

## **Remarks by the Government Secretary and Master of Ceremony, Mr. Tlohang Sekhamane**

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We are gathered here this morning for the official opening of the Sub-Saharan African Transport Program Ministerial Advisory Group. This meeting is an integral part of the 2006 Maseru SSATP Annual General Meeting and Conference.

The Ministerial Advisory Group Meeting has been preceded by a meeting of Conference Delegates who met over the last seven days in their various thematic groups to deliberate upon a wide array of transport policy issues with the objective of anchoring transport issues in poverty reduction strategies. In this context, they exchanged ideas on how best this objective can be achieved. They deliberated at great length on best practice in addressing the immense challenges facing the transport sector in Sub-Saharan Africa with a view to promoting efficiency in the sector and enhancing its role as a catalyst for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Like those before it, the Maseru SSATP Annual General Meeting has brought together Sub-Saharan Transport Sector Ministers, African transport sector practitioners, members of the SSATP Board, Representatives from African Regional Economic Commissions, International Development Co-operation Partners and other stakeholders in the transport business and civil society.

Today we witness the second leg of the conference whereby a selective group of African Ministers of Transport meet over the next two days in the capacity of SSATP Ministers Advisory Group. They will strategize on the way forward particularly with respect to the achievement of the lofty goals they set for the Sub-Saharan transport sector in the Bamako Declaration when they met in Mali last year. It is therefore befitting that the Honorable Mr. Lesao Lehohla, Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Prime Minister has been invited to officially open this important meeting of Ministers.