**National Assembly**

**Question No 1517**

**Mr K P Sithole (IFP) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

Given that road infrastructure plays a critical role in the Republic’s economy and is the main mode of transport for goods, with the rail sector facing numerous challenges, and in light of the great amounts of money that small-scale farmers spend in attempting to fix the damaged roads themselves, which is surely unsustainable and may cripple them in the long run, what (a) plans does his department have in place to address the Republic’s ageing road infrastructure and (b) has been the (i) successes and (ii) challenges experienced in the implementation of the specified plans? NW1839E

**REPLY**

# a) It is true that the road infrastructure plays a critical role in the economy of our country and has to play a complimentary role with regards to its sister mode, the rail infrastructure. It is for this reason that while the department is putting policies for rail sector, the road sector is going ahead with its road infrastructure plan:

i) The road policy is being developed with four critical chapters, namely: Road Safety, Road Financing, Non-Motorised and road infrastructure delivery models. The consultation of this policy position is underway and would be concluded soon.

ii). The classification of roads in South Africa is underway and this in terms of the RISFSA guideline document and this classification will guide spheres of government on the responsibility as Road Authorities.

iii). The national roads are managed by SANRAL which is the road agency of the National Department of Transport whilst other categories of road are managed by provincial road department and municipalities.

Table one below explains road network and the responsible authority to manage it:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Authority** | **Paved**  | **Gravel** | **Total** |
| SANRAL | 22,262 | 0 | 22,262 |
| Provinces – 9 | 46,511 | 226,273 | 272,782 |
| Metros – 8 | 51,682 | 14,461 | 66,143 |
| Municipalities  | 37,680 | 219,223 | 256,903 |
| **Total** | **158,124** | **459,957** | **618,081** |
| Unproclaimed (estimated) |   | 131,919 | 131,919 |
| **Estimated total** | **158,124** | **591,876** | **750,000** |
|  |
| * **Unproclaimed roads** = Public roads not formally gazetted by any authority
 |

iv) Provincial roads receive a grant called Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant (PRMG) from National Department of Transport (NDOT). The NDOT does oversight role on business plans submitted by provinces during the implementation stages of the grant.

This grant started during 2011/12 financial year and it is addressing the maintenance challenges the provinces face on their roads.



(b) (i)There has been huge successes with regard to road programs across the country:

-SANRAL: Road network is one of the best and it is ranked 18th in the world

-Provincial Roads are mostly having challenges due to the lack of critical technical skills at both Provincial and Municipal spheres of government. For this reason SANRAL is now assigned responsibilities to assist with technical skills for the construction and maintenance of provincial road in particular by entering into MOU/MOA, and also in skills transfer.

(ii) Challenges experienced:

* There is a shortage of requisite technical skills particularly at Provincial and Municipal levels. They are unable to keep top engineers and relevant technical skills where the private sector pays more than the government.
* The business forums disrupt projects demanding 30 percent without doing any work.
* Another challenge is the level of funding in general, which is still lower than what is required and this is a general problem across all sectors.

As the economy improves, we believe government will be able to assist all sectors of our economy.