

A department characterized by empty promises

By **Thamsanqa Mabheni MP** – DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Transport

Ngiyathokoza Sihlalo,

Ngilotjhisa naso soke isitjhaba,

Chairperson,

The Department of Transport (DoT) spent millions of Rands organizing the taxi indaba, a largely expensive yet low yield exercise. Because to date, the department is yet to distribute the over R1.135 billion Covid-19 taxi industry relief package.

Chairperson,

The Taxi Recapitalization Programme remains an overly generous programme in terms of virements. This is mainly because the uptake on the programme, is lagging behind and is bearing no fruit, as a result, the DoT uses this programme as a conventional savings account. Funds are just allocated to this programme as a tick box exercise and only for these to be re-directed to other departmental programmes, yet the DoT claims that the Taxi Indaba was a success!

Chairperson,

The local government elections are upon us, and without fail, another so-called “imminent announcement on the future of Gauteng e-tolls” has already been issued by the Minister just in time, like many of his predecessors, same script but different actors. This is what has characterized this department, empty promises, which at most these promises are not even worth the paper they’re written on.

Chairperson,

The devastating announcement by the department through a letter to the Executive Mayor of the Nkangala district municipality in Mpumalanga, that the DoT will not be implementing the Moloto Railway Corridor remains one the biggest insults to the people of Mpumalanga, and a direct contradiction of the ruling parties policies on moving people from road to rail, but hey, who are we, these are masters of empty promises.

Chairperson,

An efficient and effective public transport system and network are one of the first steps towards solving the triple challenges facing many South Africans. The inefficiency of the DoT to

inspire confidence and spearhead an effective and sustainable programme of integrated and efficient public transport system roll out in South Africa, is a cause for concern. Not only that, but the DoT is by far the largest contributor to perpetual poverty in South Africa through its gross inefficiency.

Chairperson,

It is no secret that the Global health pandemic has had a devastating effect on the many economies across the globe, and our local economy was not spared in the ongoing onslaught of this global health threat and crises. Our economy was already on its knees, and this global health crisis proved to be a devastating blow to us.

However, what was more concerning was looking with utter shame and frustration at the inefficiency and none existent and efficient public transport system. A department that brought more shame than inspire confidence amid a global crisis and when it mattered most to many South Africans who were and are still the victims of this health crises, through lost livelihoods, diminished family incomes and significant pressures exerted on many households by this crises.

Chairperson,

What we witnessed is a department in disarray, confusion and contradiction on the regulations as issued in the government gazette by the DoT which was characterized by withdrawals, from just pure madness to being inconsiderate. We got to witness with utter disgust and shame how the very people that are entrusted with the most critical levers of government were failing to provide leadership.

We got to witness how these departments which have over the years transformed into personal fiefdoms of these so-called “cadres” completely collapse in front of their eyes and just how inefficient they are.

Chairperson,

To ignite an economy, any self-respecting government in the world knows that they would need an efficient public transport system. Given the fact that a lot of incomes for many South Africans diminished during this global crises, it makes sense that the mobility of South Africans should be the least of the worries of our citizens. Yet, the DoT failed dismally to lessen this burden.

I thank you.