naamsa
THE AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESS COUNCIL

Alenti Office Park
457 Witherite Street
Pretoria
0184

MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | Monday, October 19, 2026

naamsa WELCOMES PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA'S AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY ADDRESS AND THE POLICY COMMITMENTS EMERGING FROM SOUTH AFRICAN AUTO WEEK 2026

19 October 2026 | Pretoria, South Africa, naamsa | The Automotive Business Council welcomes the Executive Keynote Address delivered by the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Honourable Parks Tau, on behalf of President Cyril Ramaphosa, at the African Automotive Indaba during South African Auto Week 2026, held at the Durban International Convention Centre on 15 October 2026.

The Council particularly welcomes the President's reaffirmation of government's commitment to the South African automotive industry, the South African Automotive Masterplan 2035 [SAAM 2035], and the recognition that the industry's long-term sustainability requires decisive, coordinated and time-bound policy interventions.

naamsa further welcomes the constructive engagement, policy submissions, recommendations and commitments presented by government, vehicle manufacturers, component suppliers, organised labour, provincial governments and other industry stakeholders throughout South African Auto Week 2026. Together, these contributions provide a strong foundation for strengthening South Africa's automotive manufacturing competitiveness, accelerating industrial transformation, and positioning the country within the rapidly evolving global automotive landscape.

RENEWED COMMITMENT TO SAAM 2035

naamsa welcomes government's unequivocal commitment to the objectives of SAAM 2035, including increasing domestic vehicle production, deepening localisation, expanding employment and accelerating meaningful economic transformation.

The Council recognises that the operating environment has changed substantially since the Masterplan was adopted in 2018. Intensifying global competition, technological disruption, changing export market requirements and domestic production cost pressures necessitate an urgent recalibration of policy instruments to ensure that the industry's ambitions remain commercially achievable.

+27 12 807 0152 info@naamsa.co.za www.naamsa.co.za

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The Council therefore welcomes the ongoing review of the Automotive Production Development Programme [APDP2] as a critical mechanism for restoring investment competitiveness, improving manufacturing scale and securing future vehicle production allocations.

WELCOMING IMMEDIATE POLICY INTERVENTIONS

naamsa particularly welcomes the policy directions outlined by Minister Tau, including:

- **Strengthening domestic vehicle manufacturing:** The proposed phasing out of existing Semi Knocked Down [SKD] operations, the withdrawal of policy support for new SKD facilities, with appropriate differentiation for medium and heavy commercial vehicles.
- **Strengthen the definition Completely Knock Down:** The strengthening of the legal definitions of Completely Knocked Down [CKD] manufacturing, to create deeper supply chains.
- **Protecting South Africa's strategic pickup truck manufacturing industry:** naamsa welcomes the proposed ITAC investigation into the competitiveness of South Africa's pickup truck (bakkie) manufacturing segment, a strategically important pillar of the country's automotive industrial base. South Africa ranked 15th globally in light commercial vehicle production in 2025, accounting for approximately 1.2% of global output, and remains a significant manufacturing and export hub for internationally competitive pickup trucks, including the Toyota Hilux, Ford Ranger and Isuzu D-Max.

  The proposed investigation presents an opportunity to safeguard existing manufacturing investments, strengthen domestic production competitiveness, deepen localisation and reinforce South Africa's position in global pickup truck value chains. **naamsa** supports an evidence-based assessment of appropriate industrial policy measures, accompanied by reciprocal commitments to production, investment, employment, supplier development, transformation and exports.
- **Addressing fiscal and taxation constraints:** The engagement between the Ministers of Trade, Industry and Competition and Finance, and the instruction to technical teams to examine appropriate fiscal and taxation support mechanisms that balance industrial competitiveness with fiscal sustainability.
- **Accelerating the new-energy vehicle transition:** The recognition that differentiated support is required for NEV production and battery-related manufacturing, together with the proposed amendment of the NEV White Paper.
- **Expanding future industrial opportunities:** The focus on critical minerals beneficiation, battery value chains, hydrogen technologies, circular economy opportunities, end-of-life vehicle management and advanced digital manufacturing.

