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*PROCEEDINGS OF THE JOINT SITTING*

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Members of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces assembled in the Chamber of the National Assembly at 14:00.

The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

**REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE DEBATE ON THE STATE OF THE  
NATION ADDRESS**

The PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Amos Masondo, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Thandi Modise, Deputy President, David Mabuza, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, premiers and members of executive council, MECs, as well as the leadership of the SA Local Government Association, Salga, thank you for this

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opportunity to reply to the debate on the state of the nation address. I firstly like to thank all the hon members who participated in this debate, particularly those who dealt with what I would call the substantive issues of national importance, issues that we are facing today. We welcome the many valuable contributions and suggestions because there were a number of suggestions, and, where they were sincere and practicable and constructive, we will take them to heart and see how best they can be taken up. We also welcome the criticism.

Members of Parliament have all the rights to criticise and some of the criticisms were laced with insults, personal insults for that matter, which I think it's really not warranted and called for. Because this is a House which our people take very seriously where we should engage in a very serious manner on national issues. We take all these contributions, as I said, seriously because in the end they enrich our national discourse, our debate and they will strengthen our response to the challenges our country faces.

Eleven months ago, when we declared a national state of disaster in response to the coronavirus pandemic, I said to

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the people of South Africa that we shall overcome. I mentioned that we shall overcome. I said like I did say last week, that we will rise. And indeed, we will rise. This is inevitable because of the strength and the resilience of the people of this country. Yesterday, this great and hopeful nation, devastated by a deadly pandemic, lifted its head, straightened its back and welcomed a new era in our fight against the pandemic. Less than 24 hours after the shipment landed of the virus, the first coronavirus disease 2019, Covid-19, vaccine was administered in our country. Our vaccination programme which is our best defence against this pandemic has begun. This has happened not in a month, not in two months, but now, in the middle of February, just as we said it would. This process is starting in a number of countries, some started earlier than us, some are starting at the same time as us and some are yet to start. Therefore, this is a process that is lifting many boats at the same time.

Many said that we have neither the ability nor the will to protect lives, and yet here we are, on the threshold of a new era in our fight against the pandemic. This pandemic has almost become our enemy number one, but we have a number of other tasks that we have to address. Therefore, before we get

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to the business of today, before we turn to our plans and to the immense work that lies ahead, let us give the courageous South African people the dues that they richly deserve. There are health workers and others on the frontline in our country. These are the South Africans who deserve to be recognised. These are South Africans like Zoliswa Gidi-Dyosi, a nurse from Cape Town, who yesterday became the first person in South Africa to be vaccinated. [Applause.] She like many others, have been in the frontline willing even to sacrifice their own lives so that all of us could live.

However, there are many others, millions of our citizens who despite the difficulties this pandemic has imposed on them, never lost faith in their country or in the commitment of this government to serve and protect the people of South Africa. Therefore, this government has protected the people of South Africa, whether we like it or not. [Applause.] I speak of the families saved from destitution and hunger, the businesses saved from closure, and the workers who were supported so that they could still earn and feed their families. I speak of our social partners in business, labour, and civil society, who stood by the people of South Africa.

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We have led and will continue to lead this country through the worst crisis of the democratic era. We have done right by the people of South Africa. It is much easier to say in hindsight what should have been done differently. To quote Homer, "even a fool may be wise after the event." [Applause.] Much of what we have heard from the opposition benches over the last two days was little more of name-calling and mudslinging. However, all I can say to all the members of this House is that we will overcome and we will find it in ourselves to work together to overcome this pandemic. We will rebuild our economy in a manner that is more inclusive, that creates jobs and that lifts people out of poverty. We will put an end to corruption, keep our streets safe and build a state that can effectively serve the people of South Africa. Now, we are undertaking these critical actions at a time of great challenge and great difficulty.

Several speakers in this debate have emphasised the reality that we are still in the midst of the most severe global health emergency in more than a century. They have spoken about the devastating effect that this pandemic has had on our economy, on our society and our people's livelihoods. That is why the vaccination programme, that has now gotten underway,

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remains our immediate priority, starting with health care workers and then expanding further to reach population immunity in the shortest possible time. It is why we continue to implement relief measures such as the Special Covid-19 Grant and the Unemployment Insurance Fund, UIF, Temporary Employer/Employee Relief, Ters, Scheme to provide support to those who need it. There are many people who need this support, but with our limited resources we can only reach those that we can. It is why we are forging ahead with economic reforms through the various programmes that we put in place, and a lot of progress has already been made, concrete progress in accelerating the implementation and shifting of our economic trajectory. This is where I would agree with those who say that the glass is not empty, we should see it as having been half-full and getting fuller and fuller as we move on.

