SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, FIKILE MBALULA, ON THE OCCASION OF LEVEL 3 READINESS INSPECTION AT LANSERIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON 6 JUNE 2020

Ladies and gentlemen

On 1 June 2020, the country moved to Level 3 of the government's risk adjusted approach in our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant more industries resuming operations, which results in increased demand for transport. It is in this context that we took the decision to gradually re-open our airspace for domestic travel for business travel. The centrality of transport in enabling economic activity cannot be overemphasized.

However, in re-opening our airspace, we must maintain a delicate balance between enabling mobility and arresting the spread of the virus. Our commitment to preservation of human life above all else, is in keeping with our constitutional obligation of upholding the right to life.

Lanseria airport is an important gateway into South Africa's economic hub, complementing the OR Tambo International Airport. Our phased approach in opening our airspace for essential domestic travel will start with limited travel, permitted only through our golden triangle airports of OR Tambo, Cape Town International and King Shaka International, complemented by Lanseria Airport. Unlike the golden triangle airports, this airport is privately owned and operated, moving approximately 2.4 million passengers a year. The obligations to comply with health norms and standards, is therefore more onerous on Lanseria.

In allowing domestic flights to land and take off from these four airports, we require implementation of stringent measures to eliminate the spread of the virus through this mode of transport.

These measures include a limit to the number of permitted flights per day and authorisation based on the reasons for travel. The availability of port health services will also guide the scheduling of flights.

When we pronounced on the limited resumption of domestic flights, we indicated that the Lanseria Airport would be responsible for arranging Port Health capacity and we would certify that such capacity is in place and meets our requirements before any flight is allowed to take off. This inspection was intended to evaluate such capacity and satisfy ourselves that the airport is fully compliant.

Once the limited domestic flights take to the skies at the four airports, we will immediately begin work to move to Phase 2 of our 3-phase process to re-open the airspace for domestic travel. This will entail evaluating the level of readiness at identified airports for both Phase 2 and Phase 3.

We have evaluated the plans in full and have also considered the non-pharmaceutical interventions as well as mitigation strategies to be implemented by all airlines operating in our domestic markets and are confident that they will assist in the containment of the spread of the virus. We have also assessed the measures being rolled out globally in the airline industry and benchmarked against these.

Guided by these considerations, commercial aircraft movement will be allowed from the following airports during Phase 2 and Phase 3:

Phase 2

- Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport
- Polokwane International Airport
- Bram Fischer Airport

Phase 3

- Kimberley Airport
- Upington Airport
- East London Airport
- Mthatha Airport
- Port Elizabeth Airport

Guidelines to prevent the spread of the virus in civil aviation activities have been developed by the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) and these are being implemented by the industry, with SACAA playing an oversight role.

Lanseria, like all other airports, is required to adhere to the strict guidelines we have put in place for resumption of air travel. These include the following:

- Only passengers will be allowed inside the terminal buildings. Therefore, no accompanying members of the public will be allowed inside the terminal buildings.

- Temperature screening will be mandatory at terminal building entrances, before any passenger is allowed entry.
- All passengers must wear masks, inside the terminal buildings, otherwise they will be denied entry.
- Effective sanitization process before entering the terminal building must be in place.
- The airport buildings must have markings on the floor for social distancing of at least 1.5 metres. This will be applicable at check-in counters, security checkpoints and airport lounges.
- All airline check-in agents must wear face shields and the counters must have protective screens installed.
- Check-in counters must also be frequently sanitized.
- All airport personnel must wear masks.
- At boarding gates, boarding must be staggered and prioritised in terms of the number of passengers to board. Sectional boarding must be implemented to avoid unnecessary contact inside the aircraft.
- Loading capacity for all airport buses must be limited to 70%. These buses must be disinfected after off-loading.
- Drivers, baggage handlers and ground handlers must be fully equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- On arrival, all passengers must be screened as they enter the terminal building. Suspected cases must be referred to Port Health.

We had earlier pronounced on measures that airlines must implement inside the cabin of the aircraft. Most importantly, all aircrafts must be disinfected before entering into service and after each flight.

We have evaluated the measures implemented at this airport against our requirements. I am happy to pronounce that not only is the airport is fully compliant with our requirements, they have gone a step further and implemented contactless check-in for all passengers.

We commend the management team for working tirelessly to ensure that Lanseria is ready to resume with domestic flights.

I thank you.