

NATIONAL TRANSPORT DIALOGUE ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE



Acting Minister of Public Works & Transport Hon. Gideon Dlamini addressing participants in his closing remarks of the National Transport Dialogue.

Acting Minister for Public Works and Transport Hon. Gideon Dlamini on Thursday, 25th February 2016: in his closing remarks for the conference applauded the private sector in working inter alia with government agencies in making this conference a success. He further stressed that co-operation is primarily important for economic development; hence the private sector and public sector need to work harmoniously to uplift the economy of the country.

“Engaging neighbors to harmonize and standardize our transport laws regulations, policies, systems and practices is the heart of SADC protocol on Transport, Communication, and

Technology,” he said. He appreciated the attendance regional participants stating that they are key in transport industry reforms.

The Honorable Minister highlighted that continuous engagement amongst relevant stakeholders is primary for facilitation, which is a continuous process. The dialogue has been an eye opener for business opportunities that are available in the transport sector.

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CLOSING REMARKS MADE BY HONOURABLE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS AND
TRANSPORT, ON THE OCCASSION OF THE TRANSPORT DIALOGUE HELD ON 24-25
FEBRUARY 2016, ROYAL SWAZI SUN

Mr Programme Director

Honourable Ministers

Your Excellencies, members of the Diplomatic Corps

Honourable Members of Both Houses of Parliament

Invited Guests

Ladies and gentleman

I feel greatly honoured to on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and indeed my own behalf, make a few remarks during the closing session of the first Transport Dialogue to be held in the country. This dialogue is special because for it to happen it took a lot of co-operation at different stakeholder levels. And this is demonstrated by the richness and diversity of the participants we have had over the two days we have been here.

First I am impressed with the manner in which the private sector worked so harmoniously with the government on this dialogue: from inception of the idea last year, to the launch, of course the couple of postponements, I believe necessary postponements we had along the way, right up to the successful event that we have witnessed here at the Royal Swazi Spar.

The second tier of co-operation that impresses me pertains to the diversity of the transport modes and general stakeholders that are represented here. It does not happen too often that road hauliers, bus operators, railways and aviation men and women sit side by side to exchange views on how to co-operate and collaborate in the manner we have witnessed here. In addition to those directly participating in transport, we also have those stakeholders that transport needs to work with in order for the business to thrive. I am therefore highly impressed to observe that we also have in our midst bankers, investors, vehicle dealers, and of course those responsible for the government bureaucracy that has so much impact on transport.

The last tier of co-operation and probably the one I wish to recognise and encourage the most is at the state level. It is greatly fulfilling to see us sitting down as neighbouring states - at our own initiative, i.e. not through the initiative of some donor driven project – to discuss issues that are of mutual interest to us. This to me confirms how much we have grown as countries and as members of the regional groupings we belong to, such as SADC. Engaging as neighbours to harmonise and standardize our transport laws, regulations, policies, systems, practices etc is at the heart of the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology. Therefore to our special guests from our neighbouring states we say thank you so much. We further ask that please when you get back home pass our message of great appreciation to your governments and principals.

Nisibongele kakhulu bekunene mhlanihika emakhaya.

I am told that in almost all of yesterday's presentations and a good portion of today's, the theme has been around the word facilitation, right across the different stakeholders. So, we are all trying to facilitate. OR in fact some of us have been facilitating for years. But we still hear a lot of complaints on bottlenecks experienced by our clients. We heard about the high transport cost component (up to 40%) in the final price of many of our products. Ladies and gentlemen this should make us ask the question "what is wrong then with our facilitation"? Are there too many facilitators? Are we facilitating in isolation, OR are we facilitating before doing a proper diagnosis of what really needs to be facilitated? These are some of the questions that come to mind. Or maybe in a dynamic world of business, the issues to be facilitated are also dynamic and therefore facilitation is a continuous process that requires continuous engagement amongst stakeholders.

I am inclined to take the opinion that maybe facilitation is a never ending process. So we need continuous engagement amongst the relevant stakeholders. This therefore takes me to encouraging you to transform this Transport Dialogue into a yearly event. However as Government we leave the final decision entirely to the industry except to say that you can always be assured of our support.

The last portion of the session, which was on business opportunities was quite uplifting especially at a time when one hears and sees a lot of gloom almost everywhere. If it is not the drought it is the ailing economy. These business ideas truly have the potential to change the economic landscape of Swaziland, and in fact the southern African region. I therefore urge each one of us here to facilitate in whatever way possible to ensure that these innovative projects become a reality. To the project sponsors/promoters, Government would like to encourage you to soldier on, as well as to assure you of our unwavering support. Projects such as these, if well executed can truly lead to the first world country status which the citizens so eloquently espoused in Vision 2022 as we heard from one of yesterday's presentation.

His excellency The Right Honourable Prime Minister gave a very powerful opening speech yesterday. His address underscored his excellent understanding and appreciation of the importance of the role played by transport in the economy of the country. I can assure you dear delegates that he expects a very clear report on the outcome of this gathering.

Lastly ladies and gentlemen I am sure you have also had the opportunity to interact and network both at the formal and informal level. I am told there was an informal session yesterday – a brai. Indeed dialogue should be a continuous process which could take different forms of interaction and definitely should not end here today. This is why I had to debate within myself whether or not I should actually come here and close this dialogue. So I have tried to be careful on how I say this. Ladies and gentleman it is now my singular honour to declare this two day session of the Transport Dialogue officially closed. May I also wish all of us especially our visitors a safe journey home.

Siyabonga, Hambanikahle, Nkulunkulu asibusise