As we undertake the demanding task to recover from this crisis, there is much about our country from which we can draw strength, hope as well as encouragement. Sometimes we forget about what we have on the asset side of our balance sheet. We forget about the many endowments that we have as a nation and as a country. We focus and spend a lot of energy on the

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negatives. And yet, if we step back and look at what it is that we have as our strengths, and we've got many strengths. These are strengths that we should find time to capitalise on, to strengthen where we are capable rather than to break down even those strengths and we end up with nothing. Therefore, we have a number of endowments as a nation. Some of the speakers spoke about some of these strengths, particularly our Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Members of our Parliament as well including from the provincial legislatures' side, our premiers, our MECs as well as our Salga representatives.

As I mentioned as a nation we have many capabilities, strengths and attributes that we can and must draw on as we build and transform our society. Our people are our greatest strength. It is their grit, determination and sense of solidarity that has enabled us to endure this pandemic. It is due to their actions that this pandemic has not taken an even greater toll, that we are now able to work towards a recovery and that we are able to contemplate a time when we will have overcome this disease. This pandemic has not only revealed so much about our character as a people, but it has also revealed the depth and diversity of expertise in our country. It has demonstrated the world-leading capabilities of our scientists,

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research institutions, universities, various agencies and public entities. However, it has also revealed the strength of some of our companies and a number of our own citizens at an individual level, at community level and at family level.

As mentioned in this debate, South African scientists, engineers and manufacturers were able to design and produce personal protective equipment and thousands of medical ventilators within a matter of months to respond to a desperate need. A number of our producers for personal protective equipment, PPEs, were even able to start selling on the platform that we set up, at the African Union. They sold to a number of countries on our continent. And this was borne out of the capabilities that we have, the inventiveness that we have and the innovation that resides in this country. These are things that we need to highlight and to be proud of on the asset side of our balance sheet.

Scientists from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, working with other laboratories, were at the forefront of the genomic surveillance work that has led to the identification of Covid-19 variants. Several South African scientists and researchers at a number of world-class institutions have been involved in



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the management of various vaccine trials in our country. Biovac, a partnership between government and the private sector, is using the vaccine storage and distribution infrastructure and capabilities to assist with the distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine to different vaccination centres that have been set up in our country. People have been saying, because they are doubting Thomases, are we going to be able to distribute and administer these vaccines, because they only look on the negative side of our balance sheet. They must also look on the positive side of our balance sheet and know that we've got institutions such as Biovac who are now rolling out these vaccines and who will make sure that they are rolled out in the most efficient way.

Yesterday, when I went to Khayelitsha Hospital it was like ... [Inaudible.] ... work. The health workers have been well-trained. The same at Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Gauteng, health workers have been trained and they are prepared and they are ready to administer these vaccines. We have been hearing doomsday stories that there's going to be chaos and collapse and everything else. Pause for a moment, South Africans, and look at our capabilities. [Applause.] Now, these capabilities did not come by chance. They have been developed

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over many years. Yes, there have been mistakes we've stumbled and we've risen up. However, the important thing is to realise that we've been trying, we've been the people in the arena fighting and working and making sure that we improve the lives of South Africans. [Applause.] That is what is important. Over many years, they've also been developed through working together with development partners both locally and internationally.

The recognition that is given to some of our scientists internationally and the respect is just mind boggling. We are an important player also on the global stage when it comes to things like innovation science and many other endeavours. Taken together, our national science and innovation system is a hugely valuable resource that we need to further, nurture and develop. We must support the commercialisation of the products that come from this innovative favour that we have seen coming through during the Covid period. It must lead to creating factories and manufacturing as well as creating jobs. I have asked the Minister of Higher Education and Innovation to put together a team of scientists to begin the process of developing our own vaccines so that we can deal with this pandemic and future ones. [Applause.] We now live in an era

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where pandemics may become more frequent in our lives and we must therefore be resilient in relation to diagnostics, therapeutics as well as vaccines. We must develop the scientific capabilities that our country has demonstrated to prepare for the future. Yes, we must use our own indigenous knowledge systems when it comes to therapeutics and, yes, even developing our own vaccines. We must use the knowledge that reside here on the African continent. It is very important. It is for that reason that I've directed Minister Nzimande to get on with the process, and I want to meet those scientists and say that this is now urgent. It is urgent that we develop our own capability and not be running around the world, scouring the whole globe looking for vaccines. We must develop them here and now. [Applause.] The success of our economy starts with the investment we need to make in our people, and especially our young people.

