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PRESS RELEASE

The United National Transport Union (UNTU) questions the motives behind the decision of the Competition Commission to initiate an investigation against Transnet for "excessive pricing" and "exclusionary practices" in delivering port services.

Mr. Steve Harris, General Secretary of UNTU, says this investigation is senseless. He believes that the motive behind the complaints against Transnet National Port Authority, which owns and operates all eight of the country's commercial ports, is merely an attempt to halt the work of UNTU, labour and government to increase train transports so that less trucks use South African roads.

"Our roads are not built for all the heavy trucks that they increasingly need to carry. The amount of accidents involving trucks confirm this. Railway transport is also cheaper than road transport," says Mr. Harris.

According to Mr. Harris Transnet negotiates its prices with most of its clients. Its port charges are subjected to the approval of the Ports Regulator of South Africa.

The Commission decision to investigate Transnet comes after complaints that South Africa's port charges were much higher than the global average. It is also alleged that Transnet gives preferential treatment to certain customers. The company's port charges have long been criticised for being among the highest in the world.

Mr. Harris says that the government and Transnet are looking at spending R300 billion to upgrade and enhance the infrastructure of railway tracks and to refurbish port facilities.

For further enquiries please phone Mr. Harris on (011) 728 0120 or 082 566 5516.

Issued on behalf of UNTU by Sonja Carstens, Media and Liaison Officer. For UNTU Press Releases e-mail sonja@untu.co.za or phone 082 463 6806.

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