

**SPEECH NOTES FOR KZN TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON
HON. MXOLISI KAUNDA AT THE TAXI GRADUATION CEREMONY IN
DURBAN.**

24 JUNE 2016

- Thank you Programme Director;
- President of SANTACO Mr Taaiboch;
- All SANTACO Executive Committee members present;
- Provincial leadership of the Taxi Industry;
- Members of the Taxi Industry;
- Representatives of all business partners;
- Distinguished guests;
- Protocol Observed;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is always encouraging when one witnesses occasions such as this one that bears testimony to the passion the Taxi Industry has for growth, development and transformation.

I may be relatively new as the MEC for Transport in this province, but my previous portfolio in the provincial legislature has familiarised me widely with issues relating to taxi industry in the province.

I also understand that the provincial transport department under the leadership of all my predecessors has worked tirelessly with various bodies of the industry to resolve conflicts, something that has almost convinced us all that indeed here one has to deal with hotheads only.

It is therefore a great honour for me to be part of this Taxi Industry Training Certificate ceremony as facilitated by the KZNTCC on behalf of SANTACO-KZN and funded by the KZN Department of Transport.

As Government, we have always emphasised the importance of a partnership with the taxi industry. Therefore, it is a sign of great maturity that this partnership today has brought these important results.

Today we are gathered to congratulate leaders of the industry from KwaZulu-Natal Province on their successful participation in the most needed management skills development and training project for the Taxi Industry.

This training programme seeks to immensely contribute towards a more effective, efficient, accountable, safer and peaceful taxi industry in KwaZulu-Natal.

Prior to the authorisation of the funding for the training that took place during the period of February to April 2016, the KZN Department of Transport and SANTACO had been in ongoing discussions for some time to agree on the training priorities for the industry.

The goals of the project are clear and they can be summarised as follows:

- To facilitate the effective implementation of the training and development of the taxi industry;
- To ensure the long-term sustainability of the taxi industry through the provision of customised training programmes; and
- To effectively improve safety and quality of transport services through the training and development of operators.

Now, what does all this tell us here? This alone tells us of the many positive things in the taxi industry that may not be communicated to the public since it is often rogue elements who steal the thunder as if they are the embodiment of this very important industry.

It means that it is high time we join hands in ensuring that we collectively deal with all the problems within the industry. Our duty is to ensure that areas of formalisation of the industry, conflict resolution and mediation, education and training, and economic empowerment are addressed vigorously.

It is our collective duty to support our Government, particularly the Transport Department, in its undertakings to fast-track radical economic transformation.

I am certainly pleased that the training also focuses on empowering women in the taxi industry with necessary skills and knowledge. They will play an effective role and provide leadership in improving the situation of women in the industry and creating favourable conditions in which women in the industry can operate and progress.

Siyazi ukuthi kuleli bhizinisi kukhona nabesifazane imvamisa abangena kulona ngenxa yokuthi lisuke lishiywe ngabayeni babo. Kuyishwa nokho baba uTaaibosch noNondaba ukuthi namhlanje sinabesifazane abangama-operator abaningi, kodwa u-95% wabo okungabantu abayeni babo abadlule nodlame lwamatekisi.

Siyafisa ngempela bafowethu ukuthi abesifazane banikwe indawo lapha embonini futhi kube nezinhlalelo ezingala zokunakekela ikakhulukazi labo abasuke beshiywe ngabayeni babo.

Kokunye kuye kuvele ukuthi badlelwa imisebenzi barojwe yilaba besilisa abebesebenza nabayeni babo. Abanye izimoto zabo ebezihamba amabanga amade ziyakhishwa zifakwe emizileni ye-local, bagcine bengasayiboni nemali abayisebenzayo.

Ngakho-ke ngigqugquzela ukuthi kuhle omama bazijwayeze ukwazi ngebhizinisi noma ngabe ubaba usaphila ukuze ukuhamba kukababa kungabi ngukuwa kwebhizinisi.

Ladies and gentlemen, also close to my heart is safety on our roads. It is therefore encouraging that for this training, we partnered with Afro Fleet to develop a programme customised to the specific role that the Hlokomela leaders play in promoting safety among the province's taxi fleet, particularly during peak holiday periods.

We are indeed compelled to do something for our people who, everyday, are praying to settle down to a life of freedom, security and comfort. Our people want to be able to assert their pride in the freedom our country achieved more than two decades ago.

They want to travel in peace, so that when they go to and from their places of work, home, prayer, recreation and all other things in which public transport has become the lifeline of secure and comfortable commuting, they would be able to be safe.

They do not want to be preoccupied with thoughts of a road accident that brings death and destruction or the bullying and rude attitudes of drivers and their assistants.

That is why perhaps this training initiative should be seen also improving relations between taxi operators, taxi drivers and their customers - the passengers.

To all our participants who are receiving certificates this evening, the message is clear. We have invested in you because we hold the view that you need to be champions of proper and good business management.

You are now sent out from here to help transform the industry. The training you have received must mean that indeed we can count on you.

I urge and encourage you as transport operators that while you conduct your businesses with due care for the safety and security of the public, but also ensure that the working conditions for your employees are better.

From our side, I want to assure you that the intention of the government is to improve the industry to be better than before.

As government it is our duty to assist you and other entrepreneurs to prosper, but we cannot do it without your cooperation. There can be no turning back now - the sky is the limit.

I thank you