, hlangulani iilali zethu.

IMpuma Koloni ayohlukanga kuyaphi phaya KwaZulu-Natal kuba omabini lamaphondo aqhwarelela ngeendlela neeblorho. Sicela abaphathiswa beli sebe emaphondweni basondele kuni ukuze nisebenzisane ekusihlanguleni. Ngalo mazwi, Mphathiswa, abantu bonke baseMpuma Koloni bajonge kuwe. I-UDM iyaluxhasa olu hlahlomali. Enkosi.

Mr M BILLY: Hon House Chair, Minister, Deputy Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, it has been said throughout this budget vote debate that transport is not just about roads, trains and buses. Transport is about whether our people can get to work on time and affordably and whether a learner or a student can get to college or school. Whether goods can reach markets or whether our economy can grow. Hon members, the reality is that, right now, South Africans are paying the

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price, for years, of transport collapse, as my colleague hon Ofentse has alluded.

Yes, hon Nzimande, poor planning. You are quite correct. It is poor planning during the former President Zuma years. It is poor planning when Prasa's Lucky Montana bought the wrong size train for R3 billion. That was poor planning. Yes, Minister, you would recall reports of Prasa also paying billions of rands to refurbish and repair trains that will never be used at that time, the General Overhaul, GO Project. You would recall that? You would recall Prasa paying billions of rands in fraudulent advance payments to the Maziya General Services entity? Again, around R3 billion was used on that.

In my province, KwaZulu-Natal, we know this reality far too well, hon Kaunda. We have seen the collapse of commuter rail across major corridors. Commuters that once relied on affordable trains between townships of Durban like Umlazi, KwaMashu, Pinetown and surrounding areas have been forced back into already congested roads and expensive taxi roads.

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Lokhu kuchazana ukuthi abantu bakithi bayaphogeleka ukuthi bagcine bekhokha imali enkulu ematekisini abanye abaningi abantulayo.

English:

The department speaks about revitalising passenger rail and increasing annual passenger trips to 600 million by 2030. Minister, that ambition is welcome but South Africans are tired of plans without delivery. Minister, we cannot continue announcing recovery while millions still cannot rely on trains to get to work every morning.

I want to touch on this since no one spoke to it. One of the clearest examples of a failed transport planning is the Go Durban, a project in which eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality cost taxpayer's money about R9 billion which has now clearly failed. For years, residents were promised a world class integrated public transport system. Billions of rands were spent, roads were dug up, infrastructure was built and communities were distracted. Yet, today, large parts of the project remain incomplete or delayed. Colleagues and hon members, the honest reality is that Minister, your ANC-led government failed to intervene. You continuously failed to intervene in that project. The eThekweni Metropolitan

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Municipality failed to intervene in that project. Instead, you have all allowed the R9 billion to go to waste while protecting the interests of the taxi industry alone.

By contrast, the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality has been expanding its MyCiTi Bus Service to provide safer, more affordable public transport to more people who need it most. This shows that effective public transport delivery is possible. Chairperson, in many areas, infrastructure stands as a monument to poor planning, weak implementation and political indecision. The people of KwaZulu-Natal do not need more impressions and launch events. They need to see buses on the roads and on time.

Chairperson, the department itself admits in its annual performance plans, APPs, that many municipalities fail to implement the integrated transport plans and that poor co-ordination and weak planning continue to undermine service delivery. Hon Minister, that is a real crisis. So, in essence, we do not lack policy documents in South Africa but lack execution. The APPs correctly identify that logistics inefficiencies cost our economies between 11 to 12% GDP. Nowhere that this failure is more visible than in our rail and freight systems.

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The decline of freight rail has forced more trucks into our roads, accelerate road damage, increased congestions and logistics. Hon colleagues from KwaZulu-Natal would know that between Pietermaritzburg and Durban traffic and congestion caused by trucks is unbearable.

Minister, more than 12 000 people die on South African roads. Yes, hon Hlengwa, there might be a reduction of a thousand from the time of former President Zuma but we can do more. Behind every statistics is a family destroyed and yet year after year we continue to see poor enforcement, unroadworthy vehicles, unsafe scholar transport and collapsing infrastructure.

Chairperson, this debate cannot simply become another exercise and repeating targets and aspirations. South Africans are no longer judging government by what is promised in glossy plans but by whether trains arrive, whether roads are maintained, whether buses work, whether ports function or whether transport becomes cheaper, safer and reliable. Chairperson, the DA supports reforms that open rail networks, improve private sector participation, strengthen logistics performance and modernised transport infrastructure. I thank you.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you very much, hon Billy. Before I call the next speaker, I want to call the people in the gallery to order. This is the People's Parliament and we welcome your participation. However, it is not a lounge. Please conduct yourselves as you would in Parliament and refrain from putting your feet up. If you wish to behave otherwise, there are seating areas outside.

