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**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**  
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**PROCEEDINGS OF HYBRID NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

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The Council met at 14:03.

The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

The Deputy Chairperson announced that the hybrid sitting constituted a sitting of the National Council of Provinces.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed all the participants to the day's sitting.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Policy debate on Budget Vote 2-Parliament:

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces greetings to your good self. Greetings to the House Chairpersons, hon Ryder and hon Radebe,

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our Chief Whip of the Council of Provinces, hon Mmoiemang, hon permanent as well special delegates, representatives from SA Local Government Association present here with us today, our esteemed guests, ladies and gentlemen. This 2025 Budget of Parliament coincides with the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, a founding document of our constitution.

In reflecting on the Freedom Charter, we celebrate its role in uniting diverse communities, in their fight against oppression and unjust. The Freedom Charter serves not only as a historical landmark but also as a guiding vision for future generations, reminding us that the pursuit for freedom and equality is an ongoing journey that requires vigilance, commitment and action.

As we celebrate years of our Freedom Charter, let us honour its legacy by continuing to advocate for the rights and dignities of all people, ensuring that the ideals it represents are realised in our society today and in the future. This then forces us to have constant interrogation, representation, and rearticulation of the aspirations of the public, as we grapple with sources of tension, contestation and possibilities for progress.

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This significance of Parliament, as the theatre of contestation and oversight, is the necessity of developing a revolutionary strategy for social change as envisaged in our Freedom Charter. The Italian political thinker and writer, Antonio Gramsci, elucidates this as a war of position, that can disable any coercive apparatus of state. True to this aspiration of the Freedom Charter this Parliament gives rise to a more consensual or consensus-based society, where no individual or group is reduced to a subaltern, less valued or less listened to.

In ending a state of subalternity, it means the state becomes ethical, creating a morally plural society, united in differences, as a means to achieve social change. These hon delegates, speaks to building a more effective voice through parliament, that rearticulates the peoples' aspirations and expectations of government. It presents a set of circumstances that forces a better knowing and thinking of the politics of emancipation, through a study of Africa's struggles for liberation.

Thus, the space for parliamentary democracy, to which delegates should be attendant, aims to give credence to all voices in general and the marginalised in particular,

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understanding the history of erasure that denied our people thought and politics itself, as envisioned in our Constitution. It is a transformative and restitutive space, positioned as an intentional negation of colonial history as a pivot, towards the re-enactment of a politics of liberation, that confronts the experiences of the wretched of the earth, as often animated by radical scholars

To this extent, brings a situation of debates, politics and their relationship through our plenaries, in ways better understood and more helpful to the people we serve. This means we cannot be a Parliament of general interest, located outside or above the people we serve as some often pre-empt. Rather, we are an ethical parliament of particular interests, which elaborates a point of view, within the terms of the people themselves, whose main content, is resolving the socioeconomic challenges affecting our people in the now.

We choose a vantage point of the former colonised, against the vestiges of accumulation through dispossession, that characterise society today. We choose a vantage point according to black feminist thinkers, which confronts a history and present, that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity. We choose and align this Parliament, through

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meditations with the work of literary scholar and activist Edward Said, who underlined the need to undo discourses about the black oppressed.

Hon delegates, this Seventh Parliament is to this end, constituted in a defining moment, as a space and site of struggle between the interest and the ways of knowing of the former settler colonisers, and the interest and the ways of the forces of resistance, Africans in particular and blacks in general. In this regard, the duty and expectations for delegates and Members of Parliament, is not to linger on analysis, without understanding and unmasking the complex ways in which the pursuit of our mandate is deeply embedded, in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices

It is the duty of this Parliament Budget Debate, to make serious reflections of these foundational and constitutive problems, marked by the interlocking multiple challenges, of poverty, unemployment, health, crime, education, housing, ecology as well as in the world that militates against the poor. It is thus a clinical call to understanding the long historical process that brought us to where we are today. A duty to redefine in different ways the current conjuncture, as

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a liberation of the periphery, through thinking South Africa, from the perspective of the poor.

In so doing, an enormous task to keep society focused on these issues, in ways that promote and defend democratic possibilities, against transnational co-operations in a global multipolar capitalist order. Hon members, just to reflect on the work of the NCOP. Hon Deputy Chair, in reflecting on the work of this House during the period under review 2024-25 as a period of transition, the National Council of Provinces, whose primary mandate is to ensure that the interests of our provinces are considered in the national sphere of government and also provides for the representation of the different categories of municipalities in Parliament.

Focus was paid to oversight, lawmaking, public participation and co-operative governance matters. We held 18 sittings as this House. We also posed over 1 100 questions to the Executive. We also considered 15 committee reports, with a strong emphasis on service delivery, ethics, and judicial matters. We passed House resolutions and facilitated robust Budget Vote debates across various departments. Public participation was undertaken through the processing of petitions notwithstanding the need for improvement in this

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area. Co-operative governance was supported by monitoring provincial and local government performance, including interventions as directed by the Constitution.

We debated and adopted 24 Bills, including key reforms such as the Climate Change Bill, the Basic Education Laws Amendment, Bela Bill, the Housing Consumer Protection Bill, as well as several money Bills to support fiscal planning and service delivery. In respect of international relations, we considered international agreements and participated in multilateral bodies to advance parliamentary diplomacy in addressing global challenges and conflicts.

