SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, FIKILE MBALULA ON THE OCCASION OF THE INSPECTION OF THE REA VAYA OPERATIONS AT THOKOZA PARK, SOWETO ON 14 MAY 2020

This morning we came to inspect the levels of compliance of the Rea Vaya bus rapid transit with the level 4 lockdown regulations. With the easing of the lockdown from level 5 and resumption of economic activity in certain sectors, the role of public transport in enabling mobility of workers and the movement of freight, cannot be overstated.

We are under no illusion about the importance of public transport in enabling social mobility and access to centres of economic activity. Bus rapid transit systems such as Rea Vaya play a very critical in enabling such mobility. The strategic role of transport as an enabler of mobility for people, also means it is a high risk sector for the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. We are therefore committed to ensuring that our public transport system does not aid the spread of the virus, by enforcing strict adherence to the disinfection, sanitizing and social distancing norms.

The vast majority of our people rely on the public transport system for their livelihoods. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that both the users and operators of our public transport vehicles are safe from infection at all times.

Our inspection of the measures the City of Johannesburg has put in place to ensure Rea Vaya operations are safe includes the daily disinfection of buses at the depot in Dobsonville.

The disinfection of stations at regular intervals is equally important to ensure that surfaces people come into contact with when awaiting to board a bus, are free of the virus.

The intervals for disinfecting both buses and stations are important in keeping the environment safe. Where intervals are unacceptably long, we will insist that these be shortened. Government has made a significant investment in both disinfection and sanitising materials as well as personal protective equipment.

Our directions for level 4 require that every passenger must wear a mask and we are happy that our law enforcement officers are diligent in ensuring that public transport users adhere to this rule.
Similarly, traffic officers and metro police must conduct themselves in a manner that respects the rights of our people, when enforcing the law.

Social distancing is an important part of ensuring that people are transported safely in our buses. Adherence to social distancing norms must find expression at all customer touch points and be enforced diligently. This includes strict compliance with the 70% limit to licensed passenger capacity at all times.

We are happy with the measures Rea Vaya has put in place and we encourage the City of Johannesburg to ensure that the bus service maintains these norms in a sustainable way.

We will continue to ensure that transport will not be a sector that enables the spread of the virus, but will play its role to enable economic activity in a safe and responsible manner.

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