



ADDRESS BY THE ACTING MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, MR THULAS NXESI, ON THE OCCASION OF THE WELCOMING CEREMONY OF THE FIRST GROUP OF THE 21ST CENTURY TRAFFIC OFFICERS TRAINEES AT DENEL AVIATION CAMPUS, BONAERO PARK, KEMPTON PARK

27 January 2018

RTMC board chairman Mr Zola Majavu;

Members of the Board;

RTMC CEO Advocate Makhosini Msibi and Executive Members;

Respected lecturers and Instructors;

Parents;

Our new recruits;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen

We are meeting this weekend, when South African are currently having the second and final voter registration weekend for the 2019 National and Provincial Elections.

The country's 22 932 voting stations were opened from 08h00 to 17h00 yesterday, Saturday 26 January and today, Sunday 27 January 2019 to allow first-time voters to register and existing voters to update and to check their registration details.

Currently there are 26.1 million registered voters on the national common voters' roll and it is hoped that at least one million voters will be added to the voters' roll ahead of the 2019 elections.

As government, we are also hopeful that voters who are already registered will use the opportunity to visit their voting station to check their registration and specifically to confirm and update their address details.

As the ANC government, we are making this call for people to register to vote because we would like South Africans to renew the ANC mandate during the elections to ensure that we continue with our commitment to make South Africa a better country, for all who live in it, particularly for our youth.

Yesterday turnout at the voting stations was commendable. This reflects the commitment of South Africans to strengthen our democracy and to work together to grow South Africa.

As the ANC government, the target we set in 2010 of creating 5million jobs over 10 years, needed us to create over 500 000 jobs per year. However, the global economic crisis negatively affected our economy from growing at the rate required.

This had a negative effect on our entire economy and our ability to create jobs for young people.

South Africa has a youthful population with about 1.2 million young people turning 18 each year and joining the labour market. That is why despite our successes in job creation, the overall level of unemployment remains high.

The slow economic growth means less tax income, while government spending rises. We borrow money to make up the difference between income and expenses and will spend more than 11% of our budget this year servicing debt – that means R160billion that we cannot spend on services.

This is the reason why the National Development Plan establishes a more ambitious target over a longer time period, calling for the creation of 11 million new jobs by 2030.

Ladies and gentlemen

Our event today, directly respond to our government call to create jobs and training our youth.

The ANC government wants to improve the skills of our people so that all citizens can participate in decent work opportunities and contribute to growing our economy.

Education is the key to overcoming poverty, unemployment and inequality. We have to improve from a country where less than half the population has

matric with only 6% having a degree. We need to create a state where everyone has an equal opportunity to further their education and improve their welfare of their families. Since 2007, the ANC has prioritized education and placed it as one of its top of its priority.

Amongst other priorities, by the end of this 5th Administration, government we would have conducted a comprehensive review of the education and training system to ensure that it is relevant and prepares young people for life, higher education and training programmes; technical, vocational and occupational skills in preparation for the world of the employment.

Government has embarked on a number of initiatives to improve the country's skills base - key among them to get young people involved in the fields of science, technology and innovation in tandem with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

I would like to express a word of appreciation to the Road Traffic Management Corporation, which is a leading entity of the Department of Transport responsible for road safety, for directing greater effort and more resources towards skills development and training for the youth at no cost.

President Nelson Mandela told us that:

“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers 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.”

What President Mandela meant by these words is that getting proper education is very necessary for success and happy life just like food is necessary for a healthy body.

Education develops personality of the people, provides physical and mental standard and transforms people’s living status. It also promotes the feeling of physical, mental and social well-being by providing a better life.

I would therefore urge the new recruits - our ***Thuma Mina Brigade, the pioneers, amavulandlela*** - who will be starting training on this inaugural 21st Century curriculum to make the best of the opportunity provided to them.

As you may know, more people wished to get this opportunity but did not make it through the selection process.

You have been chosen because you raised your hands and said “***Thuma Mina to the streets of South Africa to save lives and reduce fatalities***”.

This is your first and primary mission of a traffic officer. Far too many road crashes are happening because officers have forgotten what their mission is. It is Now or Never for you to obtain education that will set you on a path to success.

I urge parents and the next of kin to provide support to the trainees at the college. It is going to be tough sometimes, but, encourage them to persevere.

When the going gets tough, there is always temptation to throw in the towel. Please remind them of the words of Pele, the world's greatest soccer player who once said:

“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do.”

From today, your role as parents will also change. You must contend with the fact that by bringing you child to this college, you have accepted a new role as a road safety ambassador.

Society will now expect you to obey all the rules of the road and to speak out against those who place the lives of others at risk through reckless and negligent driving, speeding and drunk driving.

Let me also commend the RTMC for having had the foresight to introduce this three-year qualification for traffic officers.

For a long-time traffic law-enforcement has been regarded as a stepchild of the South African Police Services, the South African Defence Force and even the Correctional Services.

With this bold groundbreaking move, traffic officers will finally be able to take up their place among their peers as professionals in their own right. It has taken quite a long time to reach this milestone, but we have finally arrived.

We want our officers to be skilled in all competences of traffic law enforcement and this is the reason why we have re-organised our training to equip our officers with all the skills required from an officer in the 21st century.

This 21st century law enforcement officer will also be able to know the basic elements of the law, including the ability to express themselves in both verbal and writing language.

At the same time road, traffic fatalities have been escalating due to the lack of adequate numbers of traffic officers to manage the road network and improve compliance with the rules of road. These crashes place a heavy burden families and economy as they cost the economy R162 billion a year.

This training opportunity will also respond to our desire to increase the number of law enforcement officers in order to work our envisaged 24/7 law enforcement shift.

Our state of road safety report confirms without any shadow of doubt that road crashes spike over the weekends (Fridays, Saturdays and Sunday) between 15h00 and Mid-night and again in the mornings between 04h00 and 07h00.

We therefore need to step-up our implement of this law enforcement shift throughout the country.

It remains our hope that this training will help us to respond to these challenges and assist us to achieve the goals set out in the National Development Plan to build human capital and reduce fatalities by 50% by 2030.

Ladies and gentlemen

In our country and within the traffic law enforcement sector in particular, education, and this training in particular, should help to prepare our learners to be ethical citizens and avoid any conduct that might cast negative aspersion on their career.

Corruption undermines government's ability to deliver to the people. It is totally unacceptable that parts of the state have used to serve personal interests.

From the onset, trainees must know that the ANC government is against any form of crime, corruption and fraud and that public servants will be held to account for any wrong doing. We will use parliament, commissions, investigators and courts to expose those who steal from the people.

There are far too many complaints about the ethical conduct of traffic officers in the country and this course must assist by producing traffic officers with high level of ethical conduct.

In the midst of criticism of the traffic law enforcement fraternity, I urge all those that will be involved in providing this qualification to remain focused. Do not allow naysayers to derail you.

I wish you well in your studies and look forward to seeing you after three year of your studies when you graduate from this college. Remember it is Now or Never.

Lastly, I thank Minister Nzimande for the opportunity to Act as the Minister of Transport in his absence.

Thank You

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