

**SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG, CLLR MPHOSANE**

**TAU**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF NEW BUSES, MILPARK, JOHANNESBURG, 24 JULY**

**2015**

Programme Director

MMC for Transport Cllr Walters

MMC's present here today

Chairperson of the Metrobus Board, Mr Khehla Shubane

Metrobus Board members

MD of Metrobus

Fellow Councillors

Officials and staff of the City and Metrobus

Union leadership

Invited guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Today marks a NEW BEGINNING for Metrobus, one of the oldest institutions in our City. We have chosen to re-fleet, restructure and modernise our buses. I stand here, surrounded by these new buses, the symbol of a new journey for the City of Johannesburg. This journey means better transport for citizens, but also a significant contribution to the green economy and to job creation.

Fellow citizens, we have chosen to re-fleet and restructure our buses because we believe that for Johannesburg to retain its leading role as a world class African city, its public

transport ought to be the first mode of choice, where our transport corridors shape our increasingly efficient and people-friendly City. We had three important things in mind when we decided on these excellent green and clean buses:

Firstly, we wanted quality buses that we could rely on to ensure safe transportation of our residents.

Secondly, we needed the kind of buses that would contribute to clean air and to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, making a positive and meaningful contribution to the fight against climate change.

Thirdly, we wanted our new fleet to be fuelled by locally produced biogas, to create jobs and break our reliance on imported fuel.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to announce that we have achieved most of this. By June 2016, there will be 190 new Metrobuses on the streets of Johannesburg, demonstrating government's commitment to a safe, reliable and quality public transport system for our people.

Our new fleet will be branded in the colours that you see on the buses here today. This is similar to our Rea Vaya fleet. The back part of the buses using green fuel have what we refer to as a 'green bum', and for a reason. We want a universal brand that stands for quality for all Johannesburg commuter transport. Our future vision includes seeing mini bus taxis branded similarly as part of an integrated public transport system.

Ladies and gentlemen, from Monday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 20 of these new buses will commence operation. By end of August, 50 new buses will be in operation.

By the time our roll out of 190 buses is complete, as the City we will have contributed to the creation of 110 local jobs in the bus manufacturing sector, fighting back against poverty and unemployment. And to maintain the fleet, four semi-skilled and skilled personnel will be required to maintain each group of ten buses.

Not only are we creating jobs but we are providing opportunities for upskilling existing jobs, ensuring that our present employees move up the career ladder. And as we introduce new

technology in our bus system, we are creating opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation.

Furthermore, remembering the Blue Economy concept, we are using “what is locally available” and hope to produce biogas at our land fill sites as well as growing crops for biomass on our mine dumps and other unused land. Thus we stand to create 5 jobs per bus in the biogas fuel supply chain. The job creation potential of gas from biomass is far greater than the few jobs depending on imported diesel - 200 times more. It is 25 times more if we make use of already collected waste.

The gas in the storage tanks at the entrance to this venue, though not yet produced from biomass, emanates from local sources and will lead to a 75% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emission as compared to diesel fuel.

Ladies and gentlemen, the conversion of Metrobuses to dual fuel makes us one of the leading cities in the world-wide initiative to promote pollution free buses. As Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, together with other mayors who form part of the C40 cities – an international coalition of mayors supporting sustainability - I have signed a Declaration for Soot Free Buses. In this Declaration, I have committed the City to continue our green and clean bus routes and have joined forces in persuading bus manufacturers to commit themselves in terms of technology and price to producing pollution free vehicles.

Locally, this initiative to change technology creates an important opportunity for Metrobus to be a Centre of Excellence for green buses. Already Metrobus has partnered with the University of Johannesburg and the Vaal University of Technology to pilot these new approaches. I hope that in the coming years Metrobus will continue to lead in innovation around green fuels.

The promotion of public transport is one of the objectives of the Eco Mobility World Festival which we are hosting in the Sandton CBD in October. We want to demonstrate that public transport, walking or cycling is possible in a 21<sup>st</sup> century city like ours. During the Festival, we will close off certain streets and change the use of others, demonstrating to residents and the world that streets are not only for private vehicles but for public transport, for

walking and for cycling. The new Metrobuses which we are launching today will contribute to making the Eco Mobility Festival work.

With these words I would like to thank all of you for joining us in the launch of our new buses. I would like to thank all those who have made this journey possible. And I would like to thank – in anticipation - those who are going to take quality green service delivery forward, including all the Metrobus drivers and staff present here today. Colleagues you are the pioneers of a new, integrated, livable city. It is an inspiring vision and you are in the front-line in making it a reality.

Thank you