

Infrastructure development in Africa key to success of smart mobility - Mashatile

Africa should accelerate investment in critical infrastructure and digital solutions for smart mobility to succeed on the continent, says Deputy President Paul Mashatile.



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“For example, investment [must be made] towards building charging stations for electric vehicles, expanding broadband connectivity, and developing intelligent transportation systems.

“Governments, private sector organisations and international partners must, therefore, come together to invest in the necessary infrastructure.”

The deputy president was delivering a keynote address at the Smarter Mobility Africa (SMA) Conference Gala Dinner at the Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand, Johannesburg.

SMA, he believes, is another opportunity to collaborate to build a better and smarter transport system that will assist in

growing the economy, create jobs and improve people's quality of life.

Smart mobility involves creating connected and integrated transport systems, which offer flexibility and efficiency, cutting across all modes of transport.

The country's second-in-command said governments should develop clear guidelines and regulations to ensure a safe and reliable transportation system.

These, he said, include regulations on data privacy, cybersecurity, and standards for electric vehicles.

"We must make it our responsibility to establish a harmonised approach to smarter mobility across Africa."

In South Africa, the deputy president said smarter mobility has been embraced to align with ongoing worldwide discussions regarding the trajectory of mobility and climate change.

Meanwhile, government is pushing ahead with a National Transport Master Plan (Natmap) 2050 strategy to establish a safe, affordable, dependable, and efficient means of transporting people and products.

"We understand that we cannot discuss the transport sector's transformation without addressing the exclusion of our youth, particularly girls and women, who continue to face devastating and discouraging unemployment and the risk of poverty and violence in our society."

Urban planning

In light of the accelerated urbanisation expected over the next few years, Mashatile told attendees that governments and cities must prioritise urban planning policies that are responsive to changes.

"There is no doubt that the need for the transportation of both people and goods will always exist and is, in most aspects, one of the few ways in which economic development occurs."

According to deputy president Mashatile Africa must seize the opportunities presented by technology to enhance the efficacy and sustainability of our transport systems.

"This is because major cities, such as Lagos, Nairobi, and Johannesburg, face significant challenges in heavy congestion, overcrowded public transport systems, poor traffic management, and overall inefficient public transportation systems."

He has since called for more imaginative mobility solutions that can leverage technology to optimise routes, reduce traffic congestion, and use data to provide real-time information to commuters.

The deputy president believes that this could transportation networks' overall efficiency and reliability and will go a long way towards the development aspirations and efforts.

"In addition, smart mobility solutions can have a significantly positive impact on the environment."

By transitioning to electric vehicles and adopting clean energy sources, he said the continent can reduce carbon emissions and contribute towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

New energy vehicles

The state, according to the deputy president, remains committed to supporting and investing in the expansion and development of new and existing manufacturing plants to support the production of new energy vehicles (NEVs) components and grow employment in the automotive sector.

Investing in the NEV, he said, also contributes to the decarbonisation of road transport.

African trade

Shifting his focus to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), deputy president Mashatile said the continent should address the inconsistent and inefficient goods and logistics services that have long impeded intra-African trade and commerce.

“In addition, through this agreement, we will address the high customs delay times, lack of paved roadways on which goods can be conveyed, and more significant loss of goods due to limited cold chains compared to other global regions.”

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