South Africa is a young nation with a youthful population. Too many young people are disillusioned, frustrated and unsure of where to go for support. But our young people are also resilient. In just under a week's time, the matric results for 2020, will be released. This is a most remarkable group of learners, who were determined to learn and to study under the

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most difficult conditions. They must be commended for their perseverance and for their steadfast commitment to achieving their ambitions. As a country we have identified youth employment and development as one of our most important priorities not only because the high rate of unemployment is unacceptable, but also because we need young people to grow our economy.

We need to harness the energy of these young people, the skills-base that they have and develop their skills. However, we also need to harness their dynamism to meet the challenges of the present as well as for the future. That is why we are providing young people with pathways from learning to earning. We are mapping the services available to young people in every community to identify gaps and target our interventions to the areas of greatest need. We are expanding the funding availability for digital and technology skills and in global business services through an innovative model that links payment for skills training to employment outcomes.

The Youth Employment Service that we launched in 2018, has created over 50 000 work experiences and generated over R2,8 billion in new salaries for the young people that have

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gone through the programme. The Employment Tax Incentive Scheme supported well over 1,5 million jobs for young people in the 2019-20 financial year. This is a phenomenon progress that has been recorded in relation to Employment Tax Incentive. The foundation for all these efforts is laid in the early years of a young person's life. This is why maternal health, child nutrition and early childhood development are vital for the transformational process that government is involved in. That is why we are still focusing on the provision of antiretroviral therapy, and working towards the elimination of mother to child transmission of human immunodeficiency virus, HIV.

It is why, for example, one of the programmes under the Presidential Employment Stimulus is to provide financial support to over 100 000 early childhood development practitioners to enable them to reopen or keep open their early childhood facilities. It is also why the Covid-19 social relief measures that we implemented are so important. It is that support that is necessary at the social level that has helped our people get through this pandemic.

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The temporary increases in payments to social grant recipients and the special Covid-19 grant provided significant support to poor households at a critical time. The economy is already showing signs of a strong recovery. That is on the horizon.

Just yesterday, we received new results from the third wave of the National Income Dynamics Study - Coronavirus Rapid Mobile, Nids-Cram, survey, which is a collaboration among several South African universities, this is a very representative study at a national level which has been tracking the impact on households of the pandemic since the beginning of this pandemic. This data shows that by October last year, total employment had recovered to almost reach the level that we saw in February, just before the pandemic. [Applause.] This in a number of ways is progress. While we await the release of new data from Statistics South Africa, Stats SA, these findings are a remarkable early signal of a robust and resilient labour market recovery.

This recovery in employment is the result of both the phased reopening of the economy as we brought the virus under control, as well as the success of relief measures such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund-Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme, UIF-Ters, that were implemented as part of our

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emergency stimulus package. It is these green shoots that we must now continue to nurture as we steer the economy towards a full recovery and further growth. However, there are several areas of concern that they have study also found out or reported on. The same survey found a high degree of turnover in the labour market, which means that those who lost their jobs in April are not necessarily those who gained jobs in October. Women are working fewer hours, and their employment levels have not recovered as robustly as the employment levels of men. This may be due to, at least in part, to the disproportionately more time that women spend on child care than men. The data also suggests that while the expansion of social grants provided substantial relief to individuals and households last year, hunger has once again risen to higher levels than before. This is deeply worrying and concerning.

It is evidence of an uneven recovery, which risks leaving the most vulnerable behind. It also demonstrates the need to maintain some of the extraordinary relief measures that we put in place, and to accelerate our livelihoods support and employment programmes. It also highlights the need to move with the greatest speed to restore our most effective social support programmes to full operation, such as the school

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feeding schemes. Research like this has helped to inform our response to the pandemic from the beginning, and will continue to inform the choices that we have to make as we guide our economy towards recovery. More broadly, our experience of the impact of the pandemic has shown the importance of the economic empowerment of women.