Ms K R MOLOKOMME: House Chair, let me take this opportunity to greet the Minister, the Deputy Minister and the participants on the platform. The Department of Transport plays a critical role in the economy by ensuring that air transport links South Africa to the international community, Africa and the rest of the world. On the other hand, the ocean economy is enhanced with monitoring to ensure that maritime transport is regulated. The department continues to maintain its roads networks for accessibility. So, transport economy plays a vital role in bettering the lives of our communities.

I stand here today as a bearer of good news, even though we all agree that there are some challenges. However, the GNU ANC-led government is greatly moving forward without fear and favour, with much focus in mind. That will continue to

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revitalise the rail infrastructure to address our working class whose needs are pure bread and butter issues.

We want to emphasise that the ANC supports this Budget Vote, because we know that it will address the needs of our people. As the select committee, we visited Metro Rail with Prasa delegates where we had the benefit of taking a ride to Gugulethu by train. We experienced the revitalisation of our rails, and it was a joy and pleasure to meet, and talk to the commuters who largely depend on this service.

They had indicated that they are paying a reasonable price for this service. I must also report to this august House that Metro Rail has also built student accommodation here in Cape Town. This accommodation is affordable for the previously disadvantaged student who cannot afford expensive rental around Cape Town. This initiative shows that our efforts are people-centred and are not self-saving like those who championed state capture.

R96,6 billion goes to Prasa for the rehabilitation of this important asset, and this is a public investment for our people to use for now and for years to come. The safety and

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security in this train have been given priority, and it has been installed with civilian cameras.

And we had witnessed it during our oversight. For this reason, we call on our GNU partners for serious commitment. We are focused on delivering services to our people. We do not, therefore, ignore challenges that may be experienced by our people. Hence, the budget is befitting to be adopted and supported by all of us, including the opposition parties.

As we continue to improve our roads, networks, and maintenance, we frown upon those who want to destabilise our economy by creating the so-called project my fears to embezzle the future of our people with their evil plans. And this causes delays in implementation of projects and prevents them from being completed on time.

We also visited the OR Tambo International Airport, and we are happy with the progress made after this visit. It was destabilised by state capture, hon Nzimande. You can attest to that. Now that the new management is led by a female CEO, she has greatly improved the financial position by R250 million there. There is no longer a need to depend on the state.

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The funding which was given to civil aviation has been reduced from R576,6 million to R269,8 million for 2025-26, respectively. This indicates that Airports Company South Africa, ACSA, has improved greatly in its operation. ACSA is now continuously receiving support from students from Africa and the international community to train them as traffic controllers and pilots. And even opposition parties know that it is black excellence and it is shining. You must be proud of that. We need to celebrate and appreciate these milestones.

We are also elated that the Hoedspruit Regional Airport is having an additional airline, which will increase the economy and accessibility of travellers. Last week, when we were busy with our visit to Matlosana, we saw the challenges with that airport. That needs to be given our full attention, because what we had to find there, Minister, is an indication that this airport is a hub for the illegal activities and it must therefore be monitored. As the department, we need to support the Polokwane Regional Airport, because the Polokwane municipality is aiming to become a metro. So obviously, the travellers will increase. So, the department needs to support the municipality.

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We recently had Taking Parliament to the People, as I have already indicated, in North West and the residents were transported by taxi to the venue. I believe that these are the locals and this is an indication that Parliament is also supporting the initiative by the taxi industry. I also want to indicate that this is just a typical example, Members of Parliament are transported by buses. So, really, we are supporting. Most of us don't use our cars to come to Parliament. So, as Parliament, we are really supporting the economy. We know how it feels to sit in a bus. So, obviously, we know what our people are going through.

It is noted that there is a commitment of R167 billion over the medium term to the road transport programme. The South African National Roads Agency, Sanral, is given R99,9 billion to work on the road network. That includes the Gauteng Freeway improvement, and two Wild Coast and Moloto Development Corridors.

SMMEs on the Moloto Development Corridors are going to benefit, as business opportunities will be created for them. I must add that the provincial allocation is at R54,2 billion on roads maintenance for kilometres of re-graveling, and disaster recovery funding for the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-

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Natal and Limpopo. This budget will help the provinces to address their road challenges, even though I had MECs complaining about the budget cuts.

We would like to encourage the provincial government, instead of relying on consultants, build international capacity, so that they do not lose over R248,1 million to consultants. Regarding Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme, we are really appreciating the progress and this will benefit us. We urge the Minister that the very same project should be done in various provinces across the globe.

So, I just want to address the issues that hon members have touched on, especially hon Nzimande. On the issue of planning, I think no one can just wake up in the morning and start to plan, because the APP of the department is really informed by accurate information. We cannot just come here and say that data is not accurate, while we don't have ...

