

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

**House Chairperson's Input to the
Committee's Annual Review &
Strategic Planning Session**

1 March 2022

Hon. A.J. Nyambi





Chairperson of the NCOP, Hon. A.N. Masondo;
Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Hon. S.E Lucas;
Chief Whip, Hon. S.J. Mohai;
House Chairperson, Hon. W. Ngwenya
Provincial Whips;
Committee Chairpersons and Whips;
Acting Secretary to Parliament, Ms N.P. Tyawa
Secretary to the NCOP, Adv. M.E. Phindela
and members of the support staff,

I am called upon to speak on the convergence between the work of Committees and the mandate of the National Council of Provinces. We are not doing this because Members are clueless about this topic but we recognize that excellence is borne out of repetitive action. Bigger brands such as Coca Cola, Toyota and many others have reached higher heights through consistency and repetitive courses of action. If it has worked so well for them, it may as well do so for us as we seek to excel in the achievement of our Constitutional Mandate.

Chairperson, we are meeting today against the backdrop of an economy that is not growing fast enough to dent the increasing rate of unemployment, which was at 34,9% in the third quarter of 2021 as per the results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey. Needless to say, women and young people are bearing the brunt of escalating rates of unemployment, poverty and inequality. This, invariably, creates dependency on the State as well as escalates the need for social interventions.



We are also meeting at a time when we have not fully recovered from the loss of lives and the disruption of our social fabric occasioned by violent acts of looting and the destruction of property in parts of KZN and Gauteng. Further, I cannot overemphasize the flattening effect of Covid-19, which robbed us of our best men and women. We clasp our hands as we sing ASIPHELELANGA in tribute to our fallen heroes and heroines.

Despite all these challenges, the mandate of the NCOP has not changed and it cannot be deferred. And, Chairperson, dare I say that it has not been deferred. I have great admiration for the resilience of the human spirit, which has seen us getting back to our feet as a country and as an institution. Not even the burning down of buildings, within the Parliamentary precinct and elsewhere, has deterred our collective resolve to function at optimum levels. It is that resolve, Chairperson, that I wish for us to take to this Planning and Review Session as we reconnect with and recommit to our objectives as the only House representing the interest of Provinces. Committees, are where the tyre hits the tar hence the need for constant realignment after long spells on the road. We have been on the road for almost a year since our last session. We have hit numerous potholes and now is the time to hit the reset button.

However, it gives me joy to report that we have sailed on smooth surfaces than we have hit speed bumps. Chairperson, our committees are functional and effective. They are functional and effective because they clearly understand their role as the engine of the NCOP. Even with the best intentions Chairperson, no vehicle can function without a properly fitted and running engine. Despite our unique situation which sees only 54 Members having to carry out the mandate of the NCOP through their various membership of committees, we continue to thrive. Our small numbers have not deterred us. Instead, we have become a close-knit family that defies our political affiliations. We learn from each other. We support each other. We work well with each other. We fight amongst each other, and all for a good course. We seem to have taken a leaf out of Robin Sharma when he said, "Everyone who enters your life has a lesson to teach and a story to tell."



Every person you pass during the moments that make up your days represents an opportunity to show a little more of the compassion and courtesy that defines your humanity...A meaningful life is made up of a series of daily acts of decency and kindness, which ironically add up to something truly great over the course of a life time.”

It is important to understand how we have, over time, developed the Baba and Mama mantra which we are using to great effect as everyone gets drawn to the spirit of togetherness, which is fuel that takes us through the day. We do all of these in pursuit of the mandate of the NCOP, which is considering Legislation, conducting Oversight, facilitating and conducting Public Participation as well as scrutinizing the work of the Executive and government entities and holding them accountable for the decisions they make.

For all of these to happen, we need effective committees that plan their work ahead of schedule to ensure that there is sufficient time for engagement and implementation. An effective committee will also seek to strike a balance between reactive and proactive work. We ordinarily, plan for what we know but events such as what happened last July in parts of KZN and Gauteng are a reminder that we need to be agile and sure-footed. We need to spring into action within two shakes of a lamb’s tail when the situation demands of us.

Through the work of Committees, the NCOP is able to hold debates on a variety of issues that come in the form of reports to the House. Through submissions called for by committees and public hearings, members of the public get to directly express their views on matters, which are of interest to them.

Committees should continue to tap into the rich tapestry of scholarly and expert advice from staff or by way of sourcing submissions from stakeholders who have an interest in the work of Parliament.

The Strategic Planning and Review session as you see it today, Chairperson, is a classic example of how the talents of staff could be harnessed and exploited to deliver on the mandate of the NCOP.



It is for that reason that I wish to commend and thank members of staff who continue to provide support to the work of Parliament. I also thank Unit Managers, Committee Secretaries, Content Advisors, Researchers, Committee Assistants, and Executive Assistants for the support they provide. You are not just faces without names; we see you through your work. You are the wind beneath our wings! I would have failed in my duties if I did not recognize the role of the NCOP leadership, ably steered by the Chairperson, Hon. A.N Masondo. To you I say, thank you BABA! the Deputy Chairperson, Hon. S.E. Lucas and House Chairperson, Hon W. Ngwenya. To the both of you I say, Mama! To the Chief Whip, Hon. S.J. Mohai kere mo go wena, BABA!

In conclusion, Chairperson, for committees to be effective in the execution of their work the following formula needs to guide planning:

$CE=M+C+R+S$

CE means Committee effectiveness

M refers to Mandate

C Chairperson

R means Resources

S means Support Staff.

It is also important for Committees to take into serious consideration the matter of synergy between them and their NA Counterparts. This they should do being mindful of the different yet complementary roles of both Houses; the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces.

I thank you.