

MASTER OF CEREMONY, ALLOW ME TO PAY MY RESPECT TO:

HIS MAJESTY KING LETSIE III

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER

HONOURABLE PRESIDENT OF SENATE

HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

HONOURABLE PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL

YOUR LORDSHIP THE CHIEF JUSTICE

HONOURABLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

HONOURABLE MINISTERS

HON JUDGES OF THE HIGH COURT

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND
HEADS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

HONOURABLE ATTORNEY GENERAL

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARY

PRICIPAL SECRETARIES AND SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR CONSULTANTS/SADC OFFICIALS etc.

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA

DISTIGNISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to join you this morning on this remarkable event. I am indeed honoured to deliver this message and to officially open this workshop on Tripartite Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme (TTTFP) national stake-holders workshop which marks a very important milestone in the history of our country.

May I take this opportunity to welcome you all and firstly thank you for your time and effort, many of you are here in your official capacities, but there are also some from the private sector who have left their businesses today to be part of this workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are meeting in this workshop over the next two days when Lesotho has already embarked in reforms intended to address various challenges in the governance and administration of the country.

Ladies and gentlemen, this workshop on TTTFP is intended to highlight brief you on the reforms to be ratified by the member states of the three blocks of Southern African Development Community (SADC), Eastern African Community (EAC) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in the road transport sub-sector.

Specifically, this gathering will today focus on two key agreements being VEHICLE LOAD MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT (VLMA) and the MULTILATERAL CROSSBORDER ROAD TRANSPORT AGREEMENT (MCBRTA).

These two agreements are the building blocks of the more important and relevant principle of harmonization of the road transport policies, laws, regulations, standards, systems given that trade amongst the three regional groupings is mainly facilitated through road transport.

Many if not all member states of these three regions also subscribe to the agenda 2030 on sustainable development goals especially SDG 9 in that it shall foster progress in the quest for a reliable and resilient regional and trans-border traffic infrastructure for a more liberalised and harmonised regional road transport market.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this juncture, I would like to admit that over the years, Lesotho has not performed satisfactorily in implementing the SADC Protocol On Communications, Transport And Meteorology and the SACU Memorandum Of Understanding, on matters pertaining to transport. These agreements and the model laws that shall be discussed in this forum compel us to introduce new, modernised practices and technologies in traffic and transport administration.

As Lesotho, we experience frequent cross border passenger disputes between our borders with our only neighbouring country, South Africa mainly in the Free State Province when crossing the border or in transit. Therefore, the TTTFP agreements and laws bring much optimism towards realization of the smooth cross border operation between the two countries.

Despite this tripartite initiative, we shall continue to engage in parallel bilateral talks with South Africa, assisted by the SADC to resolve these challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the domestic front, the governing legislation for traffic and transport is outdated and needs a rapid review which the ministry has almost completed except to incorporate the essential outcome elements of this workshop.

It can be said, therefore that this workshop presents the opportunity to reflect and introspect on the laws governing administration of traffic and transport to make them more relevant in dealing with the present challenges in our roads.

The massive increase in traffic volumes in most member states provide a reason for setting vehicle standards, and improving on vehicle examination and driver testing processes in view of the decade of action for road safety. It is indeed the right time to move to quality regulation of traffic and transport.

Allow me Ladies and Gentlemen to indicate that I am aware that the outcome of this workshop shall be a Lesotho TTTFP Implementation Action Plan (IAP) for the next two years which we pledge to robustly support its implementation so that we can be seen to comply and ultimately enjoy the benefits of these initiatives.

SADC deserves complements for having the foresight to come up with this programme to help member states towards compliance with the provisions of both the protocol and the SACU MOU as well demonstrating leadership to in cooperate the other two blocks of COMESA and EAC.

I would like to convey our appreciation to the SADC and TTTFP team for supporting this workshop financially and their patience and unwavering guidance to the Ministry in its endeavours to develop Lesotho Integrated Traffic Information System (LITIS) under the Transport Infrastructure and Connectivity

Project (TICP). Your technical guidance has really sharpened our vision for the LITIS.

In conclusion, let me pass our sincere vote of thanks again to all other stakeholders present here today for having made time to join us at this important event and I call upon everyone in here to fully participate and articulate on the key matters from your constituent stakeholders that you feel need to be considered. May you all have fruitful deliberations. I therefore, conclude by declaring the workshop officially opened.

I THANK YOU !!

KHOTSO

PULA

NALA