



# transport

Department:  
Transport  
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

## MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

---

### MEDIA STATEMENT

TO : ALL MEDIA  
DATE : WEDNESDAY, 21 MAY 2014  
ATTENTION : EDITORS, NEWS EDITORS AND PR WIRES

### MEC MCHUNU WELCOMES RULING BY ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS MINISTER TO PROCEED WITH SANI PASS ROAD UPGRADE

The **MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu**, has welcomed the ruling by the national Minister of Environmental Affairs, Ms. Edna Molewa, in favour of the provincial department's upgrade of the Sani Pass road connecting South Africa with Lesotho.

The upgrade of the gravel road to tar was halted when stakeholders including local tour and lodgement operators opposed it, citing reasons to the effect that the upgrade would negatively impact their business.

Following the complaints by local stakeholders, the Minister had ruled in their favour, a decision that was subsequently appealed by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport (KZN DOT) in 2013. The KZN DOT's appeal was based on the importance of meeting commitments of a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the governments of Lesotho and South Africa in 2005 to improve commercial, social and economic opportunities between the two countries through increased accessibility between the two countries and in SADC. Specifically, the MoU entailed a Declaration of Intent with regards to Technical Cooperation on Roads, relating to the upgrade of Sani Pass.

As such the 19 kilometre upgrade of Sani Pass Road (P318), from Old Good Hope Trading Post to the summit of the Sani Pass at the Lesotho Border Post, aimed to achieve the objectives of the MoU.

The first phase of this project has been completed, with 14 kilometres of the road now fully tarred. The construction of the remaining 5 kilometres will begin within a five month period from today, if there are no further appeals. The total investment in the upgrade of the **19 kilometre road is R887 million.**

**“The main objectives of establishing these critical road infrastructure links, particularly the Sani Pass route between South Africa and Lesotho, are to improve trade relations between the two countries. From an environmental perspective, it makes economic sense to upgrade the road from gravel to tar as gravel roads require regular maintenance every two years. Furthermore, retaining the road in its gravel state will actually negatively impact the surrounding environment. As well, seamless and legal movement of people between the two countries will help strengthen our economic ties, grow shared opportunities and ensure sustainable and mutually beneficial development for both countries,”** said Mchunu.

**Media contacts:**

Kwanele Ncalane - 072 803 1462/ 079 699 5755 [Kwanele.ncalane@kzntransport.gov.za](mailto:Kwanele.ncalane@kzntransport.gov.za)

Nathi Sukazi - 081 018 0518/ 082 565 0205 [Nathi.Sukazi@kzntransport.gov.za](mailto:Nathi.Sukazi@kzntransport.gov.za)

Website: [www.kzntransport.gov.za](http://www.kzntransport.gov.za)

Twitter: @KZNTransport

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/kzntransport](http://www.facebook.com/kzntransport)