These policy directions are significant because they acknowledge that the future of South African automotive manufacturing depends not only on preserving existing industrial capacity but also on creating the conditions necessary to attract the next generation of automotive investment.

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RECOGNISING ALL INDUSTRY SUBMISSIONS AND STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS

naamsa acknowledges and welcomes the substantive contributions made throughout South African Auto Week 2026, particularly those addressing manufacturing competitiveness, localisation, industrial transformation, investment certainty, the NEV transition, trade competitiveness, infrastructure and logistics, and the development of domestic suppliers.

The Council recognises that these submissions reflect both areas of convergence and matters requiring further technical engagement. Differences in stakeholder positions should not diminish the shared commitment to maintaining a globally competitive and inclusive automotive manufacturing industry.

naamsa believes that the collective value of South African Auto Week 2026 lies in its ability to translate diverse stakeholder contributions into a coherent programme of industrial action.

The Council therefore supports the consolidation of submissions, agreed policy directions and outstanding technical matters into an implementation framework with clearly defined responsibilities, decision-making processes and timelines.

TRANSFORMATION AND INCLUSIVE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

naamsa welcomes the emphasis placed on transformation, particularly the recognition that the emerging automotive technologies and value chains must provide opportunities for black industrialists, women, young people, workers and emerging domestic suppliers.

The Council reiterates its commitment to advancing transformation beyond participation targets towards sustainable industrial ownership, productive enterprise development, supplier integration, procurement opportunities and long-term employment creation.

In this regard, **naamsa** supports the expansion of transformation initiatives and projects presented during South African Auto Week, including greater participation in battery manufacturing, charging infrastructure, power electronics and other emerging automotive technologies.

FROM POLICY DIALOGUE TO IMPLEMENTATION

While welcoming the address and the commitments emerging from the Indaba, naamsa emphasises that the industry's immediate priority must now shift decisively from policy dialogue to implementation.

The investment decisions that will determine South Africa's automotive manufacturing footprint between 2028 and 2035 are increasingly urgent. Policy certainty, manufacturing scale, production competitiveness and predictable regulatory frameworks are therefore essential to protecting existing investments and attracting new vehicle platforms.

naamsa stands ready to work with the Presidency, the dtic, National Treasury, ITAC, provincial governments, organised labour and the broader automotive value chain to translate the outcomes of South African Auto Week 2026 into measurable industrial results.

A SHARED COMMITMENT TO SOUTH AFRICA'S AUTOMOTIVE FUTURE

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naamsa expresses its appreciation to President Cyril Ramaphosa, Minister Parks Tau, participating government departments, provincial leadership, industry associations, organised labour, automotive manufacturers, suppliers, investors and all stakeholders who contributed to South African Auto Week 2026.

The Council regards the Ministerial's address, together with the submissions and engagements throughout the week, as an important foundation for renewed cooperation and a shared industrial agenda.

South Africa's automotive future will ultimately be determined by our collective ability to convert policy commitments into competitive production, new investment, deeper localisation, meaningful transformation and sustainable employment.

naamsa remains committed to working with all social partners to ensure that South Africa is not merely a market for the vehicles of the future, but a competitive manufacturing base that produces them.

STATEMENT ENDS

ABOUT THE SA AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

- the automotive industry contributes 5.2% to GDP [3.3% manufacturing and 1.9% retail];
- in 2025, the export of vehicles and automotive components reached a record amount of R291.0 billion, equating to 15.6% of South Africa's total exports;
- the industry accounts for 23.8% of the country's manufacturing output;
- vehicles and components are exported to 154 international markets;
- the manufacturing segment employs 113,000 people; and
- combined with multiplier effects, the industry sustains 498,000 jobs across the formal economy.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- Since 2021, **naamsa** introduced associate membership with tangible benefits including industry data access and visibility;
- **naamsa** represents 42 companies manufacturing, assembling, distributing and importing new vehicles;
- Our vision is to be the most credible and respected automotive industry thought leader and partner for a globally competitive and transformed South African auto sector;
- Enquiries: Mr. Tshetlhe LITHEKO, Chief Policy Officer - tshetlhe@naamsa.co.za; +27 64 021 9400
- Website: www.naamsa.co.za.

naamsa OFFICES: PRETORIA | Monday, October 19, 2026

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