



**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY MR BRIAN MOLEFE, GCE: TRANSNET SOC  
Ltd  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SWAZILINK MEDIA LAUNCH AND SOD  
TURNING CEREMONY  
DATE: 12 JANUARY 2012**

Today marks a significant milestone in regional economic development and cooperation for both Swaziland and South Africa. We are present here to celebrate a ground-breaking epoch for both our countries and indeed the continent.

As we are all aware, our African continent has emerged as one of the frontier economies for the new century. We'd like to think we are playing our part in these exciting developments that will affect all our lives in future.

This moment is to honour the initiating of the Swazilink railway line that will traverse our two countries. In doing so, it will provide an unprecedented economic boost for this region.

Briefly, Transnet and Swaziland Railways have agreed to jointly develop a 146 kilometre line from Lothair in Mpumalanga, South Africa and Sidvokodvo Junction in Swaziland as well as upgrading the adjacent networks in both countries.

This project is vitally important for a number of reasons for us. When complete, this new line will create additional capacity of 15 million tonnes, which will predominantly be general freight volumes from the existing coal export line.

Given the configuration of coal trains – i.e 200 wagons – we expect that significant capacity will be made available for export coal.

Significantly, this is the first large scale rail investment in Southern Africa since the construction of the Richards Bay line in 1976. It is thus of great historical and economic import and we are all immensely proud of this fact.

I would also like to add that this investment is complementary to our other large coal investments that we are still going to roll out. This includes the Waterberg and Eskom's road-to-rail migration programme.

Globally, rail infrastructure is undergoing a major renaissance as an investment and a vehicle for the upliftment of citizens in an environmentally friendly and cost effective manner. We are proud to be part of this revolution.

As Transnet we have already done a high level risk assessment to identify the strategic, planning, financial, construction and environmental risks to ensure that this great multi-infrastructural project sees its day.

We expect the first train to run in three years time after the necessary land purchase agreements and environmental approvals have been resolved.

Honourable Ministers, let me further say that this day marks our continual thrust to be responsive to the infrastructural needs of our regions. We promise to ensure that such new capital investments are translated into tangible benefits for the people of both Swaziland and South Africa.

Distinguished guests, this day will culminate in a sod turning ceremony to mark the beginning of co-operative development between our two countries. As an optimist, I strongly believe that this is the beginning of bigger things to come.

With these words I welcome you all to this occasion.

**Issued on behalf of:**

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