



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



**OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE
PRESIDENT BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT HONOURABLE SINDISIWE
CHIKUNGA - MP AT THE TRANSPORT SUMMIT ON UNIVERSAL
ACCESSIBILITY**

INTRODUCTION

It is an honour to stand before you this morning as we make history in the area of universal access to Public Transport. As the Ministry and the department of Transport we most welcome His Excellency the President and the Ministers in the Presidency who have graced this auspicious Transport Summit. We extend our appreciation to MECs, Mayors and all leaders who have prioritized attendance of this Summit. Most importantly, let me also take this moment to thank the department of Transport, specifically the DDG for Public Transport Mr Mathabatha Mokonyama and his team for organizing a much awaited and successful Transport Summit.

Mr President;

Transport is key to the normal functioning of every society, and it is at the heart of social and economic development of every nation.

After several years of gathering information from complaints received by the Department of Transport, the ICT subcommittee on universal accessibility requested to partner with the Department in hosting an annual online survey, so that people with disabilities record their travel experiences. The Department of Transport has hosted the survey for two years, 2023 and 2024. The Department received 87 responses in 2023, and 186 responses in 2024 before the closure of the survey. In addition, the Department participated in an online platform for parents with children with disabilities with nearly 800 members.

The greatest concerns were minibus taxi and bus accessibility and walking. These forms of transport, particularly minibus taxi transport, affect most people with disabilities in the country.

The survey results demonstrate that forms of transport remain a challenge for people with disabilities, where they can use them, from either a point of accessibility or cost. Crime and the fear of vulnerability is a growing barrier to people with disabilities and their families. It prevents them from using transport and makes them prisoners in their own homes. The treatment of people with

disabilities on public transport by operators and their staff has emerged as a concern in these surveys.

The survey results also echoed other survey results from women who also expressed their concern to the Department about the fear and reality of gender-based violence on public transport, which was documented by the Department from 2016 to 2018.

The accessibility concern by commuters were registered across all the modes of transport which include roads, rail, aviation and maritime

Distinguished Delegates,

We can all agree that in order to address all concerns raised, we have to coordinate and integrate all transport systems and services. As the Department of Transport, we have a Integrated Transport Planning (ITP) Branch which guides the development of transport with the primary aim to create sustainable change towards universally accessible transport systems.

As Team Transport we have realised that the experiences of people with disabilities are our experiences in the end. We are tirelessly at work and are committed to contributing to an inclusive South Africa where everyone can reach their full potential through accessibility of our transport service right for every citizen.

Honourable President;

This Transport Summit was preceded by a Transport Roundtable that took place on 26-27 October last year. The delegates deliberated on the current situation, the challenges, and possible responses to address these challenges across all various modes. The Round table discussions emerged with a document titled ***'Accessible Transport for All, which is a Draft Transport Action Plan.***

Your Excellency,

All efforts have culminated to the Department of Transport hosting this Transport Summit on Universal Accessibility, whose main purpose is:

- To provide a platform for a dialogue on universal access to transport for all critical role players, and stakeholders;
- To raise awareness of passengers' rights and create a shared sense of the challenges and opportunities for change in the transport sector; and
- To jointly and collaboratively identify and agree on urgent actions to speed up the implementation of universal access in the transport sector, nationally.

Rising from this Summit we expect:

- To create a shared vision and recommendations about a future direction of universal access and the implementation of the 2021 White Paper on National Transport Policy;
- To foster new or improved relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders that can facilitate change and future action; and
- To agree on resolutions and commitments for urgent action.

It is, therefore, my honour to be the host of this very auspicious and perhaps trendsetting Transport Summit arranged by the National Department of Transport in partnership with the Department of Women, Youth, Persons with Disabilities and the Presidential Working Group on Disability, to discuss universal design and accessibility in transport environments across modes.

I say it is auspicious and trendsetting, given its potential to produce outcomes that will begin to build a truly holistic and enabling approach to our drive to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities and other persons with various vulnerabilities. It is our sincere belief that this Summit will open up avenues for the development of a more consistent, broadly inclusive setting for conversations and most importantly actions towards ensuring rights of all users of public transport.

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to take this opportunity to present to you, a Statesman, a Trade Unionist, a Political Stalwart, a Business Connoisseur, a legal professional, a Philanthropist, The President of the governing and ruling Party the African National Congress and the President of our beloved South Africa, Mr Cyril Matomela Ramaphosa.

Your Excellency, the President may I humbly request your indulgence to ascend the stage and provide the Keynote address.

I Thank you.