

**Address by the Honorable MEC Mr. TW Mchunu, MP
Department Transport, Community Safety and Liaison,
KwaZulu-Natal Provincial AARTO Road Show
Monday, 21 September 2015,
Curries Fountain Sports Centre, Durban**

Programme Director,

Chief Operations Officer of the RTIA, Mr. Thabo Tsholetsane.

Senior Management from the KwaZulu Natal Department of Transport

Senior Management from the Road Traffic Infringement Agency

Members of all Faith Based Organizations,

AARTO Road Safety Ambassadors,

Ladies and Gentleman,

Programme Director, the road traffic environment in the country has over the years been faced with difficult challenges regarding the increment of road safety. The loss of lives experienced on the country's roads has impacted negatively on the country's social fabric. In road traffic management, it is us humans who make the most difference between hazard and safety. Human behavioural change is key to changing trends relating to road crashes.

South Africa has made a firm commitment to achieving the goals of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety (UNDoRS), by reducing the number of road crashes by 50% in the year 2020. In pursuing these goals, we thus need to come up with critical interventions that will ensure their achievement.

The rise of accidents in KwaZulu-Natal is not isolated from the scourge of the road deaths happening in various parts of the country and region. These accidents are devastating both socially and economically, killing the young and old, breadwinners and heads of families. In many instances, the investigations on the causes of crashes and accidents point to a disturbing failure by road users, mainly drivers, to respect and strictly adhere to road traffic rules. According to a 2010 Road Traffic Management Corporation's survey, among the human factors causing the accidents in KwaZulu-Natal are high speed, drinking and driving, not fastening seatbelts and indeed the failure to respect road traffic rules.

It has also been established that many of the accidents occur between 18H00 PM and 06H00 AM, which has necessitated an increased focus of law enforcement on the night shift.

It is to be noted that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport has over the past years been implementing a number of interventions to reduce accidents. Notably, the Department had begun to see a steady decrease in road crashes, accidents and fatalities between the years 2010 and 2013, which was recorded at about 33 percent.

However, during the latter part of 2013, the Department began to see an increase in road crashes, accidents and fatalities. Of note are the two horrific accidents that occurred at the beginning of September 2013.

These are the Nkwalini bus accident which claimed the lives of 11 people including nine maidens from the annual Umkhosi WoMhlanga as well as the Pinetown (off M13) accident involving a heavy truck that crashed onto four minibuses and a light motor vehicle, killing 24 people.

These are disturbing figures that require the Department to implement aggressive measures covering education and awareness, effective law enforcement, continuously improving the road engineering and monitoring and evaluation programmes. Among these is the implementation of the demerit system as part of the now promulgated Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences, the rollout of which is expected to commence in April 2016. Ladies and gentleman, today we are witnessing the AARTO Provincial Road Show being held in our Province. This is a clear sign that as a Province we need partners such as the RTIA to help reduce the carnage on our roads.

It should be noted that the Road Traffic Infringement Agency (RTIA) has embarked upon a programme of changing attitudes and behavior of our road users through the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO). The Agency is one of the key significant Roads Entities established by the Department of Transport. It is tasked with the responsibility of enforcing road traffic laws and inculcating a new habit of compliance; thus putting us in a position to realize safer roads. AARTO is intent to educating the public about their roles and responsibilities. The challenge is to implement catalyst and new strategies that will result in rendering the country's roads a safer environment in which all road users can enjoy its use and benefits.

The AARTO Act depicts the RTIA as an independent adjudicator designed to balance the rights of the alleged infringer vis-à-vis the application of the road traffic laws by the Issuing Authorities. The impact bestowed upon the RTIA includes community educational and awareness programmes that will translate into new habit of voluntary compliance amongst the road user community. In this regard, the RTIA is mandated to ensure the implementation of an objective, transparent and fair administrative adjudication process.

The Agency's mission is to encourage compliance with road traffic laws in South Africa through:

- Targeted road user and community education and communication programmes;
- Promotion of procedurally fair, lawful and reasonable administrative adjudication;
- levying of penalties;
- Imposing demerit points;
- Effective administration and management of the suspension and cancellation of driving licences and operator cards; and
- Rewarding compliant road users.

It is also key to note that the RTIA has embarked on an active stakeholder participation process and has invited a plethora of stakeholders in this mammoth task of educating and empowering our road users. The Agency is galvanising the citizenry to establish a social movement, where a commission of traffic violations would be unacceptable.

The RTIA has undertaken a process in to sure that AARTO is implemented nationally as a policy geared towards the reduction of road crashes and fatalities on our roads and also creating a road user that complies to road traffic laws voluntarily. In this process the Agency has also realized that the youth have a critical role to play in making our country a better place to live by providing them with opportunities to make a meaningful contribution through the AARTO Road Safety Ambassador programme.

Taking into cognisance that the youth are part of all societal structures and are among the vulnerable road user group, it was befitting that they become a stakeholder. This effort also gives credence on us to teach the youth to enjoy being young while at the same time learning to be responsible citizens and safe road users.

Programme Director

As a roads agency under the Department of Transport one of the mandates of the RTIA is road safety. It is therefore safe to say that The Agency is continuously engaging with the interfaith movement, comprising of all the various faiths represented in the country. This is to ensure the participation of the religious and faith leaders in preaching the gospel of road safety every week in our country.

To this end, the Agency has further developed and is actively galvanizing the general public through the 1 Million Signature Petition for the declaration of a National Prayer Day for Road Safety. AARTO Road Safety Ambassadors have been appointed to collect signatures towards this petition and so far more than 300 000 signatures have been collected.

The Department of Transport through the RTIA aims at appointing more young unemployed people, about fifty in each province as AARTO Road Safety Ambassadors to educate communities on road safety and acquiring the more than One Million Signatures for the declaration of National Prayer Day for Road Safety. As a government we have a responsibility to uplift the youth and provide job opportunities and through entities such as the RTIA and these opportunities are slowly being realised.

In conclusion Programme Director we need to recognise that our country provides world class road infrastructure, it is our responsibility to enjoy it together as a shared space because road safety is a common responsibility. With the introduction of AARTO every road user will be held accountable for their actions and will change the landscape of traffic management in our country forever. If you commit a traffic infringement there will be no longer a place to hide, we shall find you and hold you to account.

Thank you.