



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER OF  
TRANSPORT, MR FIKILE MBALULA, ON THE  
OCCASION OF LAUNCH OF THE NALEDI LINE  
COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE HELD ON 15 DECEMBER  
2022 AT PARK STATION AT 09H00.**

MEC for Transport and Logistics, Ms Kedibone Diale-  
Tlabela

Director-General, Adv James Mlawu

Chairperson of the PRASA Board, Mr Leonard  
Ramatlakane

Acting Group CEO of PRASA, Mr Hishaam Emeran

Ladies and Gentlemen

Delivering his State of the Nation Address in April this year, President Ramaphosa made a firm commitment that we will rehabilitate the passenger rail network in 10 priority corridors this year.

Today we have the singular honour to take the nation into confidence on the progress we have made towards the realisation of the commitment the President made earlier this year.

This day we are formally christening the rehabilitation and the return to service of the commuter rail service between Naledi and Johannesburg. The significance of this milestone is that it not only re-affirms our commitment to restoring the most affordable mode of transport, but also the achievement of the target to rehabilitate 10 priority corridors this year.

The completion of the rebuilding and resumption of service on the Naledi line accounts for the 13<sup>th</sup> corridor recovered this year. This means that not only have we achieved the target of rehabilitating 10 priority corridors in 2022, we have exceeded this target.

Before the unprecedented vandalism and destruction of our rail network, PRASA was operating 40 commuter rail corridors in the 2018/2019 period.

Today, PRASA is operating 16 corridors. In 2015, PRASA was moving over 500 million passengers per annum. This number dropped to a little more than 200 million in 2019/2020, dropping further to 17 million in 2020/2021. The rehabilitation work, which also gives impetus to the modernisation programme, will undoubtedly reclaim the commuter rail market share.

It is true that the vandalism and destruction of our rail network resulted in major setback for PRASA's modernization programme. This means that we have to re-build in excess of one thousand kilometres (1,000km) of rail and signalling equipment and approximately one hundred kilometres (100km) of track and over 400 stations. The devastation of the floods in KwaZulu-Natal further compounded the problem.

In May 2022, PRASA rolled out the rebuilding programme in three of the earmarked priority corridors in Gauteng, which were closed to enable speedy rehabilitation. These are Pienaarspoort to Pretoria, Naledi to Johannesburg and Leralla to Elandsfontein.

The line closures were essential to allow for the major reconstruction work of the traction substations, Overhead Traction Equipment (OHTE) and stations to continue uninterrupted and safely.

The recovery of the Naledi line is a major achievement, considering the role of commuter rail in bridging the gap between dormitory townships and centres of economic activity. Commuter rail plays an important role in unwinding apartheid spatial planning that located the majority of our people away from their workplaces.

The Naledi to Johannesburg corridor covers a distance of 70km, with 15 stations. We are pleased that the work of recovering overhead electrical wires stands at 95% completion rate at a cost of one hundred and fifty two million three hundred and ninety eight rand five hundred and ninety one rand (R 152 398 591.16). Substations are at 60% completion at a cost of one hundred and eighty one million nine hundred and seventy six thousand one hundred and thirty eight rand (R 181 976 138.05). A total of 354 local labourers were employed.

To date, the following corridors have been recovered in Gauteng:

- Mabopane to Pretoria resumed services in January 2022
- Saulsville to Pretoria resumed services in March 2022
- Pienaarspoort to Pretoria resumed services in September 2022

I am also pleased that PRASA also recovered the De Wildt to Pretoria line on 24 October 2022.

Since 2019 the Western Cape Central Line has not been functioning due to extensive vandalism and the Illegal occupation on the railway line and rail reserve. Efforts to rehabilitate and recover the Central line got underway in 2021, with the first 2 Phases having been recovered as planned.

The following corridors have since been recovered in the Western Cape:

- Cape Town to Simonstown resumed services in March 2022
- Cape Town to Retreat via Athlone resumed services in March 2022
- On the Central Line, we recovered the Cape Town to Langa via Pinelands and Langa to Bellville via Sarepta, with service resumption in July 2022
- Cape Town to Bellville via Goodwood

In KwaZulu-Natal, Metrorail was running diesel services before the floods in April caused further devastation.

To date, the following corridors have since been recovered:

- Durban to Tongaat resumed services in November 2022
- Durban to Umbongintwini resumed services in August 2022

- Reunion to Kwamnyandu (Umlazi Corridor) resumed services in October 2022
- Durban to Cato Ridge resumed services in November 2022.

To date, PRASA has completed 13 corridors in this financial year. This milestone is an important and positive step towards our commitment to rebuild the rail infrastructure and restore passenger rail as the backbone of public transport. Our focus now shifts towards the rehabilitation of the remaining corridors this financial year. These include Leralla to Johannesburg and Pretoria to Kaalfontein in Gauteng, and Phase 1C of the Central Line, which extends from Langa to Nyanga, in Cape Town, and the electrical infrastructure between Durban to Umlazi and KwaMashu to Durban.

In preparation for the rollout of the new trains, major work is underway to enhance security at the depots where the trains will be kept. The fencing of six depots: Braamfontein, Salt River, Paarden Eiland, Durban, Springfield and East London, with high-tech walling is well

in progress to ensure the safety and protection of the new trains.

PRASA is also in the process of walling some of the passenger rail corridors to prevent ease of access to the rail network and to protect the new trains from vandalism. The Central Line and the Mabopane corridors have been prioritized for the walling project, while work on the remaining priority corridors will commence soon.

In conclusion, I must commend the project team for its tireless dedication to the recovery and resumption of services on the Naledi line. I must also thank the local communities, community leaders and small businesses who played a major role in supporting the work of PRASA towards the resumption of services on this corridor.

I thank you.