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MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
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PROCEEDINGS OF MINI PLENARY SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Members of the mini-plenary session met at Good Hope Chamber at 10:00.

The House Chairperson (Mr C T Frolick) took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation

APPROPRIATION BILL

Debate on Vote No 40 - Transport:

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon House Chair, hon Deputy Minister, chairperson of the portfolio committee, hon members, as we gather today, we are all alive to the fact that the economic outlook faces several risks, including domestic constraints and global uncertainties that could hinder growth. Our state-owned entities, SOEs, operate in an environment that

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is not of our choosing. Accordingly, this will require leadership and foresight that prioritise the interests of our country and its people. Prompt execution of reforms in the logistics sector is essential to address and reduce the risks present. These risks include domestic issues such as port and rail constraints, as well as increased spending pressures along with global risks of intensified by trade tensions and market volatility. Effective implementation of reforms is essential for boosting growth and employment. To give guidance to this huge ecosystem and focus the work of all of our entities on a common programme to improve our passenger freight and logistic systems over the next four years, we are guided by six clear targets.

The first is to ensure that by 2029, 250 million tons of freight are carried on the Transnet network. The second is to improve the speed by which we load and unload ships to the international benchmark of 30 gross crane moves per hour, to ensure our passenger rail system provides safer, reliable and affordable transport to workers and their families. We aim to ensure 600 million passenger journey by 2030. To boost the contribution of aviation to tourism, economic development and job creation, we expect 42 million passengers and 1,2 million

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tons of air freight to move through the Airports Company SA, ACSA, network, by the end of this political term. To ensure greater safety on our roads and reduce the devastating toll road accidents have on lives and livelihoods, we aim to reduce road fatalities by 40% by 2029, so we reach the UN target of halving road accidents by 2030. Fundamental to our rail reform programme is our intention to re-establish rail as the backbone of transport for people and goods.

Since we embarked on the journey to restore passenger rail services nationwide, I am proud to share that price I had by the end of May 2025 successfully revived 35 of 40 corridors and sections of service lands, and we continue to deliver at pace with Passenger Rail Agency SA, PRASA, achieving an unaudited figure of 77 million passenger journey for the last financial year aiming at 116 million passenger journeys for this financial year. Our competitive pricing model for commuter passengers will ensure that working class commuters take advantage of our offerings. Total transfers to the agency amount to estimated R66,1 billion over the medium-term. This significant budget is for maintaining, recovering and reviewing rail infrastructure, rebuilding the signaling system, rolling out new transits to priority corridors so that

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we can increase passenger numbers. Our freight rail reform programme is informed by the White Paper on National Rail Policy of 2022 and complemented by the National Freight Logistics Roadmap.

This road map clarifies that strategic infrastructure such as rail and ports will remain in public ownership as assets belonging to the South African people. To this end, we must assure the country that we will do all in our power to rebuild and modernise our capabilities. We must also enhance the involvement of additional operators as a way of extending freight logistics capacity of the country and region beyond what the public sector alone can accomplish. It is important to point out that as an economy, we need freight logistics operators that can compete, but that can also complement each other when the need arises. The limited availability of state resources to fund infrastructure development makes private sector investment critical. To guide private sector investment in our five priority corridors, we have just concluded a request for information. Transnet will issue request for proposal from the end of August and so begin the formal procurement process.

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In line with the private sector participation, PSP, envisaged in the White Paper on National Rail Policy, Cabinet approved a PSP framework in 2023. The department has concluded a memorandum of understanding, MOU, with the Development Bank and National Treasury appointing the Development Bank as the hosting institution for the unit. We have established the Interim Rail Economic Regulatory Capacity, IRERC, to create fairness and transparency for third party operators to improve network utilisation, increase competition and reduce costs. In December last year, the Department of Transport issued the Network Statement and Rail Access Tariffs. Open access to the rail network will allow train operating companies to increase the volume of goods transported by rail, while our network infrastructure remains state owned.

As part of the rail reform programme, we have created the new Transnet Rail Infrastructure Manager, TRIM, to have a dedicated focus on the management of rail infrastructure. The Transnet Freight Rail operating company would now focus on the transportation of rail commodities through its rolling stock. To sustain our economy, we cannot afford to wait until the PSPs reach financial close. Funding sources for immediate rehabilitation of the five priority corridors includes the

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current transmit budget for rail and rolling stock maintenance and the purchase of port equipment. Submissions to the National Treasury's Budget Facility for Infrastructure, BFI, and private investment in refurbishing or expanding line capacity through existing customer agreements. As a result of the hard work by the Transnet War Room, port volumes were 54% higher at the end of last financial year than the previous year, rail tonnage increased by 9 million tons and containers handled in our ports increased by 48 000 units. In order to meet our targets of moving more than 42 million passengers per year and increasing air freight through the ACSA network of airports, the entity has been allocated R21,7 billion for infrastructure development.

This will improve facilities for passenger safety and comfort over the medium term and build new freight terminal at OR International Airport. In addition, we are fast-tracking projects to ensure reliable availability of jet fuel to all airlines at airports, as well as general upkeep and upgrading of facilities. This year has seen the appointment of new members of both the Air Services Licensing Council, ASLC, and the International Air Services Council, IASC, for a period of three years to regulate access to the domestic market based on

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the operators ability to operate safe, secure and reliable air services. Their functions include issuing air service licenses and taking enforcement action over noncompliance with the conditions of the relevant legislation and the licenses. The aviation branch has been instructed to develop an audit of all outstanding applications and review the license renewal process to cut red tape.

In December last year, following widespread concerns regarding capacity and operations at the Air Traffic Navigation Services, ATNS, I appointed a panel of experts to advise on the root causes of problems, and ensure remedial measures. In January, we set up four different works streams, and these work streams include both ATNS executives and members of the Committee of Aviation Experts. Since February 2025, 37 successful recruitments have been made in key areas, ranging from air traffic controllers, investigation and safety specialist engineering instructors and programming simulator. Funding sources for immediate - sorry. Substantial progress is also in evidence with regard to building the ATNS internal training pipeline, with 25 candidates recruited and currently undergoing validation. Similarly, progress is being made on ensuring the urgent upgrades of communication, navigation and

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surveillance systems, and relevant processes are in progress to stabilise the upgrade of national air traffic management systems. Regarding the safety management system, we can report that safety findings from various audits by ATNS and Civil Aviation Regulator are being closed out.

With respect to ensuring the availability of safe and compliant flight procedures across the country, we can report that a critical risk was averted with respect to April 2025 suspension of flight procedures at our major airports. Nevertheless, there are still too many instances of operations that are dependent on alternative means of compliance and exemptions. This requires a degree of business unusual, and to this end, ATNS is putting in place project Office to drive the elimination of this current situation. Hon members, the contribution of our state-owned airline, SA Airways, SAA, to the country's Gross Domestic Product, GDP, was confirmed by a recent study by Oxford Economics Africa. According to the study, SAA contributed R9,1 billion to South Africa's GDP in 2023-24 financial year, a figure projected to more than triple by 2930.

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The SAA is pursuing a bold route of expansion strategy to strengthen its regional and global footprint. The airline has begun a measured fleet expansion to meet growing demand, reinforcing its role as a connector of economies across the continent. The airline has also concluded three out of four outstanding audits and reported a profit of 252 million in the 2022-23 financial year, for the first time since 2012. The SAA is self-funding its operations and fleet growth while remaining open to a strategic equity partner as part of its long-term restructuring. Hon members, the condition of our national roads and feeder routes that connect them remain a cause for concern in the public domain. Accordingly, over the past year, National government, through its agency, SA National Road Agency SOC Limited, SANRAL, has requested, and at the request of provincial premiers has taken over 3 099 kilometres of provincial roads, which we intend to upgrade over the medium term through the Routine Road Maintenance, RRM, programme.

Last year, the Auditor General found irregularities in the procurement of the new driver's license card machine, and it is a matter of public record that we have taken this process on self-review to the courts. The old card machine is

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currently fixed, and we're hard at work to clear the backlog. To ensure we have a backup solution, we have just signed an MOU with the Government Printing Works, GPW. The taxi industry remains a major source of transport for the majority of South African commuters. Accordingly, formalising the industry and rooting out criminality and irregular operations remains a key focus. In this regard, in line with other economic sectors, existing taxi associations have a fundamental and important role to play in self-regulation and governance. Our department has committed to working with industry to reduce the cost of repayment of new vehicles and ensure a common process across all provinces for operator licenses that are linked to the term of loan repayments.