By improving the economic position of the women of our country we can reduce inequality, levels of child hunger and we can also reduce poverty. It is when we empower the women of our country that we will be able to deal a real blow against poverty and inequality. [Applause.] We can reduce the vulnerability of women also to violence and abuse. And we will be harnessing the talents and energies of one half, 50%, of our population more effectively to drive growth and transformation. As government, we are working to give effect to our decision to direct at least 40% of public procurement to women-led and women-owned businesses. [Applause.] This is important if we seek to reduce poverty and inequality. This requires not simply a change to procurement policies. It also requires that we prepare women-owned businesses to access these opportunities.



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Therefore, working with the private sector, state entities and development partners we have started with the training process of women entrepreneurs in financial literacy, accessing markets and access to finance as well. As several speakers have indicated, the economic empowerment of women is being supported across government, from small-scale farmers to co-operatives, from human settlements to tourism and to mining. The pandemic has sharply demonstrated just how much economic growth and social development depend on the nation's health. It has shown how vital it is that we should invest in our people's health if we are to sustainably grow our economy and realise the potential of this, our most significant endowment, the people of South Africa.

The pandemic has also exposed the inequalities in access to health care and underscored the value of a National Health Insurance, NHI. While the pandemic has further constrained our public finances, in many ways it has also enabled progress towards realising the NHI and making it effective. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us how to work together to harness the entire capability of all public and private providers in the health space for service provision. The other area, hon members, where South Africa is richly endowed is in our

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natural resources. The fynbos that I spoke about last week is part of a remarkable biodiversity that is matched in few other places on earth. We have a great responsibility to conserve this diversity of fauna and flora, but also boundless opportunities to use this ancient resource for sustainable growth and development.

Now, using our indigenous knowledge to produce things like cosmetics and pharmaceutical products to develop our ecotourism, we are creating new businesses and new jobs, while making a priceless investment in sustainability. Our country is a country of great agricultural promise as well. We are a producer and exporter of a wide variety of agricultural products. Our agricultural products are sought in many parts of the world. The investment we are making in agriculture and agro-processing will enable us to fully realise the potential of this great renewable resource. However, to be successful, we need to align agricultural development with an effective and accelerated land redistribution programme. [Applause.] It is when people have land that we will be able to realise this great dream that we have. We should not, as some hon members do, see a trade-off between land reform and agriculture output. The two must be complementary and they must be

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mutually-reinforcing, and we must use our own experience not seek to import experiences from elsewhere. We must use our own lived experience here in South Africa to resolve the land question. Providing more land to many South Africans, along with the means to productively work the land, is not only about correcting a past wrong; it is also about building a prosperous and more inclusive future. A future that includes everyone and not only some as has happened so many times in our past. The wealth that lies beneath our soil has been central to our country's economy for nearly 150 years.

However, this wealth has not been equally shared amongst the people of South Africa. It's only been shared by some, and is also only been shared by some who are not even in South Africa, but elsewhere. However, this wealth belongs to the people of South Africa. We have extensive reserves of some of the most valuable minerals and extensive mining expertise in South Africa. Mining was one of the sectors of our economy that recovered significantly following the easing of domestic and global lockdown restrictions. We are working with the industry to promote renewed investment through a conducive policy and regulatory framework. This includes efforts to reduce current timeframes for mining, prospecting, water and

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environmental licences. Yes, investors have complained that it takes far too long for them to get their permits and their licenses. I've said to colleagues that we now need to inject great urgency to all these. To encourage the expansion of the industry, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy has drafted an exploration programme implementation plan.

South Africa's natural beauty, its long coastline, its developed infrastructure and its rich cultural diversity have made it a destination of choice for travellers from various parts of the world. Much as we are a destination for some parts of the world, it has still succeeded in being a choice destination. We are mindful that for our international tourism arrival numbers to reach pre-Covid levels, the vaccine rollout and adoption of bio-security standards remains critical. The e-visa regime that we've sought to implement remains one of the key enablers for tourism recovery in our country.

Domestic tourism remains the pillar of the recovery of the sector and we are encouraged by collaborative efforts by all stakeholders to grow this market, this domestic market, in an effort to save businesses and jobs in the tourism sector.

