

The North West Provincial Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads, Transport Management and Community Safety has welcomed the Department of Transport Management and Community Safety's responses on matters raised during the Transport, Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Sectoral Parliament held on the 28 October 2016.

The Committee called the department to give feedback on issues raised at the Sectoral Parliament. Some of the matters raised included; illegal taxi operations; unregulated and unfriendly taxi ranks; unfair treatment of female taxi drivers; lack of passenger liability insurance; hitchhiking sports should be eliminated to improve the profit in the taxi industry and issuing processes of transport operating licenses should be improved and fast-tracked. The meeting was attended by taxi associations in the province, Road Accident Fund and also national taxi associations

Committee Chairperson, Hon. Wendy Matsemela said the Committee welcomes departmental initiatives in resolving challenges in the transport industry. "The industry can only transform once stakeholders refrain from using threats and violence when resolving their disputes. They must strive for continuous engagements with the department and relevant government authorities," said Hon. Matsemela.

MEC for the Department of Transport Management and Community Safety, Dr. Mpho Motlhabane, said the department is currently holding consultative meetings with different transport stakeholders including regional and local taxi associations on their successes and challenges.

"The goal of these meetings is to ensure that the industry is transformed to be more accountable and profitable. Government must be seen as a tool that create viable opportunities for the transport industry. The department is engaging the councils in all the districts to check matters of accountability and currently on the process of empowering women in the taxi industry. In the past financial years, the department supported the councils with about R30 million to start-up cooperatives but some have collapsed.

"The department has also placed a moratorium on the issuing of transport operating licenses to allow processes of auditing and cleaning the system. We also condemn the ill-treatment given to our officials when they want to verify operating licenses in taxi ranks," said MEC Dr. Motlhabane.

He said the provincial government is in a process to create integrated transport network which will generate a viable and profitable transport management industry in the North West Province. "After amendments to laws governing transport management in 2009, the passenger reliability insurance is no longer a prerequisite for the issuing of transport operating licenses but it is highly recommended to taxi owners, should Road Accident Fund not approve claims for their drivers.

"We also condemn the alleged government officials who operate illegal taxis and should be reported to the department," said MEC Dr. Motlhabane.

The Secretary-General of South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) in North West Province, Mr. Sello Mphago said the department should conduct workshops on laws and regulations and skills development in the transport management. "Although we registered our employers for Unemployment Insurance Benefit and with South African Revenue Services, the industry still requires serious transformation. The Provincial Regulatory Entity (PRE) is also not assisting on resolving some of our cases timeously," said Mr. Mphago.

Ends

**Issued by: North West Provincial Legislature: Media & Communications
Unit on behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads,
Transport and Community Safety – Hon. Wendy Matsemela**