Hon members, the Department of Transport has been assigned shareholder responsibility for 16 public entities that operate within the transport sector to drive the priorities of the National Strategic Vision and the District Delivery Model, DDM. The entities under the Department of Transport are vital to delivering public value to our citizens. In this regard, the department will focus on ensuring accountability, good governance, financial stability and operational capabilities in the department is creating a standard accountability model

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for its 16 state-owned entities. Hon members, as I conclude, allow me to take this opportunity to thank team transport for all the hard work that has gone into turning around this huge ecosystem, including our Deputy Minister, Mr Hlengwa, the Acting Director-General, Mr Mokonyama Mathabathe, all the Deputy Director-Generals, DDGs, and senior managers, all chairs and CEOs of our entities, chairperson, Selelo Selamolela, and all hon members of the portfolio committee. I thank you.

Mr S D SELAMOLELA: Hon House Chair, hon Minister Barbara Creecy, hon Deputy Minister hon Hlengwa, members of the Portfolio Committee on Transport, people of South Africa, friends and compatriots, allow me to greet you this morning. Colleagues and compatriots, as the ANC we come to you at a time where we celebrate 70 years of the Freedom Charter. Recently, we concluded the celebration of the Youth Month and the Youth Day on 16 June 2025. It was the learners of 1976 who, on 16 June, marched against the injustice they experienced with the education system not respecting their culture, heritage, language and providing less primitive education compared to education system provided at the time to their white counterparts in our land.

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As I have already mentioned, this year also marks 70 years since the adoption of the most seminal document in the history of our country, the Freedom Charter in Kliptown on 26 June 1955, under the progressive banner of the Congress of the People. The workers, students, mothers, miners and domestic workers convened. Those were people who had tasted the bitterness of the apartheid and dared to dream of South Africa that belongs to all who live in it.

The Freedom Charter was not just a list of demands, it was and remains a moral compass and a declaration of the kind of South Africa we strive to build – a South Africa where no one is oppressed because of their race, language, belief, a South Africa where the doors of learning and culture are open to all, a South Africa where there is work, housing, security and comfort.

As the ANC we support this Budget Vote as we believe that it will provide the foundation to further the agenda of enhancing inclusive growth through efficient and effective transport system in our country. The Budget Vote inspires confidence as it is in alignment with the department's medium-term goals, which are to maintain South Africa's road network, support

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integrated road based public transport networks and invest in infrastructure to revitalise passenger rail services, freight and logistics infrastructure. It is our conviction that this will enable favourable ground for expansion, an employment development via service accessibility and inclusive economic activity. We want a budget that will have an impact on gross domestic product of our country, and we strongly believe that this is one.

The department's overall budget for the next three years is expected to be R287,3 billion, of which an estimated 91,5% will come from transfers and subsidies to provinces and municipalities at an amount of R1,3 billion. Public entities and departmental agencies will have R161,8 billion through various grants.

It is anticipated that the spending will rise from R86,4 billion in 2024-25 to R95,2 billion in 2027-28, at an average annual rate of 3,3% with a substantial GDP contribution.

The South African transportation industry is an essential part and a nucleus of our national economy. The industry which

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includes freight, road, rail, air, sea and logistics is estimated to contribute to between approximately 6,5% and 9,3% of the gross domestic product.

The success of other economic sectors depends squarely and largely on this contribution, which affects everything from trade and tourism to job generation and general economic progress, of which jobs are more needed, especially by our youth in the country. We believe that the current budget will invest in rail corridors infrastructure to revitalise passenger and freight rail services. An amount of R40,8 billion of the expected R66,1 billion in total transfer to the agencies over the medium-term, are designated for capital expenditure.

To fill financing gap in the rolling stock fleet replacement programme, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa has been given priority over the SA National Roads Agency for R2,8 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, term. The plan is to cut down on lead times. The nation must prioritise infrastructure upgrades, boost logistics effectiveness and use technology to improve visibility and management in the South African transportation related supply

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chain. This entails making investments in rail, ports, roadways, streamlining transportation roads and using technologies such as automation and real time tracking. We believe this budget will maintain our country's roads transport programme, supports efforts to maintain road networks, constructs and upgrade our infrastructure while providing sufficient access to safer roads.

Over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period, the programme is expected to receive R161,7 billion, of which R106,8 billion will go to the SA National Roads Agency, which is the main agency responsible for carrying out these goals. We strongly believe that it is currently doing well in this regard. The nontoll network will receive R54,9 billion of the agency's share where the Gauteng Free Way Improvement Project will receive R19,3 billion, the N2 Wild Coast project will receive R4,3 billion, the R573 Moloto Road Development Corridor, hon Mabhena, will receive R3,2 billion and R94,2 million will be used to test and deploy a single ticketing system for Gauteng public transportation that will enable commuters to use all public transport transportation facilities with a single pass.

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To increase trade within the SADC region, South Africa's transport infrastructure must be regionally integrated to enable the free flow of people and commodities. This integration entails creating a unified regional transportation policy, enhancing transportation infrastructure such as roads and rail, roads and expediting trade and customs processes.

The integrated public transport system based on roads in Cape Town, Ekurhuleni, Gauteng, George, Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela Bay, Polokwane – ga bo Maraba Sexwale – Rustenburg and Tshwane, the department will distribute the public transport network grant to municipalities for infrastructure improvements and to cover the indirect cost of bus rapid transit services.

Over the medium-term, R22,4 billion will be allocated for the grant. Road based public transport services offered by the provincial transportations are subsidised by the public transport operations grant.

We remain committed as this government to the reduction of logistics costs for globally competitive environment to attract foreign investments. We do, however, understand that

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in order to lower logistical costs, boost global competitiveness through in foreign investment, South African transportation industry remains essential and at the centre. Efficient logistics system and better transportation infrastructure can save expenses for distributors and manufacturers alike, speed up deliveries, cut down on waste and increase access to business knowledge. This increases the nation's appeals to foreign investors and providers. We need to acknowledge that we still need to improve our systems as government to be better prepared for an unpredictable economic climate which directly affects transportation plan in this country. The transportation industry in our country has always been cyclical and highly dependent on the state of the economy.

We need to address supply chain challenges which are affected by the economy through the rising cost of living, extreme inflationary pressure and sharply rising interest rates have all forced many businesses to adjust in recent years.

Maintaining successful operations in the face of all these challenges is a never-ending task, particularly when future events are unpredictable. for us we believe that as we support

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the budget there must be a mechanism to make sure that we implement our budgetary obligations. We need to create and develop strategies where underspending is further minimised by asking the National Treasury to remove containment restrictions pertaining to departmental opening so that appropriately qualified candidates can be appointed to management roles. Projects and implementation programmes will benefit from this.

Hon House Chair, hon Deputy Minister and hon Minister, hon members, we are all aware of the challenges confronting many of our strategic entities. The interventions alluded to in this budget are meant to alleviate those challenges and return these entities to sound prudent and efficient running way. We strongly believe, hon Minister, that you are on track in relation to this end. We have no doubt whatsoever that you will do all that is needed in this regard.

Today, as we mark the Mandela Month, a month of selfless service to humanity, we commit to bring about stability and positive progress in the memory of a giant. [Time expired.] The ANC moves to support this budget. I thank you and thank you very much.

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Mr T L MONTANA: House Chair, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, hon members, I stand on behalf of MKP to debate the Budget Vote of the Department of Transport. Budget Votes are about statements of the various departments. Let me state from the outset that, as the MKP, we reject Budget Vote 40, and we cannot associate ourselves with the policy direction of this department. We also reject a 40% increase in the fuel levy, which will bring more suffering to citizens, impose huge transport costs and cause serious damage more than even the proposed VAT would have done. I will detail some of these below.

