

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **TRANSNET CONCLUDES HISTORIC LAND CLAIM AGREEMENT WITH MANDLANZINI COMMUNITY**

**[Richards Bay, 1 April 2022].** The Minister of Public Enterprises, Mr Pravin Gordhan, and Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza today oversaw the historic land claim agreement between Transnet SOC Ltd "Transnet" and the Mandlanzini and Mbonambi communities, which paves the way for the expansion of the Port of Richards Bay, that is expected to lead to more economic development in the province.

The agreement was signed between the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza as custodian of Land Restitution in the country, Transnet Group CE, Ms Portia Derby, Thulani Justice Mpanza representing the Mandlanzini Community and Mambuka-Mandlanzini Community Trust, and Martin Mbuyazi representing the Mbonambi Community and the Communal Property Trust.

Also in attendance was KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Economic Development, Mr Ravi Pillay, Deputy Mayor of the King Cetshwayo District, Cllr Sikhumbuzo Dlamini and Mayor of the City of Umhlathuze, Cllr Xolani Ngwezi.

Under the agreement, Transnet and the Mandlanzini Community have agreed to settle the Mandlanzini Land Claim on the following basis:

- (a) Transnet to restore land parcels located in the Northern Link/Nsezi forest and commercial properties in the Small Craft Harbour.
- (b) Transnet to retain all the land parcels that are core to its rail and port operations, including the land parcel that Transnet is acquiring from the uMhlathuze Municipality for Port expansion purposes.

The settlement agreement recognises the Land Swap Agreement between Transnet and uMhlathuze Municipality. Kapei Phahlamohlaka, CE of Transnet Property signed the Land Swap agreement together with uMhlathuze Mayor, Cllr Xolani Ngwezi.

In terms of the Land Swap agreement, Transnet is to acquire certain land parcels from the Municipality for port expansion and relocation of the navy from Salisbury Island in Durban to Naval and Pelican Island in Richards Bay. In return, the uMhlathuze Municipality is to acquire, *amongst others*; Acquadene Township from Transnet for human settlement purposes.

“As we take practical steps to reverse the legacy of land dispossessions and restoring the dignity of our people, we are sensitive to the need for the peaceful co-existence of the two communities,” said Minister DIdiza.

“Last year we transferred in excess of 5000 hectares of land to the Mbonambi community and more land is still to be transferred to this community. Last week, I approved the restoration of over 1400 hectares to the Mandlanzini community as part of settling their land claim,” she said.

Minister Gordhan as shareholder representative for Transnet, said the signing of the agreement paves the way for Transnet to commence with their expansion plans and upgrade the port to ensure the more efficient export of commodities to their global destination.

“The land agreement we have reached and signed today will make sure that this port can grow from increased investment, and a lot more trade activity takes place largely in terms of exports and also in terms of imports into South Africa. This brings opportunities for increased construction activity, skilling of artisans and an opportunity to train a new generation of young people with new skills to operate this port,” said Minister Gordhan.

The Port of Richards Bay is one of the largest strategic ports in the Southern African region and is responsible for exporting commodities such as coal, chrome, and magnetite.

“We are thankful that today we are healing a wound that was inflicted on the people of this community many years ago. Many who started this journey are no longer here physically to realise the fruits of their struggle. We acknowledge their efforts,” said Ms Derby.

“In order to proceed with the expansion plans of the Port of Richards Bay, Transnet had to ensure that there is equitable redress and settlement of the land claim to



address historical injustices. A company like Transnet places great value in developing strategic partnerships with communities where its operations are located," said Ms Derby.

The land claim and land swap agreement happening today coincide with the anniversary of the Port of Richards Bay, which started operating on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1976.

**ENDS**

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