**More than 25 000 taxis in KZN and industry employed more than 100 000 people as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the South African National Taxi Council: Duma hails the hosting of a gala dinner that marked the beginning of another journey of the transformation of this critical public transport sector**

Media and Public Statement by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Siboniso Duma

26 October 2026

Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House: Over the weekend, we reflected on the 25th anniversary of the South African National Taxi Council.

We gathered not only to celebrate the anniversary of this giant organisation but to reflect on the critical role SANTACO has played over the years in improving the quality of life of the people of this province and the country.

We recall that years ago, Black-African taxi operators were not allowed by the apartheid government to operate, legally, within the formal public transport sector.

Their applications for permits were rejected deliberately, resulting in many entrepreneurs operating illegally.

There were only 3 Indian families that controlled the public transport industry and operated buses.

We thank the democratic government that spearheaded the transformation under President Nelson Mandela.

In particular, we must acknowledge former MEC for Transport, Sbu Ndebele, who pioneered this transformation.

With the initial budget of only R8 million, he ensured that the Department fast-tracked the entry of Africans into the public transport sector.

To date, we have the Public Regulatory Entity, which has handled permits and works closely with SANTACO and taxi associations.

We have many successful taxi operators who are now operating buses and making a contribution in terms of ensuring the success of the public transport sector.

Critically, today we talk about fully fledged entrepreneurs who are operating Toyota Quantum minibus taxis—each worth over R1 million.

This is a clear indication that we have a businessman who is trusted by a bank with his money, which he earns honestly.

Whoever thought that one day, taxi operators would gather like these, wearing tuxedo suits and celebrating serious progress of their businesses?

At all times, we must all remember that the taxi industry was designed by the apartheid government to fail.

They were determined to ensure that Black-African entrepreneurs in the public transport sector did not see the light of day.

We must therefore celebrate this success—be proud and continue to disappoint the doomsayers.

We must also internalize the fact that there are those who frown upon the progress of an African-Black person.

They have been conditioned to believe that a wealthy Black-African person is practicing witchcraft or is corrupt. We must work together to change such a mentality.

We wish to reflect on some of the most critical points, just to underline the importance of the taxi industry:-

- There are more than 25,000 taxis in KwaZulu-Natal, transporting more than 5 million commuters daily.
- These taxis are generating more than R20 billion revenue a year.
- More than 8000 taxis are owned by women operators.
- From 231 taxi associations – we have 160 women members and women's desks comprising of about 10 members who are taxi owners.
- There are more than 100,000 people employed by the taxi industry in KZN and this number is growing.

Ends

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