Clearly, hon Minister, the transfer of key strategic sectors in the hands of the largely untransformed white private sector and foreign investors seems to be at the heart of your Budget Vote today. We are not surprised by all of these. In your first public statement as the new Minister of Transport, you did mention that you will engage with and take forward the work of the National Logistics Crisis Committee, NLCC, which had been appointed by the President.

The NLCC had not only set the agenda for the Minister of Transport, but its national road map has determined the work

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of her department. The main driver, of course, is structural reforms being implemented in various sectors of the economy, which forms part of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. These comments, of course, the Minister has been at pains to clarify that this is not privatisation. The state, she claims, will retain ownership of its transport infrastructure or assets.

As the MKP, hon Minister, we do not have an unprincipled opposition to private sector participation or competition in the transport sector, but the Minister clearly does not appreciate how her current policy reforms and the specific private-sector model, which is pursuing, if allowed to prevail, will undermine the very capacity of the state and sustainability of the transport sector, and its ability in the long term to meet the development needs of the country.

We say, hon Minister, there are better policy alternatives and there are more efficient PSP models which could allow the private sector to thrive whilst addressing the development needs of the country. I will spent part of my speech to explain what I mean by that. However, let me start by explaining what structural reforms really means, because this

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has nothing to do with the removal of impediments to growth or constraints bandied about by the government.

Structural reform are nothing else but the opening of key network industries, like transport, energy, telecoms and others, which were historically dominated by SOEs and transfer control of these to the private sector in the country and to foreign investors. Structural reforms have nothing to do with building the capacity of the state or transforming the South African economy.

It has got nothing to do with industrialisation through promoting local manufacturing and local content or building a class of black industrialists or stimulating new economic activity, as it is. In a specific case of transport, it has nothing to do with changing the structure of Transport that we inherited in 1994.

The fallacy of these structural reforms is in the belief that by simply bringing the private sector, things will change by themselves. The private sector is viewed as inherently efficient. No detailed operational improvement plans are needed for these network industries. The Minister of Finance

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keeps on telling us that structural reforms are about removing the constraints on the economy but fails to provide the numbers in the budget showing the benefits of structural reforms across the economy or to measure the efficiency gains. All these are not costed anywhere.

The introduction of competition has in many instances been accompanied by the requirements to separate infrastructure from operations and creation of regulatory authorities, but the design of suitable industry structure is key to the introduction of any competition, Minister. Competition authorities and regulations have, therefore, a legal and moral duty to ensure that specific sector industry structure they approve are in the long-term interests of the specific sector and the economy at large.

If they approve multiple operators in a specific sector, competition authorities should satisfy themselves that there will be adequate revenues generated to fund operations and maintenance, as well as capacity to meet future investment requirements. This is what is meant by the ability or capacity of the industry to recapitalise itself.

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Hon Minister, competition and introduction of private sector should not be a religion to be introduced blindly, irrespective of the consequences, the size of the economy, traffic volumes in the specific sector, revenue being generated from operations and the market conditions. In fact, our assessment is that the Transnet Rail Infrastructure Manager, Trim, that you mentioned just now, Minister, we require billions of rands in financial support from the national fiscus, from as early 2026, with increasing funding requirements every year thereafter.

The MK Party says this is extremely irresponsible and should be rejected. This is the beginning of the destruction of our railways, a major setback for South Africa and its economy. The MK Party rejects this plan being rolled out by the coalition government. This is not based on the demands of our people or level of economic development, and it lacks sound understanding and knowledge of the operations of Transnet.

Even under this specific PSP, Minister, the private sector will be left with no option but to increase prices because without vertically integrated industries, like transport and energy, their operational costs will skyrocket. They will be

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forced to come to you, hon Minister, and ask for financial assistance from government. This will be a merry -go-round, and we have seen the same madness being applied in the commercial ports.

However, private sector participation in sport is not a new thing. There have always been private companies in port terminals. The distinct feature of the current period is that strategic port terminals, especially those dealing with petroleum products and liquid fuels, including storage facilities, are now being given away.

In the context of the shifting geopolitical changes and the critical need to protect our national interests, particularly in respect of energy sources, it is vitally important for Transnet National Ports Authority to retain ownership and operational control of key strategic terminals in the port environment.

We have looked at the budget, hon Minister. One of the major things is that it doesn't champion public transport transformation. We have seen how the taxi industry is being undermined. Out of R156,9 billion rand, you only allocate a

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mere R110 million rand for the Taxi Empowerment Project and R408 million as part of the Covid-19 Relief Fund for the taxi industry, which is quite insignificant.

We also want to say: Hon Minister, you promised that you will review the Taxi Recap Programme, yet it is not done. We have seen the underspending in your own department. In fact, when you analyse the numbers, the allocation to public transport has in real terms decreased by minus-167%. This is really unacceptable! In a country like ours, with its geography of apartheid, where people live far from cities, surely public transport should feature high on the agenda.

Hon Minister, I saw you and the Minister of Finance celebrating about the allocation to Prasa. I also want to say that last year, government told Prasa to cut down the numbers; now, suddenly, you are increasing them. It is quite clear that this has got nothing to do with allocation to Prasa and championing public transport, but it has to do with the high penalties if you carry on ... [Interjections.] [Time expired.] On that basis, Minister, we think that we should pursue alternative public transport. I thank you.

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Mr T B MABHENA: Chairperson, allow me to begin my contribution in this House today by drawing on the ethical work of Dr Jessica Flanagan, a renowned scholar in ethics and democratic values at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond. In her recent journal article titled Evaluate Consistency and Ethical Leadership, Dr Flanagan argues that political and business leaders should be held to the same moral standards as everyone else.

She calls this principle evaluative consistency and presents it as a direct challenge to evaluative exceptionalism the misguided I believe that leaders are entitled to operate by a different set of ethical rules. She goes on further to say that in line with evaluative consistency, there is a single set of moral principles applicable to all individuals, regardless of their leadership roles.

This is in stark contrast with the evaluative exceptionalism, the notion that leadership ethics should be evaluated by a different set of moral standards that do not apply to ordinary decision makers. That brings me to my core concern. What we witnessed in the Portfolio Committee on Transport on

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Wednesday, 11 June, was a blatant case of evaluative exceptionalism.

The ANC, Action SA, MK Party and the EFF joined forces to hijack the meeting and turn it into a tribunal on the Road Accident Fund, RAF. In doing so, they cast aside principles and processes and openly undermined the authority of the Road Accident Fund Board, all in defence of a suspended CEO. This move, which flew in the face of good governance and accountability, appeared designed to grant a suspended official a platform to undermine the leadership of the board that appointed him and evade proper scrutiny.

The DA refused to legitimise this fuss, and staged a principled walkout from the meeting once the suspended CEO of the Road Accident Fund was given a parliamentary platform to address the committee. We strongly condemn the actions of the chairperson of the portfolio committee for failing to protect the integrity of the committee and that of Parliament.

This incident was not about transparency it was about protecting vested interests and frustrating accountability.

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The DA subscribes to evaluative consistency and not evaluative exceptionalism.

To this end, the DA was vindicated when the Gauteng High Court on Thursday, 26 June 2025 delivered a scathing judgment in the same matter between the suspended CEO who had taken the Road Accident Fund Board to court, contending that his suspension by the board was unlawful and had petitioned the court to overturn the suspension and reinstate him.

In delivering his judgment, Judge Moshoana stated that, and I quote:

The suspension affected by the board is lawful, rational and reasonable. There is no factual or legal basis to declare the suspension to be unlawful, irrational or unreasonable. Mr Letsoalo has failed to establish a prima facie right, even one open to doubt, and failed to demonstrate any apprehension of irreparable harm. He is therefore not entitled to any interdictory relief, whether interim or final.

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This judgement vindicates the Road Accident Fund Board decision and exposes the political theatre we witnessed in Parliament for what it truly was. It is worth noting that this application was dismissed with costs. A lesson to be learnt here is that evaluative consistency should always trump the narrow interests of political handlers and principals who are compromised.

A recent *Sunday Times* investigation revealed shocking details of how the suspended CEO squandered more than R10 million of taxpayers' funds on his own personal security. This included getting himself nine bodyguards and three bodyguards for his wife. As if that was not enough, he also bought himself a R4 million armoured BMW X5 and three VW Golf GTIs at a cost of R800 000 each as part of his bloated personal security detail, all at taxpayers' expense.