Tourism has been a resilient sector over decades and even

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during the pandemic. With the work that we are doing now, we are confident that the sector will survive and it will revive and it will grow again. Among our most valuable natural resource as we build a new economy are also the most plentiful, the sun and the wind. That is why our Integrated Resource Plan 2019, envisages a substantial increase in the contribution that renewable energy makes to our country's energy supply. It is why Eskom is expanding and strengthening the transmission grid to facilitate the connection of renewable energy by participating itself in the building of renewable energy generation capacity. Those who have been saying Eskom must enter this market, Eskom is in the process of doing precisely that. It has the depth of knowledge. It has the depth of capability, and we would like it to play in that market.

Apart from reducing the country's carbon emissions and ensuring substantial water savings, our renewable energy programme presents great opportunities to boost local manufacturing and job creation. Another of our natural endowments is our location and our geography. We are exploiting this through our special economic zones, using them to strengthen our industrialisation drive and bring

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development to local areas. If you look at how other economies that have now become big economies have grown, they started industrialising their economies through special economic zones. Our own Coega special economic zone, SEZ, now has a mature portfolio with one large anchor investor and the Tshwane Automotive SEZ has a major company driving the localisation of components in the area. The Dube Trade Port is located at a key logistics hub, that is well-positioned to decrease the time taken to deliver a product to global markets.

Using learnings from our own Coega SEZ, and as I prefer to call it Ngqura, the Coega Development Corporation is providing advisory services to governments and to development agencies in a number of countries on our continent. The projects opportunities have been identified in Cameroon, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. We have developed these home grown capability by one of our agencies which is government-owned. Another of our strengths as a country is our position in the global community and also on our continent. We are a country that is at peace with ourselves, but we are also at peace with the rest of the world. Over the past year, South Africa has been hard at work towards promotion of the African agenda during its Chairship

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of the African Union. We have worked with a number of Member States to develop a comprehensive and co-ordinated response to the Covid-19 with a view to promoting the economic empowerment also of women and to silence the guns. We have made enormous contributions in our international work.

We used our position as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council to strengthen the ties between the United Nations and the African Union bodies, particularly in the areas of peace keeping and conflict resolution. We are a sought after partner at the international level. As various players in the world seek to address a number of challenges and problems, they always seek us out. A number of our own citizens are already being placed in a number of places in world bodies and in continental bodies. The sustainability of our economic growth and development depends to a great extent on the development of the entire Southern African region. This is gaining increasing importance - and is presenting greater opportunities - now that the African Continental Free Trade Area is in operation. We are working with other countries in our region to consolidate peace, and also in countries that are facing challenges such as Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC, and others. We have worked very

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hard in South Sudan to ensure that peace is also installed. The Deputy President has been working with various partners in that part of the world.

Our country, hon members, is at its most promising when these great endowments are exploited and relied on as we combine to create something that is altogether new as well as innovative. For more than a decade, the government has been working with various partners, including the private sector and academia, to develop the hydrogen fuel cell and lithium battery storage technologies. This work serves two important developmental objectives - it offers the possibility of a new, renewable source of energy; while at the same time establishing new uses and new markets for the platinum group metals that are abundant in our country.

Hydrogen and fuel cell technologies, which use platinum, offer an alternative source of clean electricity, while hydrogen allows for energy to be stored and delivered in a usable form. Through this Hydrogen South Africa Strategy, government and its partners have successfully deployed hydrogen fuel cells to provide electricity in some of our schools and to build



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hospitals established as part of the country's Covid-19 response.

Now, after a decade of investment, we now are ready to move from research and development to manufacturing and commercialisation. We are establishing a Platinum Valley as an industrial cluster which brings together various hydrogen applications in the country to form an integrated hydrogen ecosystem. This initiative will identify concrete project opportunities to kick-start hydrogen cell manufacturing in promising hubs.

It will facilitate the commercialisation of home-grown intellectual property. It presents what I see as a great opportunity to build a local skills base and lead the country into a new era of energy generation and demand for its platinum group metals. Remembering of course that we have a biggest platinum producer in the world.

Now, through this initiative, South African skills, technology and expertise is being used to extract greater economic value - in the form of new jobs, industrial development and cleaner energy - from a mineral that the country has in substantial

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quantities. We will develop measures that should be taken to ensure that innovators are supported in the local innovation and research, as we move further with the production and government will also be one of the up takers. This is just one example of the boundless potential that exists in our country to build a new economy of the future and this stands on our good stead of the positive asset side of our balance sheet.

