

SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT,

MR FIKILE MBALULA,

ON THE OPENING OF FURTHER CIVIL AVIATION ACTIVITIES

29 JUNE 2020

On 30 May 2020, I announced the opening of domestic air travel for purposes of business and other essential travel as contained in the Directions signed and issued on the same day.

These directions were accompanied by guidelines which gave detailed compliance requirements to be adhered to by the civil aviation industry. It has been three weeks since the OR Tambo, King Shaka, Cape Town and Lanseria International airports have been opened for domestic passenger travel. We have witnessed airlines gradually taking to the skies mainly through the phase 1 approved airports.

Following the announcement of phase 1 domestic operations, the airports and airlines submitted their Standard Operating Procedures to the SACAA for approval and this was followed by a compliance inspections conducted by the Regulator to all four airports. My team and I visited ORTIA and Lanseria for a readiness walk-about and we were satisfied that the airports were ready to for operation.

Airlines opened for flight bookings immediately thereafter and it took them almost two weeks to build passenger numbers to at least 50% capacity. On 05 June 2020, Cemair operated its first flight between OR Tambo International Airport and Cape Town and added King Shaka International Airport to its schedule on 08 June 2020. Airlink commenced operations on 08 June 2020 between OR Tambo, Cape Town and King Shaka International Airports. On 15 June 2020, FlySafair and Mango Airlines commenced flights between the above airports and FlySafair included Lanseria International Airport on its schedule.

The SACAA opened its doors for aviation personnel licence examinations on 08 June 2020. Aviation Training Organisations opened their doors to students which will further allow for more students to finalise their licence status.

It was critical for us to test the efficiency and impact of the guidelines we issued against the health and safety of the passengers and aviation personnel operating in this space and we are pleased with the progress we have observed to date. Like any other area, we are making continuous improvement in areas where we observed challenges in consultation with the Department of Health representatives, specifically Port Health. Some of these observations include the following:

a)As more airports are opened, this will naturally increase the number of passengers at airports and therefore measures have been put in place to ensure that passengers are prepared for their experience at the airports to avoid congestion mainly at security check points. Whilst this is work perfectly at the airports currently, it will need to be managed properly as we open for more activity;

b) To date the SACAA has received about 117 SOPs from industry and more than 87 have been approved.

c) Sanitisers are classified as dangerous goods and the SACAA has made provision for the carrying of such in limited quantities as a safety measure and in compliance with existing regulations.

d) For the efficient facilitation of passengers at the airports, the operators have urged the flying community to arrive at least 2 hours early to allow for sufficient time to process passengers at the airports whilst adhering to the screening requirements as per the DOH regulations.

e) The SACAA have also reviewed its earlier decision of 'no catering' on board an aircraft by permitting airlines to provide pre-packed meals that must be placed in front of the seat for each passenger before the passenger board the aircraft. This will allow for minimised movement during flight.

Having engaged further with the aviation industry with regards to the observations made during phase 1 of domestic air travel activities, I am pleased to announce the following relaxations in this sector of the transport industry:

a) All international passenger flights are prohibited except those flights authorised by the Minister of Transport.

b) Domestic passenger flights are permitted subject to the following conditions:

(i) In addition to the original four airports that are currently operating, the following domestic airports will reopen from 01 July 2020:

- Bram Fischer International Airport;
- Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport;
- Pietermaritzburg Airport;
- Port Elizabeth International Airport;
- Richardsbay Airport;
- Skukuza Airport; and
- Upington International Airport.

c) All aerial work to conduct the following will be permitted from 01 July 2020:

(a) agricultural spraying, seeding and dusting;

(b) cloud spraying, seeding and dusting;

(c) culling;

- (d) construction;
- (e) aerial harvesting;
- (f) aerial patrol, observation and survey;
- (g) aerial advertisement, including banner towing and other towing of objects;
- (h) search and rescue;
- (i) parachuting;
- (j) aerial recording by photographic or electronic means;
- (k) fire spotting, control and fighting; and
- (l) spraying, seeding or dusting other than for agricultural purposes and clouds.

d) General Aviation is permitted for the following purposes:

- (a) Approved Regional re-positioning flights for all South African and foreign registered aircraft into and from South Africa for return after maintenance and repair, to perform maintenance and repair or to continue with contractual work within South Africa or foreign countries within the region;
- (b) Exchanging of crew members operating in foreign countries as and when required; and
- (c) Transporting of aviation technicians, mechanics and engineers internationally for essential support and assistance to aircraft.
- (d) Proficiency flights provided that the flight is authorised by the South African Civil Aviation Authority and remains within the general flying area, airfield or airport boundaries.
- (e) Recreational aviation is permitted for proficiency flights provided that the flight is authorised by the South African Civil Aviation Authority and remains within the general flying area, airfield or airport boundaries.

All these measures are in line with the gradual reopening of our economy, as we enter a new normal and journey together, towards a healthier, safer and more prosperous South Africa.

I thank you.

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