

**ADDRESS BY LIMPOPO TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY MEC FLORENCE RADZILANI AT THE LAUNCH OF THE PROVINCIAL 2022 OCTOBER TRANSPORT MONTH (OTM), 14 OCTOBER 2022, POLOKWANE.**

**Programme Director,**

**Executive Mayors of Capricorn and Polokwane**

**All the Local Mayors of Capricorn District present here**

**Acting Head of Department**

**Our Provincial Commissioner**

**Executive Management of the Department**

**Our law enforcement**

**Cross Border Road Transport Agency Board Chairperson**

**Our stakeholders in the sector**

**Our media**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

It is a great honour for me and for us in Limpopo to be launching the October Transport Month (OTM) following the National launch by our Minister of Transport, Fikile Mbalula on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2022. It is indeed a privilege to be in your midst to officially launch the October Transport Month intended to heighten awareness on road safety and reliable public transport. This is part of our efforts as Government, to advance road safety initiatives while also encouraging collaboration with

all the stakeholders for safe and reliable public transport. Some of you in attendance might rightfully ask yourselves what is October Transport Month (OTM) and what do we seek to achieve with it? October Transport Month is an annual campaign of our government that was first launched in 2005. This campaign seeks to raise awareness on the important role transport plays in our lives and also in our economy. It also seeks to invite business and civil society to join hands with government in providing safer, more affordable, accessible and reliable transport system for our province and country.

The stark reality is that South Africa's road safety record remains one of the highest in the world with people either sustaining injuries or losing lives on a daily basis. This translates to about 36 lives lost daily on our roads. In 2021, human factor proved to be a serious challenge as it contributed more than 85% to the fatal crashes compared to other factors such as vehicle fitness, road engineering and environmental factors. This bleak picture remains undoubtedly the same.

Road traffic injuries are currently estimated to be the ninth leading cause of death across all age groups globally and are predicted to become the fifth leading cause of death by 2030. Road carnages are amongst the top five killers in South Africa and are a huge public health and developmental problem. As

human population grows and vehicle population increases this problem only becomes worse with each passing year.

We understand that safety on our roads will not improve unless it is all hands on deck. We also understand that when we fail in road safety, the effects are very personal indeed, as well as for the loved ones of those killed and for those injured. Accidents on our roads reminds us that life is challenging and invite us to refocus and prioritise road safety, to stress education and the need to change behaviour and the enforcement of rules at the same time. To achieve maximum results which save lives and limb, we need to intensify the implementation of the four **'E's of Road Safety** which are **Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Evaluation.**

On the law enforcement front, we need to ensure that our plans are integrated. The SAPS, Provincial Traffic, Municipal Traffic, National Traffic Police, Road Traffic Infringement Agency (RTIA) and the Cross Border Road Transport Agency (CBRTA) must work together to build synergies where it matters most.

In other words, we want Provincial Traffic Officers, CBRTA officers, Municipal and National Traffic Police including SAPS members to operate together using one plan. I'm aware that already this is happening in some parts of the province, but we

must intensify our joint operations in line with the Provincial 365 days plan.

In the previous financial year (2021/2022) the Department spent R 741,3 million in operational subsidy which was paid to contracted bus companies. The operational subsidy paid to contracted bus companies benefitted 27 million (27 150 077) passengers across the Province. The subsidy served to cushion passengers who under normal circumstances would not have afforded the high costs of travelling.

Through additional funding provided, the Taxi industry was assisted and managed to take all Taxi Associations through an election programme to renew the mandate of the leaders serving at various levels of the industry.

Through the Provincial Regulatory Entity (PRE), 2 777 applications for operating licences were processed and adjudicated during the previous financial year. This is done to facilitate entrance to the industry by new players with the aim of ensuring general compliance to regulations by public transport operators.

We want to reiterate our position that this government will continue to provide operational subsidies to bus operators in

order to keep the cost of transportation affordable to members of the public.

We will also continue to provide annual grants to the Taxi industry aimed at financially assisting the industry to better manage their affairs and to build requisite capacity within its leadership.

As the Department we will also continue to facilitate empowerment and awareness workshops for the benefit of owners of public transport vehicles to deal with matters related to Labour relations, Basis conditions of employment and SARS (Tax) matters, amongst others.

The October Transport Month campaign also advances the country's road safety initiatives including the 365-Day Road Safety initiative.

South Africa is a signatory to the Decade of Action whose goal is to stabilize and reduce fatalities by 50% by the year 2030 with the 2010 baseline. To do that, South Africa needs to create a culture of safer road usage through concerted efforts that seek to inform and encourage safer road conduct by all road users.

