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## TRANSPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

SANTACO PRESENTATION TO PARLIAMENT JOINT  
MONITORING COMMITTEE ON IMPROVEMENT OF  
QUALITY OF LIFE AND STATUS OF CHILDREN,  
YOUTH AND DISABLED PERSONS

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## INTRODUCTION

- The Constitution of the RSA provides that *"The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth"*.
- SANTACO fully subscribes to the Constitution of the country, and would therefore strive to adhere to the principles and ethos of the Constitution.

## INTRODUCTION (CONT.)

- The taxi industry is acutely aware and sensitive towards the plight of the people with the disabilities.
- SANTACO had also been receiving numerous complaints and concerns from the people with the disabilities.
- Although the existing vehicles are not suitable or specifically designed to convey people with disabilities, the taxi industry is currently transporting people with disabilities on the taxis.
- Taxi drivers had also not been trained how to deal with the people with the disabilities.

### POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DIRECTIVES

- The National Land Transport transition Act, 2000 (Act No. 22 of 2000), defines persons with disabilities as *"all persons whose mobility is restricted by temporary or permanent physical or mental disability, and includes the very young, the blind or partially sighted, the deaf or hard of hearing"*.
- It is however, those people using wheelchairs that are posing serious challenges to all those people that are affected – the marshalls, drivers and operators themselves.

### POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DIRECTIVES (CONT.)

The policy objective of the Integrated National Disability Strategy regarding transport is to, *inter alia*, *"provide an accessible, affordable, multi-modal public transport system that will meet the needs of the largest numbers of people at the lowest cost, while at the same time planning for those higher cost features which are essential to disabled people with greater mobility needs"*.

### POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DIRECTIVES (CONT.)

The document titled Transport for Disabled People (NDOT, 1992) was produced to make recommendations and guidelines regarding planning and provision of transportation facilities for the disabled, and ultimately to incorporate disabled travellers in all modes and everywhere in the transportation system. The document further provides for the Matrix of Facilities for Disabled Passengers as well.

### POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DIRECTIVES (CONT.)

- The Office of the President has established a dedicated office that deals mainly with issues pertaining to disabled persons, namely, Office of the Status of Disabled Persons (OSDP).
- Despite of all the policy directives, not much had been done by the government to assist people with the disabilities, especially those making use of public passenger transport.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Loading and offloading wheelchairs is perceived to be time consuming.
- Wheelchairs occupy a paying seat on a vehicle, hence some of the drivers are (wrongfully) charging extra money for that wheelchair.
- Helping a person with disability to board and/or alight a taxi is a challenge itself, with some people feeling that they are not being assisted with respect.
- Women with disabilities also need to be helped and handled with dignity and respect.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT (CONT.)

- Wheelchair could be a safety hazard to the other passengers in case of an accident.
- Most of the vehicles used as taxis had not been designed or modified to transport persons with disabilities.

## RESOURCES

- Capital investment or the availability of the resources is generally seen as a major factor in the provision of infrastructure and services for people with disabilities.
- Most of the vehicles that could suitably fit in the wheelchairs are however, very much expensive (R475 000.00 per vehicle, excluding the disabled transport accessories). Thus where the government is expected to come in and assist.

## EXAMPLE OF SUITABLE VEHICLES



This is an example of a United Taxi in the US. The vehicle is suitably modified and does have all the necessary requirements to transport people with disabilities safely and comfortably with respect and dignity.

These are the kind of vehicles that should be used to transport people using wheelchairs.

### EXAMPLE OF SUITABLE VEHICLES (CONT.)



Typical wheelchair ramps on a London Cab. All London taxis are supplied with loading ramps, with special extended seat belts for the wheelchair.

### EXAMPLE OF SUITABLE VEHICLES (CONT.)



These taxis are already available in South Africa, brought in by SACAB. They are based on the London taxi model, are probably the best answer for disabled persons transport. They are purpose built for the job.

These type of vehicles that could suitably fit in the wheelchairs are however, very much expensive (R475 000.00 per vehicle, excluding the disabled transport accessories). Without subsidy, no operator would afford to buy this type of a vehicle, and thus where the government is expected to come in and assist with a special kind of a subsidy.

### CONCLUSION

- Despite all the challenges of limited resources, people with disabilities and the aged are currently being catered for with care and dignity within the taxi industry.
- All possible assistance is being given to people with disability, including their luggage, wheelchairs, etc. However, SANTACO does acknowledge that there are some unfortunate instances in which some of the taxi drivers are a bit insensitive towards the plight of the people with disabilities.

### CONCLUSION (CONT.)

- Needless to say, the taxi industry would like to be wheelchair friendly.
- SANTACO is looking at a situation in which some of our taxis would be able to accommodate customers with special needs.
- Like the ones in the pictures above, we are envisaging wheelchair taxis that would include fold out ramp with extension, wheelchair restraint belt with clamp, non-slip step, easy release exterior door handle, and child seat with lap and diagonal seatbelts.