All this while the Road Accident Fund has thousands of pending claims that have not been settled, even to the point where the Road Accident Fund matters are clogging the Gauteng High Court roll. In a recent judgment in the Gauteng division of the High Court, Judge Jan Swanepoel did not mince his words in what he terms, and I quote: "a chaotic approach to litigation by the

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Road Accident Fund, which has resulted in huge losses of taxpayers' money".

To further demonstrate the chaos that engulfs the Road Accident Fund, as demonstrated by Business Life, Judge Jan Swanepoel was very clear that, and I quote: "The main problem lies with the Road Accident Fund". The Road Accident Fund did not deal with these matters properly and did not send lawyers to court to oppose applications. If it did, it did not provide them with any instructions. This has resulted in default judgments. The fund would then apply to rescind the judgment, often on baseless grounds.

Judge Swanepoel further stated, and I quote: "In this manner, huge sums of money, public money, it must be emphasised, are lost".

Yet we are told that the Road Accident Fund is the best performing entity. This is not true and here is the evidence of taxpayers' monies going down the drain.

Just in May, Judge Swanepoel had to grant a R25 million default judgement because the Road Accident Fund did not send

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lawyers to court. In the same week, an additional two default judgments worth R50 million were granted, all because of the chaotic nature of the Road Accident Fund.

How did we get here? Let me paint you a picture of how we got here. The Road Accident Fund's main activities and mandate is that of claims and litigation. That is the core function that makes up the existence of the Road Accident Fund. In the 2023-24 Road Accident Fund annual report, it is noted that the following vacancies exist.

First, the chief claims officer is vacant, head of claims operations is vacant, head of legal services is vacant, head of people management is vacant, head of enterprise risk management is vacant, and head of financial management and reporting is vacant. To add salt to wound, guess what? The following executives are on suspension: The chief executive officer is on suspension rightfully so and the chief investment officer is on suspension.

The systematic erosion of corporate governance at the Road Accident Fund was not by accident, but by design. Here is why: The suspended CEO was fulfilling the role of chief claims

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officer and was also fulfilling the role of head of claims operations. How on earth can one individual assume three c-suite positions in one entity at the same time, you may ask. Here is the answer.

This is how systematic collapse for the purposes of capturing an entity is done. We are calling on the Minister to retire the entire board and urgently appoint a new board and ensure that all vacancies at the Road Accident Fund are filled because even the person currently entrusted with the role of head of legal services at the Road Accident Fund, does not even have a law degree.

We welcome the publishing of the request for information for the five priority lines as stated by the Minister earlier calling on the private sector participation issued in March by the Minister of Transport. Transnet must accelerate the process to issue rail concessions on these five priority lines, given that the network statements issued in December 2024 and January 2025 have already provided a detailed pricing guideline.

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We believe the participation of the private sector will assist with injecting the much-needed capital and expertise to provide relief to a constrained fiscus. We also support the vertical separation of Transnet and the proposal to create a fully-fledged subsidiary in the form of Transport National Ports Authority. These are some of the good things that the department is doing.

In closing, not all is doom and gloom. Here is a silver lining. In terms of the Integrated Public Transport Network, where the DA governs, services are delivered efficiently and transparently, even under challenging conditions. According to the national Department of Transport, the DA-led City of Cape Town leads the nation in inefficient inclusive public transport delivery.

The City of Cape Town has emerged as the leading implementing agent of the Integrated Public Transport Network, transporting 19,3 million passengers annually. This is almost half of the national total of 44 million trips recorded across the nine operational municipalities. This stands as clear evidence of the DA-led city's commitment to providing safe, reliable and accessible transport to all communities.

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Cape Town's implementation efficiency is further reflected in its financial performance, with the city having spent 59% of its allocated public transport network grant funding - the second highest expenditure rate nationally. Unlike many ANC-run municipalities, where corruption, maladministration, inefficiency and thuggery take place, work runs are routinely withheld due to non-performance of these corruption riddled municipalities.

The City of Cape Town which is led by hon executive Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis and his team have made sure that the city continues to lead where others are failing. Cape Town continues to demonstrate sound governance and accountability in public spending. Hon Chairperson, thank you very much.

IsiNdebele:

Siyathokoza. Bayede, Ngwenyama!

Mr M B BLOSE: The debate is about transport. [Interjections.]

Oh!

IsiZulu:

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Sibingelela umkhuzi wamabutho e-EFF, sibingelela umongameli wenhlangano yamamnyama elwela inkululeko nomnotho ezweni lethu, sibingelela umhlanganyelwa, umavula kuvaliwe udikadika ibhande lomshini umshayi wendoda iphindelela, umudli webhantshi nezinkinobho zalo, umakhuluma eNingizimu Afrika kuqhaqhazela o-Donald Trump le eMelika, sithi phezu kwabo mfo ka-Malema ungabe usabayeka.

Mongameli le nyanga kaNtulikazi iwuphawu olubalulekile kwinhlangano yethu njengoba sizobe sigubha iminyaka eyishumi nambili. Sibiza wonke amalungu nabalandeli be-EFF ukuthi bazojabula nathi e-Khayelitsha ngomhlaka-26 kuyona le ephezulu lapho esizobe sijabulela khona ukukhula kwenhlangano yethu. Inhlangano enobuholi obukhethwe abantu hhayi umhlanganiso nje wasemakhoneni.

English:

House Chair, today we stand here to reject this Budget Vote of the Department of Transport. This budget is an indictment of the department's persistent failures. A department that lacks a transformative vision. A department that has a consistent inability to deliver for the working class and the poor.

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How can we support a budget that fails to resolve the chronic failure and collapse of national, provincial and municipal roads? Our people are dying daily on the roads, yet this department is obsessed with celebrating minor victories in road fatalities over the Easter weekend, while a week later, over 20 people died in a single road accident in the Eastern Cape. We are led by content creators here; people are obsessed with cameras and want to be famous.

This Budget Vote reflects a department that is trapped in bureaucratic inertia, a department addicted to consultants, paralysed by outdated organisational structures and unable to modernise the transport infrastructure in a way that shall serve our people. We see no plans or evidence in this budget that seek to revive Transnet and to get many trucks off our roads. How many more lives must die on the roads for this department to act decisively to save our people? Currently, as the EFF, we continue to mourn the lives of our 10 beloved fighters who lost their lives in a tragic accident involving a truck in Vryheid on 16 June. To support this budget would be to dishonour their memory. Our heroes died before their time, all because of a careless government that has no interest in serving our people.

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There is a heavy reliance on consultants in this budget, especially in rail transport. There is a ridiculous increase of over 86,2% for consultants. This is an admission by the department that it does not have the necessary state capacity to deliver on its core mandate. It is a department that heavily relies on outsourcing its work, just so as to sustain patronage networks for the ANC and to feed those corrupt tenderpreneurs at the expense of service delivery. The department has presided over the spectacular failure of the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme. Thousands of old and unsafe vehicles remain on our roads, endangering commuters and undermining any genuine transformation in public transport. It is a ...

IsiZulu:

... sobonana emathuneni ...

English:

... kind of situation.

IsiZulu:

Bayafa abantu bethu nikhona Ngqongqoshe.

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English:

Go Durban in eThekwinI remains inoperative despite the fact that infrastructure in Corridor C3 has been completed and should be live, yet nothing is happening. The Ministry has once again demonstrated cowardice and poor leadership in resolving the issues of eThekwinI.

Instead of mitigating the disputes and finding consensus between taxi operators and the municipality, the department has chosen to bully the situation by withholding the grant that is critical to completing the project. We can tell you now, Minister, that this approach is only inviting further problems for you. Let us warn you about the systematic destruction that is happening at the Road Accident Fund, RAF. We see you, and you shall be exposed. The department has engineered a crisis at RAF, a crisis that does not exist, all because certain politicians, including the DA by the way, want to satisfy the greed of white capital, in particular the owners of this country. [Interjections.] You must keep quiet when I'm talking.

