Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula has met with the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) as part of ongoing consultations with the taxi industry.

Through a virtual meeting today, the Minister shared his observations on the implementation of the COVID-19 national lockdown regulations and directions.

Minister Mbalula commended the taxi industry, saying that by and large, the sector has complied with the directions on the carrying capacity, operating times and the use of personal protective equipment.

The Minister is however concerned about reports of taxi fare increments of up to 100% in some parts of the country, insufficient sanitization as well as sporadic incidents of overloading and breaching of travel times.

Minister Mbalula noted the dire effects of the lockdown on the taxi industry but strongly advised against lawlessness. He indicated that intergovernmental consultations on Taxi Industry Relief Support are at an advanced stage. The Departments of Transport, Small Business, Labour, Trade Industry and Competition as well as National Treasury have agreed to support the industry and are currently looking at various modalities of assistance.

“The taxi industry is one of the biggest contributors to the success of the lockdown; it cannot be left to chance. We are happy that stakeholders in this sector are championing the campaign and are in agreement that we must all do what we can to flatten the curve and stop the spread of COVID-19. Where there have been challenges regarding the implementation of the regulations, we have found that these issues are not insurmountable. We are attending to each concern raised by the leadership of SANTACO, including the need for a Taxi Industry to be offered a relief, we will make pronouncements soon.”

“SANTACO welcomes the commitment made by the Minister, that the taxi industry will be offered some relief for the loss of income suffered by taxi operators during the lockdown. We therefore call on taxi operators throughout the country to continue to observe the regulations and continue the fight against the spread of COVID-19” said the President of SANTACO, Philip Taaibosch.

“Once again, we urge the leadership of the taxi industry to ensure that 70% loading capacity is adhered to and taxis operate within the stipulated hours. We must move our people responsibly, because victory against COVID-19 is victory for the taxi industry too”, added Mr Taaibosch.

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