

Closing remarks by Honourable Mr S J Mohai (MP) during the Ministerial Briefing Session on Transport

6 May 2021

Honourable Chairperson

Honourable Deputy Chairperson

Honourable Minister Mbalula

Honourable MEC

Permanent delegates

Special delegates

Allow me to express our utmost appreciation to Minister Mbalula and the various MECs for their elaborate briefing on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the transport sector in our country.

They have given an elaborate account of the measures that our government has put in place to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the transport, freight and logistic sector, as well as the aviation industry. We are encouraged by the appropriate response and elaborate contingencies that sector under the leadership of Minister Mbalula and various MECs have initiated to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the sector.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, cities across the world have had to enforce massive restrictions on public transport in order to limit transmission of the virus and ensure safe passage of key workers during the emergency response.

Minister Mbalula and various MECs have outlined the dire impact of the pandemic to all public transit locations such as public transport and aviation. They have also outlined how the pandemic has resulted in enormous job losses with many operators such as ACSA, PRASA and OTOPEC having no choice but to scale back on their operations. Sadly, some operators are facing completely shut down due to less viable routes due to reduction of passengers.

The social impacts are undoubtedly significant. While those with access to private cars might enjoy uncharacteristically quiet roads, for poorer households that depend on shared transit, being denied motorised travel for months could have disastrous consequences.

Most low-income residents will have no choice but to walk or cycle, but with added curfews and outdoor time limits, access to work and social services are likely to be severely impeded.

Honourable Chairperson,

Research shows that discretionary consumer spending may decline by between 40% and 50%, translating into a 10% decline in gross domestic product, with numerous second- and third-order effects, such as a reduction in tax collection.

The most immediate and visible effect of this is a massive reduction in revenue for the government to continue with the national agenda to deliver quality services to our people.

Bold measures and decisive interventions are required to respond to the pandemic while also ensuring decisive interventions to forge ahead with creating strategic partnerships with measures to weather the covid-19 storm. We want to reassure Minister Mbalula and all the MECs of our support in rallying all sectors of society to ensure that this pandemic does not reverse the gains that we have made in reversing the legacy underdevelopment, especially poor infrastructure in our communities and providing our people with reliable and safe public transport.

I thank you