Minister, you must tell us if you were appointed by Discovery Medical Aid to be the Minister of Transport, because we must

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know exactly how to treat you. I don't understand why Discovery would write you a letter and give you instructions to fire the CEO of RAF. What interest does Discovery have in the Road Accident Fund? Why are you being given instructions by Discovery? Everything that we see happening now in the RAF is nothing but the execution of the wishes of white businesses in Stellenbosch, the funders of the DA.

So, you must continue and bury those who advocate for true transformation, but the people of South Africa see you and one day they shall judge you harshly. So, the EFF will not endorse this budget, a budget that allocates over R95 billion in public funds but has no credible plan for the radical transformation. Let us give you a few solutions. As the EFF, this is what we demand; a decisive end to the department's addiction to consultants and outsourcing of work. Just go and utilise the EFF's cardinal pillar number 3 and build state capacity. I'm giving you solutions, Minister, don't say I do not teach you anything.

Let us get immediate reform of the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, Prasa, the SA National Road Agency, Sanral and Transnet with strict performance-based contracts and committee

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oversight. The urgent finalisation of the road infrastructure funding policy with guaranteed allocations to rural roads. Subsidised public transport for the unemployed and low-income households utilised until these measures, Minister, and more, which I will send to you in writing, are finalised and implemented. The EFF rejects this budget. Thank you very much.

Mr N M HADEBE: House Chairperson, the IFP notes and welcomes an essential budget that lies at the very heart of South Africa's economic recovery, spatial justice and community safety, and one whose mandate aligns closely with the IFP's longstanding vision of connecting people to opportunities through safe, reliable and equitable mobility. At the outset, the IFP commends the Department of Transport for its firm commitment to revitalising the country's transport infrastructure in line with the President's 2025 state of the nation address priorities the repair of roads and bridges, the modernisation of ports and airports, the recovery of commuter rail services and enabling Transnet to function optimally.

We are encouraged by the department's allocated budget of R80,6 billion, which reflects the scale of the task ahead. While we note that by the end of the second quarter,

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R39,9 billion has been spent, we appreciate the department's transparency in reporting spending trends and its intentions to accelerate disbursement in the second half of the year.

That said, we encourage the department to continue prioritising efficiency in transfers and subsidies, especially those linked to strategic interventions like the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme and the AARTO National Roll-out.

The IFP believes these initiatives must reach beneficiaries in a timely and transparent manner. We, therefore, propose that the department continue enhancing stakeholder communication and application systems to reduce delays. We also commend the department's effort to contain costs and apply prudence in human resources.

However, the IFP notes that compensation of employees sits at only 48,2% of its allocation, largely due to vacancies. While we support the principles of fiscal discipline, we caution that excessive delays in filling critical posts may weaken capacity, particularly in provinces with backlogs in infrastructure planning and maintenance. We urge the department to work closely with the Department of Public

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Service and Administration to unlock key appointments without compromising oversight.

Regarding the taxi industry, we continue to support inclusive efforts to uplift the sector, which remains the backbone of public transport. We call on the department to ensure that recapitalisation and compliance processes are simplified and accessible, especially to small and informal operators. A healthy taxi sector is a cornerstone of both safety and economic mobility for everyone in every province, from uMkhanyakude to Matatiele. It is transport that determines whether a child can reach a classroom, whether a business can deliver its goods or whether a job seeker makes it to an interview.

The IFP acknowledges that this department is not just a builder of roads. It is a builder of dignity. In conclusion, the IFP accepts the Budget Vote, not as a blank cheque, but as a contract for delivery that is ethical, inclusive and felt by the people of South Africa. I thank you.

Afrikaans:

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Mnr P A VAN STADEN: Voorsitter, ek dink die Minister en Adjunkminister het 'n departement geërf wat moeilik omkeerbaar gaan wees. Die departement is besig om die burgers van die land te faal, en die departement is nie net besig om ver tekort te skiet met die uitvoering van sy oorsigrol oor die provinsiale departemente van vervoer nie, maar ook met die dienslewering wat hy veronderstel is om aan die publiek te lewer.

Met 'n totale begroting van R95,7 miljard vir die 2025-26 boekjaar word daar maar slegs 'n bedrag van R70,9 miljoen beskikbaar gestel vir die ontwikkeling en implementering van 'n volhoubare en betroubare pad-infrastruktuurnetwerk, dit terwyl daar bewerings gemaak word van korrupsie met die multimiljard-rand N3-hoofweg opgraderingsprojek tussen Durban en Pietermaritzburg, wat ongeveer 79 km beslaan. Hierdie projek word tans geskat op 'n waarde van R29 miljard, dit terwyl die toestand van hoofsaaklik paaie in die Vrystaat in 'n haglike toestand is en bouwerk al vir jare sloer, en dit terwyl slegs 35% van Gauteng se provinsiale paaie wat sowat 5 000 km beslaan in 'n goeie toestand is.

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Ons ervaar tans probleme met die Padongelukkefonds waar die hoofuitvoerende beampte geskors is en hom tot die Hooggeregshof gewend het om sy skorsing te keer en daar uitspraak gelewer is dat sy skorsing van krag moet bly. Die entiteit is so deurmekaar. Ons het op 25 Junie as die portefeuljekomitee met die entiteit vergader, en dit is duidelik dat hulle nie kop of stert uitmaak van die chaos wat tans in die entiteit aan die gang is nie.

Die wil ontbreek ook tans om probleme met die drukmasjien van die bestuurderslisensiekaarte vir eens en vir altyd uit te sorteer. Hierdie masjien wat tans 26 jaar oud is, moet dringend vervang word, en die VF Plus het reeds vrae hieroor aan die Minister gerig. Ons wil ook graag weet wat die Bestuurslisensiekaartrekening gaan maak met hul begroting van R379 miljoen vir 2025-26. Ek dink dit is tyd dat hierdie entiteit voor die komitee gedaag word.

English:

The cash injection that Transnet received of R51 billion from government in the form of a state guarantee has saved the entity from downgrading by Moody's. Transnet did not have enough cash to finance its operations. Transnet must use this

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money to settle its debt over the next five years. Moody's has indicated it will monitor the situation. However, the FF Plus is of the opinion that this problem at Transnet will not be resolved and that, eventually, they will run out of cash again. Transnet received a state guarantee in 2023 of an amount of R47 billion, and that has already been depleted. State guarantees will not be a permanent solution to Transnet's problems. The question must be asked for how long we want to give cash injections to state entities clearly not in a position to do business as usual.

It is of great concern that even with the cash constraints at Transnet, they still gave an increase of 6% over the next three years to their staff members. The taxpayer must now bear the cost. The taxpayer is not bottomless ATM.

Afrikaans:

Die Passasierspooragentskap van Suid-Afrika, Prasa, ontvang tans 'n bedrag van R18,35 miljard van die departement.

English:

Meanwhile, it is reported that Prasa has paid contractors R2,5 billion to repair all trains that are not in use and are

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being dumped in depots all over the country. Prasa has to come and explain to the committee what the reason for this is. Rather sell these unused trains in order for the entity to receive a cash injection.

The Bus Rapid Transit System is nothing more than a waste of money, as some of its projects have come to a complete standstill in places like Rustenburg in the North West. The department should take control of this situation and see to it that these projects be completed in order to provide a sustainable and reliable public transport system to the citizen of South Africa. I thank you, Chairperson.

Ms M P KOBE: House Chairperson, ActionSA cannot support Vote No 40: Transport in its current form.

Whilst the Department of Transport plays a vital role in enabling growth and connectivity, this budget once again fails to deliver real solutions to the systemic failures that define our transport sector. South Africa's railway system under Prasa remains dysfunctional, despite a massive R22,9 billion allocation. Although the department claims 31 of 40 corridors have been restored and 200 modern trains deployed, this has

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not translated into reliable service for commuters.

Infrastructure remains vandalised, signalling systems are incomplete, and safety incidents persist. Without visible recovery or accountability, this budget rewards failure and not progress.

Worse still, taxpayers are paying for an outdated general overhaul project where R2,5 billion was spent to resurrect the yellow fleet that lies rotting in our depots. This project, I can assure you, isn't aligned with South African commuters' priorities but with the priorities of corrupt politicians and officials. I spent a significant part of my constituency time in Ekurhuleni, where the people of Daveyton looked me in the eyes and said to please ask the Minister when they will get their trains back on track. Our population is growing, our roads are congested, and the public system is highly fragmented, causing a vicious cycle that keeps our people disconnected, marginalised, and the economy stifled. Solutions will cost money, but, if the systemic issues are not addressed, we will continue to throw money into a bottomless pit.

