

7th Regional Conference for Africa to focus on smart, safe and resilient roads

The seventh Regional Conference for Africa will be held from 18-20 October at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. The theme is 'Connecting Africa through smart, safe and resilient roads: Stimulating growth and trade on the continent'.



Asphalt resurfacing on the R43 between Hermanus and Stanford, Western Cape. Image: Imile van Rhyn, EFG Engineers

The conference is hosted by the South African Road Federation (SARF) in collaboration with both the International Road Federation and the World Road Association (PIARC).

“Physical conferences have always provided crucial and unique networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities that we’ve lost over the past few years. We believe the return this year to a physical venue post-pandemic will mark a pivotal event for our industry worldwide,” says local conference organiser Basil Jonsson, the operations director for SARF.

Keynote speakers

A number of international and local keynote speakers have already confirmed their attendance, among them World Bank consultant and civil engineer Nazir Alli, a South African who is currently the president of PIARC and formerly the founding CEO of the South African National Roads Agency (Sanral).

Other keynotes confirmed to date include Professor André Roux, head: futures studies programme, University of Stellenbosch Business School; and Dr Pierre Voges, CEO of the Atlantis Special Economic Zone Company and former CEO of the Mandela Bay Development Agency.

Jonsson also notes that over 114 abstracts have been received for consideration by the conference technical committee, indicating a strong interest in the event not only from the countries that usually attend (including the UK, the USA, various EU countries as well as those in the Middle East and Africa), but also from Japan, Mexico and New Zealand.

He adds that, as always, strong local support for the event had also already been demonstrated: “To date, 45% of all abstracts submitted have been from South Africa.”

With the final programme to be finalised by the end of June, presentations and speakers would fall under seven key sub themes, namely:

- Determination of roads needs and financing mechanisms,
- Preserving Africa's road assets,
- Safe and efficient transport by road,
- Innovative practices to optimise road networks,
- Roads and the environment,
- The role of low volume roads in rural connectivity, and
- Capacity development in the roads sector.

Jonsson believes there will be particular interest both locally and internationally in two of these focus areas, namely road safety and low-volume roads, but notes that the sub themes cover the full scope of the reach of the South African Road Federation. To accommodate the volume of topics and information to be exchanged, each day of the conference will be structured with an overall main session to start, followed by numerous breakaway sessions.

ESCA accreditation has been secured by SARF with 1 CPD Point in Category 1 for each of the three days of the conference.

A trade exhibition will once again run alongside the conference.



Basil Jonsson, operations director for SARF

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