

## March new vehicle sales up 4.8%

PRETORIA: New vehicle sales in March have increased by 4.8% year-on-year to 56 110 units, the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (NAAMSA) announced on Tuesday, 3 April 2012.



According to a statement released by NAAMSA, aggregate industry sales had improved by 2 552 units or 4.8% to 56 110 vehicles from 53 558 units in March last year.

"For the time being, Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) would provide a single total sales number for passenger cars, commercial vehicles and export sales. Based on historical sales trends and forecasting techniques, Messrs RGT SMART (NAAMSA's data processing service provider) had compiled estimates for MBSA commercial vehicle sales by segment," NAAMSA said.

Out of the reported industry sales (excluding MBSA), 89% or 47 417 units represented dealer sales, 4.9% represented sales to government, 3.1% represented sales to the vehicle rental industry and 3% to industry corporate fleet sales.

A total of 38 970 passenger cars were sold in March, reflecting an improvement of 3 802 units or 10.8% compared to the 168 passenger cars sold during March 2011.

Sales of vehicles in the medium and heavy truck segments -- at an estimated 934 and 1 650 units, respectively -- declined by 22 units or 2.3%.

For the first quarter of 2012, commercial vehicle sales had underperformed the growth in the new car market.

The association noted, however, that export sales had remained under pressure.

Exports of South African produced motor vehicles, including MBSA export sales, during March 2012 at 23 956 vehicles reflected a decline of 6 070 units or a fall of 20.2% compared to the 30 026 vehicles exported during March last year.

NAAMSA anticipated that industry export sales should improve during the months ahead as the Ford Global Compact Vehicle Export Programme and the BMW new 3 series export volumes were ramped up.

However, it warned that sharp increases in energy and transport costs would impact negatively on consumer disposable income in the months ahead, highlighting that record high fuel prices should also reinforce the growing trend in favour of more fuel efficient vehicles.