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The minibus taxi industry relied by millions of South Africans remains neglected. The long-promised public transport subsidy policy has not yet been approved, and the so-called empowerment model has not materialised into tangible support. Whilst the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme continues, the lack of formalisation, regulation, and infrastructure investment is a glaring omission.

Meanwhile, the Road Accident Fund, RAF, continues to drain public finances without reform. The proposed Road Accident Benefit Scheme Bill remains stalled, yet billions of rand is poured into the RAF despite its administrative collapse and growing liabilities. The latest impasse between the department, the board, and chief executive officer is a glaring example of the failures of this multibillion-rand entity.

Road infrastructure is also in poor shape. Despite large allocations to the SA National Roads Agency Limited and provinces, the committee's report highlights ongoing potholes, crumbling bridges, and unsafe roads, particularly in rural areas. I must remind you, hon Minister, that road infrastructure is not merely concrete and tar. It is quite

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literally an essential part of our constitutional rights to access health, to access education, and to access economic opportunities. The state of our roads in the rural Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga is a direct violation of those human rights.

Worryingly, the department is ramping up on spending on consultants – R628 million in the 2025-26 financial year, whilst critical posts remain vacant and the organisational structure outdated. Just last month, young people sat in this very Chamber, lamenting the 43,1% unemployment rate, yet your department sits at a vacancy rate of 15%. This is not a sign of reform, unfortunately, but a sign of dysfunction.

This budget is not a road map to better transport. It is a continuation of broken promises and mismanagement. ActionSA cannot support this report.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister Creecy, the director-general, hon members, and all our entities, maybe very briefly, so that one does not get side-tracked, just a few things to correct. Hon Montana, the whole issue around alternative transport may find itself

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wanting because we are speaking about trying to fix the entire ecosystem of transport. So, if you speak alternative transport, then I can only assume you want us to write broomsticks like Harry Potter. We are fixing roads, aviation, maritime, and the entire ecosystem is receiving our focus. Hon Mabhena, the successes you speak about in Cape Town, particularly around the Passenger Rail of SA, Prasa, it remains an entity of the national Department of Transport and not that of Cape Town. Hon Bloose, I think it would be irresponsible for us to litigate the report around the tragic set of circumstances that led to the loss of life of EFF members from this podium and we have indicated we would want to engage with the leadership of the EFF on those realities. The irony, of course, is that you go and speak about content creation being the Minister and me, but you go and quote content creation in your speech. So, it is a case of the kettle calling the pot black, but the content creators ... yourself ... and I hope the sound bites help you move forward. Then, on the issue of signalling, hon Kobe, this budget speaks about signalling being provided for. So, it is quite an irony that in your projected extent of reading, that one certainly fell through the cracks.

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It is once again an honour and privilege for us to table this Budget Vote here today, because it is our understanding that our department carries the weight of a nation's mobility and economic lifeblood, connecting people, enabling trade, and serving as a platform for development, transformation, and opportunity. In a country still grappling with spatial inequality and the legacies of the past, transport is not just infrastructure; it is liberation.

Minister Creecy has, in the interests of organised, streamlined oversight in the department, delegated to me the responsibilities of the Road Transport Management Corporation, RTMC, Cross-border Transport Agency, CBTA, SA Maritime Safety Authority, SAMSA, the Road Accident Fund, RAF, and the Ports Regulator. In addition, I am charged with the responsibilities of public road safety and the Provincial Roads Maintenance grant. I want to thank the Minister for her guidance and leadership in the exercise of my responsibilities. We want to state upfront that road safety remains one of the most urgent developmental and public health imperatives of our time. Every year, 12 000 lives are lost on South African roads, leaving behind broken families, burdening the health care system and

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costing our economy an estimated R200 billion annually. This is not just a transport issue; it is now a national crisis.

Guided by the Medium-Term Development Plan, MTDP, the Minimum Programme of action and service delivery of the Government of National Unity, GNU, we are focusing on high-impact co-ordinated interventions that speak directly to the lives lived realities of our people. In line with the United Nations Decade of Action, we have committed to halving road fatalities by 2030, and encouragingly, our efforts are beginning to yield measurable results. In the first five months of 2025, fatal road crashes have declined by 8% and fatalities have decreased by 9% compared to the same period last year - hon Blose is now not here. These are not just statistics; they represent saved lives, trauma prevented, and hope restored.

We are currently in the process of finalising the review of the National Road Safety Strategy, building on the 2016 to 2030 framework. The revised strategy strengthens our focus on the four Es, that is, enforcement, engineering, education and evaluation, with a specific focus on pedestrians who continue to form a high proportion of fatalities, which are currently standing at 45%. Law enforcement remains the backbone of our

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response. While budget constraints and labour-related matters have hampered our full implementation of the 24/7 operations. We have continued to deploy the national traffic police strategically across the country, and provinces are now rolling out the flexi shift system with a renewed focus on the evening patrols, where many high-risk incidents occur.

The journey of reforming the transport ecosystem must be underpinned by institutional progress and modernisation. We are diligently working towards the roll-out of the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences, AARTO, a necessary step in establishing a culture of accountability on our roads. Similarly, the reform of the Road Accident Fund is underway to restore the fund's financial health and ensure the fair, timely compensation of victims.

The Provincial Roads Maintenance grant remains a vital tool for preserving our existing infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where roads are their lifeline of our economic activity, access to health care, and schooling. We will continue to monitor the efficiency and transparency in the use of this grant and with the establishment of the Follow the Money operations that we have undertaken as the national

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department, to make sure that funds are correctly used in provinces.

A cornerstone of our strategy for road safety, amongst others, as I have said, is AARTO, and it is poised to fundamentally change how we address traffic violations and promote compliance. The implementation of Phase 2 of the AARTO, beginning on 1 December 2025, will be a significant step in our broader efforts to reduce road fatalities and ensure due regard for all the rules of the road and compliance. We are piloting in 69 municipalities that are prepared for the roll-out, and we will continue to monitor the state of readiness in each of our municipalities.

The Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre, MRCC, in Cape Town, continues to do good work, and so far, as maritime safety is concerned. As we broaden our focus on transport safety, we must address the critical challenges beyond road transport, for example, the commercial fishing vessels safety compliance audit conducted at the instruction of the department and the Ministry in collaboration with Samsa serves as an important reminder that safety standards must be enforced. The first phase of this audit took place in PE with 65 inspections that

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were carried out on fishing fleets. This audit revealed numerous safety compliance issues, and we anticipate the audit team's report to reach us by August.

On the Road Accident Fund, which remains a cornerstone to supporting the commitment of individuals injured in road accidents, the Road Accident Fund has faced severe operational and financial challenges, including escalating liabilities, systemic inefficiencies, and prolonged delays in processing compensation claims. These issues have eroded public confidence and placed undue strain on accident victims awaiting relief. We are, as the Ministry, working towards the stabilisation of the RAF, but further, we are going to decisively deal with the challenges as we bring about the Road Accident Benefit Scheme, which, amongst others, will ensure a no fault compensation system, defined benefits, faster direct payments, structured long-term benefits paid in annuities instead of lump sums, ensure the exclusion of illegal foreign nationals, and a medical-based claims processing system and an integrated data claim system. So, we are en route to ensuring that the RAF is fit-for-purpose and can respond to its mandate.

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The Provincial Roads Maintenance grant, PRMG, at R16 billion allocation specifically earmarked for roads through national budget in the medium-term and it is our commitment to ensure that the fund can fulfil its obligations as well and distribute it more effectively across provinces based on the actual road conditions, maintenance backlogs, and disaster response, with specific focus to deal with new projects and deal with the backlogs as well. As I have said, we have established the Follow the Money audit team, which will monitor the use of the PRMG.

