SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, FIKILE MBALULA ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE HARAMBEE SERVICE EXTENSION ON 28 OCTOBER 2019 AT STATION 19, THEMBISA

Premier of the Gauteng Province, Mr David Makhura
Member of the Executive Council for Finance and e-Government, Ms Nomantu Nkomo Ralehoko
Executive Mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni, Mr Mzwandile Masina
Members of Mayoral Committee
Chairperson of the KTVR Bus Service, Mr Mandlakhe Mtshali
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

- It is only fitting that as the October Transport Month draws to a close, we focus the spotlight on public transport, the most important aspect of our work, which directly touches the lives of our people. We have made a pact with the people of South Africa that we will focus our energies towards accelerated service delivery in a tangible way. This can only be achieved through collaborative efforts that enable us to grow South Africa together. The service we are rolling out today is an example of the kind of social compacts that give practical meaning to a better life for all.
• Ekurhuleni is one of the thirteen cities that are rolling out Integrated Public Transport Networks. Through these networks, we will change the face of public transport and enable seamless mobility of the commuting public.

• However, in order to achieve this noble goal, the Cities must work together to ensure that services such as Harambee, Rea Vaya and Areyeng are wall to wall and enable citizens to realise the benefits of seamless travel across our cities. Indeed, such seamless travel must be as a result of full integration with other modes such as taxis.

• Our transport plans must clearly define the role of each mode in the value chain and ensure that not only do they play a role in moving the nation, but that they also benefit from the vast investment government is making in public transport infrastructure.

• While we are celebrating the rollout of this service today, we must be concerned about the time it has taken us to get here. Despite completing Operations Planning in 2012, Business Planning in 2015 and launching a test service in February 2017 the city has been underachieving in terms of spending its allocation for the past 3 years, completing infrastructure and stations and scaling up operations to a viable level of at least 30 000 to 50 000 passenger trips per weekday from the current 2500. The Khawuleza ethos that underpins the strategic focus of the 6th administration demands of us to walk at a brisker pace in delivering services.
• We have no doubt that both the City and the Province have learnt valuable lessons from experiences of rolling out IPTN services and will address the root causes of slow progress.

• We are under no illusion that the City will move with speed to improve efficiencies, while reducing costs and scale up the service to the target level of 100 000 passengers per weekday over the next 5 years.

• It must never elude us that the strategic role of the IPTNs is to unwind the apartheid spatial planning legacy, which confined our people to dormitory township away from centres of economic activity and workplaces. The Phase 1 corridor, of which this launch is a partial implementation thereof, extends from Tembisa to Vosloorus via O.R Tambo International Airport, Kempton Park, Isando and Boksburg. This route is a practical expression of our commitment to make travel to work and access to social amenities easier and affordable.

• We are pleased that the minibus-taxi industry is an integral part of this service and are participating in this project through a Special Purpose Vehicle called KTVR. The participation of the taxi industry in the implementation of IPTN projects is a strategic imperative aimed at ensuring that the industry is able to directly benefit from government’s public transport infrastructure build programmes.
• The bulk of this route will not require dedicated lanes in the short term and we are therefore hopeful that the City will speed up the rollout to enable the citizens of Ekurhuleni to enjoy the benefits.

• In achieving integration of our public transport services, the City needs to do more to integrate its subsidized bus services into a single Harambee network that is able to seamlessly integrate with other modes.

• Our commitment to accelerated service delivery means we must run a tight ship in the implementation of our public transport projects so that we don’t miss any future targets. This also extend to a commitment to use public resources in a prudent manner that maximises value for the citizen.

• Over the next 2 years, we want to see IPTN numbers in Gauteng triple from the current 70 000 weekday passenger trips to over 200 000. Anything less would be tantamount to shortchanging our people.

• We must congratulate Harambee for getting out of the starting block. It is time the people of Ekurhuleni enjoyed the benefits of billions of investment this government is making in public transport, as a building block towards the realisation of a better life for all.
• When we return in 2020, we expect the City to not only to meet, but exceed its stated target of doubling to 80 buses and 20 000 passengers.

I thank you.