This is the seventeenth year since this campaign was launched and it is always encouraging to see greater participation of all sectors of society behind the road safety message. Throughout the years, we have seen a gradual increase of participation of the private sector and the religious community in the campaign. This must be sustained going forward.

Our message for October Transport Month goes beyond road safety. We want our people, especially the previously disadvantaged individuals to participate in greater numbers in the transport economy.

The participation of women entrepreneurs in the taxi and bus industries cannot be postponed any longer. I'm convinced that greater women participation in the taxi industry can go a long way in bringing peace to this troubled sector.

Young black people and women who want to start careers in rail, in maritime and in the aviation sector also deserve our support. Through interventions such as scholarship and mentorships, we can help to unearth future pilots, air traffic controllers, aeronautical engineers, aircraft mechanics and the like. Our overall objective must be to provide a safer, more affordable, accessible and reliable public transport for human and economic development.

As part of celebrating this year's October Transport month, our department has lined up a series of activities that members of the community will have the opportunity to partake in:

- Already the province has taken part in the National Road safety school debate and Participatory Educational Techniques (PET) competitions where Limpopo obtained position one under the national rural category for debates.
- Jointly with CRBTA, the province will also hold activities aimed at Driver Testing involving freight, taxi, and buses, to mitigate near fatal health conditions that may possibly endanger other road users, i.e., High Blood pressure and diabetes.
- Cross Border buses will also be tested for roadworthiness,
- On the 29<sup>th</sup> of this month, our province will host the Provincial Taxi Driver of the year Competition here in Polokwane.
- Other lined up activities for the month include the Storm Flag Handover ceremony to honour the families of bereaved Traffic officers who perished during the Covid 19 Pandemic.
- There will also be a number of joint roadblocks in all our major routes involving police and traffic officers. Members of the community should expect to be stopped and

searched by police officers as a way of deterring crime and non-compliance.

From October onwards until January, motorists leaving and entering our province will be subjected to zero tolerance policing, which will include heightened inspections of vehicle fitness and driver fitness. We shall only tolerate roadworthy vehicles on our roads. Those found to be drunk behind the steering wheel will not be allowed to proceed with their journeys. Unlicensed and unroadworthy public transport vehicles will be impounded instantly.

Drivers and Passengers who do not fasten their seatbelts are a risk, not only to themselves, but also to other passengers. It has been scientifically proven that a safety belt can be the difference between life and death because it can save a life in a car accident.

To reduce the number unnecessary deaths and injuries this year, all of us must fasten our seatbelts and avoid reckless behaviour at all times. Excessive speeding and drag racing should be the last thing on our minds, if we want to live beyond December.



Pedestrian safety is also another area that will continue to remain on our radar. Pedestrians must always watch out for motorists and vice versa. Statistics have shown, year in, year out that we are losing more pedestrians on the road compared to all the other categories of road users. Shebeens and taverns located alongside busy roads have proven to be death traps for pedestrians crossing roads after they would have consumed alcohol. Campaigns involving tavern owners need to be intensified to reduce the spate of these carnage.

Whilst law enforcement must be strengthened, we believe that the time has now come for us to step up road safety education measures in order to reduce unnecessary deaths. Municipalities, Department of Education and traditional authorities all have a bigger role to play in this regard.

As we leave here, let us continue to heed the Arrive Alive message by doing the right things on the road. We do not want anyone to be counted in our statistics as we approach the festive season hence we continue to insist that you obey the rules of the road each time you travel.

We are still determined to ensure that our officers operate 24/7 in all critical routes prioritizing visible patrol. We shall do everything in our power in order to maximize visibility. The main

objective for this period and for the festive season operations is:

- To reduce critical offence rates that lead to crashes.
- To reduce crashes, fatalities and serious injuries
- To inculcate safe road user behaviour and encourage voluntary compliance.
- To create heightened awareness of road traffic safety issues.
- To increase detection and prosecution of critical road traffic offences.
- To harmonize and co-ordinate common operations between the Province and Municipalities.

The following critical routes will be prioritized during this period and beyond. These include but not limited to the N1, R101, R71 R81, R37, R518, R567, R521, D19, R36 and N11

Let me conclude by thanking all of you for your participation in this launch and look forward for your steadfast activism in our efforts to reduce unwanted and unnatural deaths and fatalities on our roads across the Province. Wherever we are, let us be custodians of road safety around Limpopo. At all times let us buckle up, let us not drink and drive, let's not overtake when it is not safe, let's not overload and most importantly let's not

overspeed, because chances of one surviving after you have been involved in an accident after speeding becomes even more fatal. Together we can stem the tide of road carnages.

**“S’ya yi shova’ingolovhane: together building infrastructure that builds lives and livelihoods”**

**I thank you!**