We cannot overlook the importance of cross-border logistics in ensuring the safety and efficiency of the transport system, and the Regional Integration Strategy approved by Cabinet in March 2024, focuses on improving our cross-border transport efficiency to promote regional economic growth and stability. We are making strides to digitise our borders. As we constitute the Single Transport Economic Regulator, the Port Regulator SA will form the nucleus of the new entity, where necessary, to ensure that there is no interruption or disruption to the work that needs to be done. The assurance we want to give to this House is that the Ministry is one, the department is hard at work, and we are making progress in

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turning things around. Those who say there is no progress, if you read the transport report of the first quarter of this year, on every indicator we have proven that we are making inroads; more people riding trains, more people on our roads. We are moving on with the logistics work. So, we are hard at work. The doomsayers are completely lost.

In conclusion, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to Minister Creecy for her unwavering support, mentorship, and guidance in my new responsibilities, the acting director-general, the ministerial staff, the entire department, and all our entities. Together, colleagues, we are working towards a future ... [Time expired.] ... I thank you.

Mr W M THRING: Hon House Chairperson, the Department of Transport's 2025-26 budget of some R95 billion appears ambitious on paper, but beneath the surface lies a troubling pattern of bloated transfers, sluggish implementation, and a widening gap between policy intent and lived reality. A vital step towards integrated and accountable transport governance was to establish a Single Transport Regulator covering road, rail, shipping, and aviation in the Economic Regulation of Transport Amendment Act.

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It bears reminding that in May 2025, the ACDP flagged delays in its implementation due to a simple date error. In this department, the ACDP sees a litany of poor governance.

Beginning with Prasa, despite a R66,1 billion allocation over the MTEF, commuters are still waiting for ghost trains. The Rolling Stock Fleet Renewal Programme is behind schedule, plagued by underspending, infrastructure vandalism, poor management, corruption, and theft has decimated the use of our rail services. In 2010, passengers completed over 500 million journeys. Currently, this number, as indicated by the Minister, sits at around 77 million journeys with no sense of urgency by the department. Transnet receives billions of rands for freight corridors, yet the truck booking system is still problematic. Kilometre-long queues of trucks are seen at our ports, and these inefficiencies and rail bottlenecks continue to choke our economy.

The Provincial Roads Maintenance grant of some R53 billion over the medium-term is meant to fix our crumbling roads, yet in many provinces, potholes multiply while targets remain unmet. In an Eastern Cape ruling earlier this year, failure to maintain roads was declared a constitutional violation and a dereliction of duty. The 2023 SA Human Rights Commission

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inquiry found that in the Eastern Cape, less than 10% of roads are paved, and poor road conditions are directly violating residents' rights to health care, education, and safety.

The Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2022 has only 11 completed bridges from a target of some 288 by the end of the 2025-26 financial year. This budget fails the test of transformative infrastructure. It is heavy on allocations, delivery light, and as kingdom stewards, the ACDP cannot support this Budget Vote. I thank you.

Xitsonga:

Ttn S M GANA: Mutshamaxitulu ...

English:

... this morning, I rise on behalf of Rise Mzansi, a movement that is committed to building a safe, prosperous, equal and united South Africa in one generation. I rise on behalf of South Africans who need a safe, reliable and affordable transport. The Department of Transport is not just about moving people and goods. It is about moving our nation forward. Transport sits at the heart of economic growth, job

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creation and access to opportunities. Without safe, reliable and affordable transport there can be no prosperity for all.

South Africans deserve to feel safe when they travel, whether by road, rail or air. Yet, we are losing far too many lives on our roads every single day. Road safety cannot be seasonal. It cannot be a campaign where we ... [Inaudible.] ... of Easter and again in December. It must be permanent, always on campaign, backed by action and real time data. Monthly accident statistics must be released so that we can decisively and urgently attend to this matter. We know that the budget of just over R95 billion allocated, the bulk of which will be transferred to provinces, municipalities and public entities. This places a heavy burden of oversight and accountability on the national department.

This department must follow the money, every cent of it, to ensure that it translates into a safer, cleaner and more accessible transport system for the people of this country. Oversight must not be an afterthought. It must be embedded in how this budget is managed. As Rise Mzansi, we welcome the R23 billion that has been allocated to rail transport. South Africa cannot thrive without a functional Passenger Rail

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Agency of South Africa, Prasa, and a competitive Transnet.

Rail is not just transport, it's economic infrastructure. Here again, I stress that agency oversight is key.

The Road Accident Fund should serve as a warning and not a model to be replicated elsewhere. Hon members, we must be clear to the department and its entities that as Rise Mzansi, we welcome the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Scopa, enquiry into the evidence of allegations of maladministration, financial impropriety and the misuse of public funds at the Road Accident Fund. Let no stone be left unturned.

Lastly, Chairperson, it is frankly unacceptable that in 2025, we are still waiting for a new driver's license printing machine, Minister. Can we sort this matter out? These backlogs are not helping the people of South Africa. Let's move the people of South Africa forward.

Xitsonga:

Ndza khensa swinene, Mutshamaxitulu. [Nkarhi wu herile.]

Mr M A MAIMANE: Thank you, hon members. Good morning to the hon Minister and Deputy Minister and the team that is here. It

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bears no repeating the fact that when South Africa faced an economic crisis during coronavirus disease, Covid, and the war that was sparked between Russia and Ukraine, the demand for coal surged. Most coal makers became quite clear that it was an opportunity for South Africa to export its coal to other markets that were in demand. However, what was an opportunity meant that we could only realise some of it by being able to see a budget surplus in that year, but we couldn't realise the fullness of it because our ports were not functioning at the level that they could have.

Therefore, I speak on this Budget Vote today because I certainly am passionate about transport being an economic enabler. We cannot set this aside. Logistics are the backbone of any economy. Therefore, Minister, there are several issues that I felt it important to raise as we speak about how we build an effective rail system. There's no debate that leadership across the department is something that is important that we recapacitate. There are several senior executives that are finishing their term and the sooner we can replace directors-general, DGs, etc, to be able to create the appropriate leadership that will be important.

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Secondly, I think there can be no doubt that road infrastructure in this country and the goods that move off our roads, I support your view that trucks need to move off our roads onto rail. However, I want to speak about the one road that seems to be the department's expenditure of flagship item. Minister, Moloto Road is as R90 million per kilometre. This is only in the medium-term. You compare that to China for argument's sake, their spending at least R40 million per kilometre. This is a serious concern that South Africa is building roads at such an exorbitant cost.

Furthermore, Minister, I want to welcome the opportunity that SA Airways has turned itself around. I believe the leadership there is doing an important job. What is going to be important is that it has a revenue shortfall and therefore an equity partner may be a conversation we need to have in the future. as it pertains to Prasa, of course, I, like many South Africans, are heavily reliant who used to grow up using trains, etc, and we need to see rail being revitalised.

Therefore, I welcome your opening of a few stations across the country but also note the fact that it will be important that for the cost of a worker to get to work, this cost must be

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reduced. I leave you with this one thought, Minister. I think, rather than us trying to solve problems of yesterday, I wonder if we couldn't think about transport, about problems of the future and answer the question. Is there feasibility in being able to put a bullet train between Limpopo, Gauteng, Free State in order to enable the incorporation of those provinces and make sure there is economic opportunity? The last rail that we built cannot be the Gautrain. I would argue that this is an opportunity for us to think about the future rather than yesterday. I support this budget.

Setswana:

Ke a leboga.

Mr C N MALEMATJA: Hon Chairperson, Minister, Deputy Minister, hon members, fellow South Africans, a functional and integrated transport infrastructure is essential to South Africa's socioeconomic development, according to National Development Plan, NDP. It seeks to accomplish this by creating and maintaining competitive and effective transportation infrastructure such as public transportation, rail, roads and highways. The NDP also emphasises the necessity of a better public transportation service and smooth integration of

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various types of transportation. The ANC in South Africa seeks to implement an integrated transport system in South Africa through the ANC-led government, which will further enhance trade and tourism through civil aviation.

Minister, it will be a very naive kind of position to stand here and not to acknowledge the good work that we have done. The good work that has been proven during the Easter holidays as compared to the numbers of yester years. The performance was excellent. Many more lives were saved. If there is any person maybe who television does not have, radio, worse, if he is a Member of Parliament and does not have these figures and cannot acknowledge, he is a default member of this House.