As several speakers in the debate noted, we do need to work with greater urgency and at greater scale to address the challenges that we face. That is why the state of the nation address focused on progress and not promises. Those who extracted promises, promises and promises may be read it otherwise - but we focused on the progress that we will be making [Applause.] and discerning critics. When looking more closely at what we were reporting here - having able to say yes progress has been made - there are green shoots. We never said that we are going to do everything, all at one go. All of it - in terms of handling corruption, local government strengthening, the capability of the state - these are processes that I have often said we all need to work together to achieve.

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Our country has been in a difficult situation for a number of years and I have been invited all of us to that we should work together, there is just no other way. Yes, I do welcome some of the suggestions that were made, including from Bills that people want to propose and what a view, that's fine let's put all in the pot and let's see how we can work together to build this South Africa. [Applause.]

Now, we are making progress and within only four months of the establishment in October last year of this centre that we set up, Treasury and working together with the Presidency - Operation Vulindlela has worked very closely with and supported implementing departments to resolve obstacles to the implementation of crucial reforms.

The raising of the licensing threshold for embedded generation, the opening of further bid windows for renewable energy, the reinstatement of the water quality monitoring system, the commencement of digital migration and the process towards the allocation of the spectrum and the whole number of others, including the focus on land are all concrete demonstrations of the progress that is being made across government.

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During the state of the nation address, I said that we would publish the revised critical skills list for public comment within one week, and I am pleased to announce that the list was gazetted this morning, so this is already happening.

[Applause.]

We have entered what I see as a new era of implementation and action, but let me say, yes the criticisms that emanated from various role players have contributed to get us to be more focused and the work that is also being done by government has enable us to be much more focused and doing the work that needs to be done, but in doing it with speed and with urgency to follow through on our commitments.

I have spoken this afternoon of some of this country's strengths and capabilities - of how we have nurtured them and how we should continue to develop them - because all too often we overlook them, we just focus on a negative. All too often, we find ourselves distracted by the political intrigues of the day. We are too often overcome by the unrelenting pressures of the moment, so that we fail to see the enormous potential that resides within this nation. All we need to do at times is to

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sit back and smell the coffee and see that great things are possible in this land. [Applause.]

If we fail to see that potential and if we fail to recognise our strengths, then we will fail to seize the opportunities that they present for building a better society.

A week ago, I stood here, I was forthright about the severe challenges that we face as a nation and about the many crises that we must endure to overcome. I spoke about the pain and the sorrow and the hardship that so many South Africans have experienced and continue to experience. But I also spoke about our strength and resilience as a people. I spoke about the qualities that we share, and the common purpose that binds us together as a nation.

We share the same fears; we share the same anxieties about our future. We share the same hopes and desires. We all want to provide for our children, and we hope that they will enjoy better lives than we have had.

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We want safety and we also want shelter. We all want work, work that is dignified and rewarding, and we also want good health to perform it to perform this work.

Throughout the history of our nation and our country, there have been those who have tried to divide us, to tear us apart, to turn us against one another, and to drive us apart, but we have always had more in common than that which divides us.

Most importantly, I spoke last week about the focused actions that we are taking, together, to recover from the devastation of this pandemic and to build a new economy and a new society and a new future.

As we conclude this debate on the state of the nation, let us resolve that, whatever our differences, we may have many and indeed we have many, let us resolve that we will strive together to overcome this virus.

Let us resolve that we will strive together to overcome poverty, to overcome inequality and unemployment. That we will strive together to end violence against women and children in our country. [Applause.] Let us also agree that we will work

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together to build a new, transformed and sustainable economy. [Applause.] That, we will never surrender to state capture, corruption, mismanagement, complacency or despair. [Applause.] That, we will never be discouraged or despair as South Africans, because that is not part of our Deoxyribonucleic Acid, DNA, we are a resilient people, we are a strong nation and we must rely on our strengths to get rid of our weaknesses we [Applause.]

We must also resolve that we will place the South African child at the centre of all the efforts that we make. We must also resolve that we will get the work done. I can assure that, after this debate we are much more invigorated, we are much more empowered and I will even work harder for the people of South Africa [Applause.] and would say like the fynbos after the fire, we will rise. I thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, we have now come to the end of the President's reply. I take this opportunity to thank the hon President, Speaker of Parliament and hon members, that concludes the debate on the state of the nation and the business for the day. This joint sitting is adjourned.

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Debate concluded.

The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces adjourned the Joint Sitting at 15:02.

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