



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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## **MEETING WITH NATIONAL TAXI ALLIANCE**

### **SPEAKING NOTES FOR DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY, PROF. HLENGIWE MKHIZE on the occasion of the MEETING WITH NATIONAL TAXI ALLIANCE**

**DATE: 06 November 2020**

**10:00 – 12:00**

**THEME: “A 365 DAYS SAFE TAXI INDUSTRY FOR WOMEN YOUTH AND PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIES”**

**VERSION: 6 NOVEMBER, 08:30**

Programme Director, please allow me to recognize:

Mr Khambule from KZN

Mr Mabaso from Mpumalanga

Mr Kgasago from Limpopo

Ms Thafa from Eastern Cape

Ms Pule from Free State

Mr Gaborokwe from Northern Cape

Mr Buthelezi from Gauteng

8.Mr Mogale from North West

Mr Malele the National spokesperson

Ms Sifuba Gender chairwoman

Ms Mnguni the brand ambassador

2020 has presented unprecedented conditions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, which has underlined and exacerbated the continued deprivation and inequality faced by women, young women including those with disabilities across the world. This has pointed to the urgent need to drive the global gender equality, youth development and disability-inclusive agenda, despite the adverse conditions which constrain the nature and scope of the how our lives have changed.

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) is working with various stakeholders on interventions to help mitigate negative impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic for women, young women including persons with disabilities, particularly as it pertains to broader socio-economic empowerment issues such as gender-based violence and femicide as well as financial inclusion.

We engage today with the National Taxi Alliance as an important stakeholder within the broader taxi industry in the best interest of the safety of women, youth and persons with disabilities who use taxis as a mode of transport on a daily basis.

It is important to indicate that just 3 days ago we launched disability rights awareness month under the theme: *“Together Building Communities Inclusive of Disability Rights”*

Today we focus a broader yet not mutually exclusive theme: A 365 DAYS SAFE TAXI INDUSTRY FOR WOMEN YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. This is in an effort to bring about behaviour change through ongoing advocacy, response and economic empowerment within the sector.

Having just come out of Transport Month, we wish to recognize the important role the National Taxi Alliance plays in ensuring our economy remains mobile.

The Department is conducting this dialogue with stakeholders in the taxi industry across the country, recognizing unity in their diversity, to raise awareness within the sector and communities regarding their role in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence and femicide 365 days of the year.

When President Ramaphosa received the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide he indicated that it is everyone's responsibility to breathe life into the Policy to ensure that all spaces are safe for women and children in South Africa. As you know, High levels of GBV prevail throughout the life cycle of women, starting from the unborn child, pregnant women, the girl-child, young women, adult women and elderly women. Women and girls with disabilities and gender non-conforming persons are at a much higher risk to GBVF.

The National Strategic Plan provides a cohesive framework that will guide the national response to the GBVF crisis affecting South Africa. The plan outlines a comprehensive strategic response to GBVF with a specific focus on violence against all women – across age, physical location, disability, sexual orientation, sexual and gender identity and national identity – as well as violence against children, and how these serve to reinforce each other.

We would love to say in this meeting that women and children feel safe when commuting in taxis or public transport, or when in taxi ranks, or as owners of taxis, but that is not the case. For the overwhelming majority of women, there is fear, anxiety, and apprehension when women are in taxis or in taxi ranks. There is a culture of toxic masculinity that gives men a sense of bravado that leads to unwarranted harassment, taunts, jeers, and behaviour that demeans women and seeks to objectify them in the eyes of men. Women are sexually harassed, touched, taunted and insulted daily on public transport routes and the taxi industry is not free from this abuse.

We meet with you so that you can play your part in realizing the National Strategic Plan by building social cohesion and by contributing to the prevention of abuse of women and children. We need your buy-in to commit to a higher level of professionalism that immediately condemns any such behaviour and sets the standard for how women, our mothers and sisters, should be treated in society. This is how you can play your part in realizing Pillar 2 of the National Strategic Plan (Prevention and Rebuilding Social Cohesion)

The vision underpinning the plan is a South Africa free from gender-based violence directed at women, children lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA+) persons.

The Taxi industry in South Africa has been and remains a critical pillar of the country's public transport sector. Not only is it the most available mode of transport, it is also the most affordable to the public for the majority of urban

and rural poor. I am pleased that we have representatives from various provinces as part of the dialogue because each province has its unique demographics, challenges and opportunities.

What we know is that around 69% of all South African households use minibus taxis, equating to more than 15 million commuter trips a day. Minibus taxis represent 75% of all transport to work, schools and universities in South Africa. Minibus taxis generate an estimated R50bn in fares annually (Transaction Capital, 2019).

That which the apartheid government meant to disrupt and destroy the lives of black people ended up creating a black dominated economy, that is, the apartheid dispensation and planning processes were designed to marginalise and systematically exclude black people from the mainstream economy and economic activities, in this regard the Group Areas Act created a new problem for black people, resulting in the need for public transport. The taxi industry developed as a response to address this problem.

In addition we recognise that, Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a social ill, which has become a concern at all levels of society, with women and girls living in fear including within taxis and around taxi ranks across the country. While the taxi industry endeavours to create a safe environment for its commuters, men still harass and assault women in and around taxi ranks, and on taxis.

In his address on 17 June 2020, President Ramaphosa outlined: "At a time when the pandemic has left us all feeling vulnerable and uncertain, violence is being unleashed on women and children with a brutality that defies comprehension." This affirms the narrative that indeed GBV has become a secondary pandemic, whose sting has been accentuated even more by the

effects of COVID-19, with women having to face their abusers in private spaces without much reprieve, given the effects of the national lockdown.

President Ramaphosa has further stated that “violence against women is a man’s problem: It is men who rape and kill women. There is, therefore, an obligation on the men of this country to act, and to end crimes of such behaviour.” This statement within the context of how culture has been used to promote patriarchal structures and societal modes of conduct and communication, heritage month endeavours to demystify the misuse of culture in condoning and promoting GBV in the name of patriarchy.

The objective of the dialogue is to provide a platform for the National Taxi Alliance as stakeholders to engage with the department on work currently undertaken, challenges and possible interventions towards social cohesion and nation building in and around taxi ranks for the safety of women, youth and persons with disabilities 365 days of the year.

Going forward we expect that we can working together to promote the economic potential of the taxi industry particularly for women, enhance social cohesion and nation building 365 days of the year and ensure accessibility of taxi’s for persons with disabilities including those with albinism.

We want to work with you to ensure a safe environment for your commuters and workers, so that as the economy grows, so too does the taxi industry. We don’t want male commuters that harass women, they are not welcome in the National Taxi Alliance Family.

Thank you