Hon Nzimande, the GNU is here and we are going to lead. I know that your slogan is saying, umshini wami. Here, we are not saying umshini wami, because we owe this to the GNU. We are saying, ...

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Sepedi:

... motšhene wa rena, ka Sepedi ...

English:

... not my own machine.

Hon Breedt, I don't think the department is promising. You are saying it is empty promises from the department. And I think, when we adopt the APP, as the committee, as members, we also ask questions and the departments can clarify every question that hon members are asking. So, I don't think it is right to say there are empty promises, because this is the plan that the department has, and we all know, as the members of the committee, that it is a work in progress. And the APP outlines very well the projects that the department is embarking on based on the department's budget.

Hon Makesini, on the issues you have raised about the Sanral, we acknowledge that there are some challenges, but we also need to appreciate the good work and the project that the department is doing. Like I am saying, it is work in progress. But I think, when we need to, ... When we want accountability from the department, we also need to adopt the budget. The

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accountability part that we need comes from what we have agreed on. Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: House Chair, but I should be given a few more minutes because I still have three minutes from my time earlier.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): It does not work like that, unfortunately, Minister. I will ask the table to restart the clock from five.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you. Well, it works like that in the National Assembly. Thank you very much, hon House Chair. The first issue I want to respond to is the Integrated Public Network grant. And I suppose that is a situation that I found. And the question that I had to ask myself is, now that you are here, what are you going to do about it? And it is not conscionable to continue with this grant when the total number of passengers that are transported through this grant is 147 000, when millions are catching buses, taxis, and other forms of public transport every day. And so, we must decide how we are going to create a new kind of public transport grant that is going to benefit all commuters. I am happy, Councillor De Vos, that we discuss more, but we cannot discuss

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forever because the National Treasury is already repurposing that grant. And if we do not work out what the new grant looks like, it is going to be a question of use it or lose it. I had a very good discussion with Mayor Hill Lewis on the weekend regarding the situation with MyCiti bus, and he has agreed that he will submit a suggestion on how that grant can be used going forward. So, that is what we need, not complaints, but solutions. About the situation in our ports, 8 630 vessels arrived in our country last year, compared with 7 912 the year before. And this is before the problem started in the Strait of Hormuz. What this meant was that there was an extra 304 million tons of freight that was processed, and, after auto, citrus fruit through the port of Cape Town was the largest increase at 22% up. Unfortunately, it is above my pay grade to deal with 900 hours of wind that was over 100 kilometres an hour, which is what happened in December and January, and that is what messed up the deciduous fruit season. Now, as we saw yesterday, the hon Minister of Agriculture indicated that the flooding and electricity cutoffs are what are interfering with that. The investments in the Port of Cape Town are important because they are dealing with container stacking and truck staging, and those are issues that will facilitate movement. About the Road Accident Fund, the new Bill will deal with a standard set of benefits,

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a no-fault system, and a hybrid contributory system, and all of that is intended to reduce the impact of road accidents on the fiscus. My plea to the SA Local Government Association, Salga is, please get municipalities to spend the Municipal Infrastructure Grant on roads before you start to ask for more money. The National Rail Bill will outline the conditions for devolution, and the conditions include population, financial availability, and capacity. The National Rail Plan is important, colleagues, because it is the first tool that allows us to integrate the planning of rail with other forms of transport. It tells us what the core network looks like, and it tells us branch lines that can be concessioned out to agriculture, tourism, and other usages. Hon Breedt, 1479 kilometres of road have been transferred to the SA National Road Agency Ltd, Sanral, in the Free State. I think this is an indication of our commitment to get the roads working there. Hon Peters in the Eastern Cape, the figure is 4091 kilometres.

I want to conclude by saying that this government does care about the cost of living, which is why the Minister of Finance has given three months' relief on the fuel levy, and it is making an important contribution to the tremendous burden that this levy is placing on ordinary people. My time has run out.

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But there would be more, I could say. Thank you very much, hon members, for the debate.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Minister, thank you very much indeed. Hon delegates, there are two quick announcements I would like to make, the first being that there is no plenary sitting tomorrow, and the second notice being that there has been an allocation made in the sitting schedule for Tuesday afternoon, to deal with several of the matters that are listed under 'further business' on the Order Paper as it stands. So, hon Chairpersons, particularly if you can keep your eyes open, there will be information coming out over the weekend regarding which reports will be dealt with in the sitting on Tuesday, and we can then bring some of those matters to completion. Hon delegates, that then brings it to a close. I would like to thank the Minister, the Deputy Minister, all permanent delegates, the MECs, special delegates, and, of course, the Salga representatives for availing themselves for today's sitting.

The Council adjourned at 17:31.