



GAUTENG PROVINCE

ROADS AND TRANSPORT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH

SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE DEBATE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT (2016/17) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS AND TRANSPORT IN THE GAUTENG PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

29 NOVEMBER 2017

Madam Speaker

Allow me respond to the debate by firstly congratulating the Chairperson of the Committee, the Honourable Jacob Khawe, on his prospective appointment to a new political function. As Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Roads and Transport, he had effectively used the power of this institution to raise matters of importance, particularly as they relate to public transport. He had initiated the Committee Enquiry into the Taxi Industry, and more recently, the Committee has been focussing on the quality of services being rendered by subsidised bus operators. He has successfully piloted the amendment of the Gautrain Management Agency Act and has championed the road safety campaign in our province. He did all this with a calm disposition and great sense of humour. There was never an occasion when he did not enjoy a joke and laugh with gusto, which is so unlike the members in the opposition benches. Their politics is always dull and dry and they bear a dour disposition. So I take this opportunity, on behalf of all of us in the House, to wish the Honourable Khawe every success in his new portfolio, and I say this with deep affection, "We will miss you."

Madam Speaker

As was reported previously in the House, the Gautrain Management Agency has received a clean audit and the Department and g-Fleet have obtained unqualified audits.

The Department acknowledges the Committee's concerns regarding underspending, particularly as it relates to infrastructure projects. There are a several reasons for this. To some extent at least, the Department must assume responsibility for delays in its internal planning processes. At the same time the introduction of new procedures linked to the "open tender" system and the more recent Integrated Development Management System (IDMS) has placed new administrative obligations on the Department, which require more rigorous planning that is more time consuming. Added to this, periodic labour stoppages, community protests at construction sites, and in some instances, poor performance by appointed contractors have contributed to the underspending. I want to assure Members that every effort is being made to ensure that the Department overcomes these challenges and that road construction and public transport projects are completed on time and within budget. Similarly efforts are being made to ensure that the Department meets the employment targets for women and people with disabilities.

A significant part of the Department's infrastructure spend in the past financial year maintained and expanded the provincial road network to meet the growing mobility challenges emanating from rapid in-migration and urbanization, population growth, and an increase in the number of vehicles on provincial roads. Our expanding transport infrastructure footprint continues to shape the five development corridors of the Gauteng City Region, and provides both social and economic access to our growing population.

We are pleased that the Gautrain Management Agency was able to spend its entire budget allocation and had achieved 93 percent of its performance targets. It has also resolved the outstanding legal disputes with the Bombela Concession Company that related to the construction period and it has repaid the loans it has received from

Treasury. Planning for the future expansion of the Gautrain rail network is on track.

In the Transport Operations programme, the House should note that progress is being made on the irregular expenditure reflected with regard to the subsidised bus contracts. The Mamelodi and Sedibeng contracts were put on tender last week, and planning is at an advanced stage to review the remaining subsidised contracts in terms of the National Land Transport Act. Inter-governmental authorisation agreements have been concluded with City of Tshwane and the Sedibeng District Municipality. Discussions with the City of Johannesburg and the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality remain inconclusive at this stage. We will be meeting with them shortly to finalise these matters. Also, it is envisaged that an electronic monitoring system will be linked to the new bus contracts entered into between the contracting authorities and bus operators.

In relation to the g-FleeT the House should note that real efforts have been made to recover outstanding amounts from client Departments and to resolve billing disputes. I am pleased to report that MEC Creecy and MEC Ramokgopa have agreed to pay a handsome sum to g-FleeT, which will substantially improve the entity's financial position. I can also report that the disciplinary proceedings against the Chief Operations Officer has been concluded and the finding of the Presiding Officer has been implemented. Similarly, the outstanding cases against other senior managers are near completion, which will assist in stabilising the senior management of the entity.

The Department remains an important deliverable hub for frontline services such as drivers' licenses, public transport operating licenses and vehicle testing. Its "deliverology" programmes are aimed at improving efficiencies at public service centres and combatting corruption. Increasingly, these services are now more accessible to citizens as the Department locates centres within historically disadvantaged communities. The Department has commissioned the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research to design a master plan

for the future location of Transport Service Centres. It has also ensured that new equipment for the capturing of biometric data of applicants are being installed at DLTCs. I should report that the pilot project at the Mabopane DLTC, initiated in partnership with Business Against Crime, has resulted in a 43 percent decrease in waiting times for services at the centre. This is deliverology at work and the Department is in the process of implementing a similar programme at the Temba DLTC.

As part of its adoption of new technologies and international partnerships, the Department has signed a Joint Declaration of Intent with the German Government, which seeks to further the development and rollout of Green Logistics Indicators (GLI:X). The German Federal Ministry chose South Africa, and Gauteng in particular, as the first country and region on the African continent to develop and implement this project, which stresses the importance of environmentally friendly solutions and sustainable development in the field of freight logistics. I am pleased to announce that this morning we launched Phase 2 of Green Logistics Indicator Project in partnership with the metropolitan municipalities and the German government.

The Department reassures the House that it is deeply committed to clean governance and sound financial management. It will not hesitate to act against corrupt and fraudulent practices. It has clearly demonstrated its commitment to clean governance by the number of successful disciplinary cases that it has initiated in the past financial year. It will continue to do so in future.

I would like to thank the multiple stakeholders that make up the transport family, both in the private and public sectors, which have contributed to the overall success of the Department. In particular, I would like to thank Chairperson, Mr Jacob Khawe and members of the Portfolio Committee on Roads and Transport, for the excellent role they have played in exercising oversight of the Department.

Ismail Vadi

MEC for Roads and Transport