It is not by mistake that at some stage you find people who want to compare the good and the bad, forgetting that in South Africa to judge and categorise that this is bad is when on Monday people are heading to Palm Ridge Magistrate Court. You do not just go there because you are invited. In many cases, you will find that, among those who are there are the MK Party members and that will be Mr Siyabonga Gama and Brian Molefe. They went there for the money they have misused and they are now there. How do you then say that is a good public

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investment whereas they have squandered the money and nothing arrived in the country? You see, it is not correct that we stand to defend things that we have a little knowledge of it.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Malematja, can you please take your seat.

Mr T L MONTANA: Hon Chairperson, on a point of order: The member not only -

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Can you address me?

Mr T L MONTANA: Thank you, Chair. The hon member is saying that one of the members and he mentioned by name hon Gama, with the monies that never arrived. Now, I think not only casting aspersions but also misleading the House. I think that if indeed there are monies that did not arrive, I urge the hon member to put that in a substantive motion and demonstrate where these numbers are because they are not even before the court as things stand.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Montana, hon Montana, I missed where he mentioned a name. Can I make a ruling after? Can you please take your seat?

Mr T L MONTANA: No, no, I accept that as long as he dismissed that moving forward.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Take your seat, hon Malematja.

Mr C N MALEMATJA: Thank you, House Chair. Hon Minister, two weeks ago I took a journey from Germiston, Phola Park in a train, a very beautiful train with a lot of masses standing. I asked them where are they from? They said they are from Daveyton in Ekurhuleni and were going to Phola Park. Those who are not new in the history of South Africa, you will remember what happened in Phola Park. Now, that commemoration. They went there. Then, I asked them about their journey in a new train. They asked me to pass this to the government of the day that they are very much happy.

Today we can attest that trains are moving all over. Then because they were from Daveyton, Minister, and very patient

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people asked when are you coming to them? I said you are on the line because we are starting with those that we can easily furnish and we will be attending to you. They said that I must pass this to the government of the day that no one must ever attempt to speak on their behalf. They will wait. They will wait.

House Chair, the danger of getting into marriage without understanding the terms and conditions is that some other marriages have got rules. In the Government of National Unity, GNU, we have got a collective. So, whatever that is happening, when you are there, enjoying the blue lights, you are bound by the collective decision of the government. So, the DA has got this tendency of coming here time and again being offline, leaving their lone lane and think that they can compete here for who must be the next Deputy Minister after we fired that one who was ill disciplined.

Now, it cannot be correct that you stand here and say the chairperson, singling the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Transport in which you were part of that particular sitting when a decision was taken that we will want to hear the other side of the story of the person who is

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alleged to be suspended. We doubted because we never had full information of that and we clapped hands and agreed. Today, because there are televisions and because the master withdraws you, you come here and think you can be smarter than us. It is not how you are supposed to act.

House Chair, allow me to continue by saying we are very much worried. All of us, we are worried about the vandalism of infrastructure. It must not be reduced to a mere portfolio committee of one department. It must be a concern to all of us and if indeed we are true leaders of the society, let us be seen on the ground conducting campaign to ensure that people are refraining from continue vandalising that. We can now see and test the vote if in case things are in order and there is no vandalism.

So, when we support this Budget Vote as the ANC, we do not support for the sake of supporting. It is because of tangible evidence on the ground. We want to take this opportunity, hon Mmusi Maimane, and rest assured that spade work has been done in Limpopo to Gauteng and Gauteng to Limpopo. We really appreciate your understanding. The Blue Train is on the pipeline, but you have sponsored a very good idea that we must

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also consider Free State. You are very spot on and that will be taken into account. These are the positive contributions that we need, hon Blose. It would be very painful. You are still in pain then you come here and forgot that you are still mourning and we want to mourn with you. We will continue mourning with you. So, take that seriously, do not take this for a public speaking debate then you come here as if we are so reckless. We cannot allow people to be vanquished just that way.

As the ANC, we strongly believe that there is a lot that is happening in Transnet an improvement and we strongly believe that the said and requested budget it will be given accordingly and applied accordingly, which we are very much careful in ensuring that we follow every cent, hon Gana. That is why we have got people who are suspended that is how we are getting new people to come on board? We are following each and every cent in the interest of the public. So, we are not reckless.

So, under the Minister Barbara Creecy and Deputy Minister your team chaired by the Chairperson Silamulele, who is very much capable. You know, it is not easy to be a chairperson of the

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portfolio where you are dealing with members who are the beginners in testing the taste of being in the government, but he is trying very hard and he is really indeed making it. Therefore, as the ANC, we support this Budget Vote 40 of Transport. Thank you so much, Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Thank you, hon Malematja. Hon Malematja, can you go back to the podium? It appears that you indeed mentioned the name of hon Gama. I will have to ask you to withdraw. The reference to hon Gama will have to be withdrawn.

Mr C N MALEMATJA: Chairperson, I wholeheartedly withdraw.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon Chairperson, let me start off and thank hon members for all the important points that have been raised during the course of this debate. And indeed, we are mindful of the important issue that many hon members raised of the centrality of the transport system to our economy. And I think it is for that reason that the entire ecosystem is working hard to fix the difficulties that we have

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and to ensure that we develop an efficient, cost-effective service for the movement of both people and goods.

A number of hon members have raised the question of vacant posts in the department and in the entities, including the Chairperson. And hon Chair, we would want to say we agree with you that many of these posts have been vacant for far too long. I am pleased to say for the first time in a long time, we now have a CEO for the for the Rail Safety Regulator and the CEO for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA, is in the Cabinet system. We are currently recruiting for a director-general of the department, as well as deputy-director-general, DDGs, for corporate and roads.

And we will ensure that these appointments are made with speed, because we agree with you, it is not appropriate to all 15% of the vacant posts due to current constraints from National Treasury. So, we are working hard to try and fill those posts which we regard to be strategically important.

Hon Chair, we also agree with you, and other members who have raised the issue of underspending. We are extremely concerned

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about underspending on conditional grants, and we are also concerned about underspending on the municipal infrastructure grant for road maintenance, because this underspending is responsible for the poor state of many municipal roads and bridges. We have accordingly formed a task team with Salga that will be enabling us to tackle this underspending and making sure that we direct spending accordingly.

Hon Montana, I think you gave me a reasonably easy ride. I will not therefore talk about people who bought Locomotives too big to fit in tunnels. We do not know who those people were. But let me say that in both the developed and the developing world ... [Interjections.] ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Minister, can you please take your seat? Hon Montana, what point are you rising on?

Mr T L MONTANA: Is the hon Minister willing to accept a question?

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Minister, are you willing to answer a question?

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The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: ... At the end of my speech.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Thank you very much, you may proceed.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: ... Hon Montana, I said that in both industrialised and developing countries, the separation between freight operations and infrastructure operators has been implemented everywhere. Russia, China, India, Mexico, as well as all these developed countries. The intention is to fund trim on a project basis through the budget facility for infrastructure. The first tranche of that requirement has already been put in. There will be a second application in October, and we are looking forward to success regarding that application.

Hon Kobe, the Daveyton line is coming. It is a very difficult rehabilitation process. It is probably going to take us until the end of the 2026 financial year, but it is on the agenda. Hon van Staden, we agree that the Bus Rapid Transit, BRT, is not an optimal project and it was agreed at MinMec on Friday that we need a review on all of the money that is within the

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transport ecosystem so that we can attend to it more appropriately.

We agree with all hon members that agency oversight is absolutely key if we are going to make sure that we spend appropriately and that is why we are enhancing our facilities in this regard. In conclusion, by saying that we thank you for your support. We are not arrogant about the changes we are bringing about. We will continue to roll up our sleeves and work hard and we believe that in due course, this will give us the results we need. Thank you.

Mr T L MONTANA: Is the Minister able to take a question?

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Unfortunately, the question should have been taken at that point. You cannot ask it after the speech. That is not permitted.

Hon members, we would like to remind you that two debates are scheduled simultaneously today at 14h00, namely the debate on the Budget Vote on the Stats SA budget, which will take place here in the GHC Chamber, and the debate on the Human

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Settlement budget, which will take place in room M48. Thank you.

Debate concluded.

The mini-plenary session rose at 11:43.

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