



**CLOSING REMARKS BY MR. TO EMVULA,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE ROADS AUTHORITY BOARD
OF DIRECTORS AT THE JOINT RA-RFA
STAKEHOLDERS' DINNER,
WEDNESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2007,
NAMPOWER CONVENTION CENTRE**

Director of Ceremonies,
Minister of Works, Transport and Communications;
Minister of Finance;
Minister of Mines and Energy;
Minister of Trade and Industry;
Minister of Environment and Tourism;
Director General of the National Planning Commission;
Chairpersons of the RA and RFA and their Boards of Directors;
Deputy Minister of Finance;
Deputy Minister of Works, Transport and Communications;
Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy;
Chief Executive Officers of the Roads Authority and Roads Fund Administration;
Heads of Institutions;
Permanent Secretaries;
Inspector General of Police;
Senior Managers of the RA and RFA;
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. If pleasure is correctly defined to be the absence of pain, then I ought to be pleased because of what I heard this night. It is difficult not to draw the inescapable conclusion that emerges from all the speakers here regarding the fact that the strategic role and over-riding importance of the Roads Authority and the Road Fund Administration cannot be over-emphasized.
2. It was mentioned several times tonight that the importance of a good road network arises not only from a purely economic point of view, but also from the perspective of social and political well-being. Economic questions cannot be tackled adequately by ignoring society's role. In order to solve the chronic shortage of funds, we must work on a systematic approach which takes into account the interconnection and interaction of different sectors in our country. Perhaps we should start by asking the question: what role can the banking sector,

the mining sector, trade and environment play in the reconstruction of our road network? I want to thank the Minister of Works, Transport and Communications for reminding us that the responsibility of managing the road network does not rest with the Roads Authority and the Road Fund Administration alone. I thank him for coming to reassuring us that road safety and the maintenance of the road infrastructure remains a government priority.

3. While many of us regard ourselves to be minor, insignificant role players in the road sector, the objective reality however, is that all of us have some sphere of influence in which we can work for change, even if it is just in our own network of family, friends and colleagues. We are gathered here tonight to answer one other question: how can we co-operate to build a better road infrastructure? If this question sounds trite in its simplicity and rhyme, it is because this challenge has been lingering around for quite some time now. Tonight, the Minister of Finance told us that the development of this country depends to a large degree on a number of economic fundamentals, not least of which is an efficient road infrastructure. As Business and Labour, what is our contribution towards that? As we think about what we can do, I want to thank the Minister of Finance for her most illuminating statement.
4. You often hear people say “pull yourself up by your shoelaces” and yet you may not even have shoes, let alone laces. What are you going to pull yourself up by? The RA and RFA shoulder a tremendous responsibility in respect not only of keeping our road infra-structure intact, but also of expanding and extending it to the farthest reaches of this vast land of ours. We would all be failing in our duty should we not be fully appreciative of this fact. Tonight, the two Chief Executive Officers gave us a clear insight into a range of the daily challenges their institutions are facing. It is my fervent hope that as we leave tonight, we will do so knowing more about the RA and RFA than we did some two hours ago and that we are now better equipped to explain to others about the overall significance

of our national road sector to the economic development of this country. I thank them wholeheartedly for their presentations.

5. It is a great pleasure to note that our gathering here tonight is graced by the presence of so many esteemed dignitaries including Ministers, Chief Executive Officers, News Editors, Government officials, Heads of Business and Labour. They came here as representatives of their various Institutions. When they leave tonight, they will do so as ambassadors of the Roads Authority and the Road Fund Administration. I thank them in advance for the work they will be doing on our behalf.
6. This stakeholders' dinner is important. But the message resulting from it is of even greater over-riding significance that we can only ignore it at our own peril. In a nutshell, it is this, that the national road sector is an indispensable conveyor belt both of economic growth and national development. Consequently, if we fail to invest in it, we are failing our own national development and economic growth. I am pleased to see members of the Media here tonight because it is indeed of the utmost importance for this underlying message to be driven home as much as possible. I thank them in advance in this regard in full trust that they will rise to this challenge and that will indeed see and hear about it on radio and television tomorrow, and read about it in the newspapers on Friday.
7. Ladies and Gentlemen, I cannot thank you enough. I know we are in this together. The RA and RFA are grateful to count on you as partners. As the Minister of Works, Transport and Communications alluded to already, beginning March 5, the two sister institutions will embark upon a joint national road show where they will again explain in detail what we do and our future plans.

Thank you for coming and good night.