As presiding officers, in support of the myriads of strategic planning sessions and prioritisation work, we developed Standard Operating Procedures, to promote synergy in the leadership and co-ordination of the key functions of the NCOP. Cross-functional technical teams, which draw on resources from across the NCOP and shared services, are ensuring that through a more systemic fashion, the full spectrum of expertise and support is accessible to the presiding officers and the House at large.

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This, we are undertaking to strengthen qualitative outcomes, through the monitoring and evaluation of our key programmes and activities. Thus, closer attention is being paid to monitor and track progress internally, particularly considering the perpetual litigations against Parliament, wherein some of our operational systems have fallen short and have been a subject of public scrutiny. The previous judgements made, such as the Doctors for Life International, Land Access Movement, Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act are some important outcomes where detailed limitations in our processes were highlighted.

We trust that this intervention strengthens the monitoring and evaluation by the presiding officers, as means to enhance institutional effectiveness. We shall foster a renewed culture of collaboration, synergy and collective ethical teamwork, within a more functional political arm as well as administration, operating across both horizontal and vertical planes.

Furthermore, deriving from section 70 of the Constitution, which deals with internal arrangements, proceedings and procedures of the NCOP, the Rules Amendment Process is underway, to regulate and manage the business of the House and

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Committees, in ways that strengthen democracy, and more attendant to the new dispensation of the Seventh Parliament.

What then are the emerging issues that influence our work hon delegates.? Through a reading of the economy, it is increasingly public knowledge, that global growth is projected to drop to 2,8%in 2025 and 3% in 2026. The swift escalation of trade tensions, occasioned by the United States tariff regime and its benevolent imperialism, are expected to have a significant impact on global economic activity and impact jobs in the citrus, automotive and steel sectors. It is for this reason, that we are calling for diversification of our markets, and expanding the investment pool against the syndrome of dependency, in support of our economic interests.

The opportunities and possibilities that are brought about by the Africa Continental Free Trade Area should be our primary point of departure, to explore mutual beneficial trade relations. I was quite happy yesterday; I came across the Minister of Agriculture. he was enroute to China precisely to address the issue of expanding and opening other doors of trades so that we can try and circumvent the issue of tariffs that have been posed to us. So, that expansion is necessary

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for us as the country of South Africa because we are the biggest suppliers as well, particularly on the citrus.

Therefore, that then put us in a better position so that we don't drop significantly in so far as our economic growth is concerned as a country. That is commendable. I have already shared with the Portfolio Committee of Agriculture chaired by hon Modise that, this is happening and therefore, as they interact with the department, they will have that sense of appreciation so that we have a better insight and understanding that will inform our oversight. I thought maybe I must share that with the House as I speak on this matter.  
[Interjections.]

Hon delegates, the medium-term economic outlook for South Africa is forecast to grow at an average of 1,4% in 2025, improving to 1,8% by 2027. Government's economic priorities remain on strengthening macroeconomic stability to reduce living costs and grow investment, executing reforms to promote a more dynamic economy, building state capability in core functions and supporting growth-enhancing public infrastructure investment.

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Several of South Africa's challenges can only be addressed through improved international and regional co-operation. Therefore, several emerging risks, including extreme weather patterns, cyber security failures and natural resource crises, require greater collaboration and co-operation on international and regional levels. The key achievements for 2024 hon delegates, despite the challenges around the lack of facilities, and a decreasing budget, Parliament, through its plenaries and committees, continued to adapt business processes with physical and hybrid proceedings, as well as strengthening its interface with the people in pursuit of its law-making, oversight and public participation programmes.

The 2024-25 financial year marked as transition period for Parliament, laid the groundwork for the seventh democratic Parliament, amid a complex and evolving internal and external environment. This transitional year unfolded within the broader context of South Africa's celebration of three decades of democracy. A period during which Parliament has progressively matured through successive terms, each shaped by shifting national priorities and governance demands.

The Seventh Parliament now faces a new political landscape following the 2024 general elections and is tasked with

consolidating and extending oversight and accountability mechanisms that are evolving. We are preparing for long-term transformation into a digital enabled organisation. To do this, we must accept the potential of data, artificial intelligence and process automation to enhance member support, decision-making and public engagement. Key core performance initiatives undertaken in 2024-25 included the ongoing refinement of the Oversight Priority Model and committee planning frameworks.

Equally, as outlined by the Sixth Parliament; a country outcome dashboard as well as pre and post legislative impact assessment need to be enhanced. In addition, the institution tracked the implementation of the Commission on State Capture Recommendations Plan, as well as the development of an ePetitions System. The Restoration Project's implementation stage is at 80% in terms of the planning phase. Notable, there were delays that we experienced in finalising documentation for the Old Assembly, given its heritage requirements.

For us to accelerate progress on the restoration plan, the design work for the Old Assembly has been fast-tracked to unlock subsequent procurement and construction activities. The continued stakeholder engagement with the South African

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Heritage Resources Agency is being prioritized, to streamline approval processes and avoid further delays. However, Parliament continued to achieve a clean audit for the previous financial year.

The priorities of the Seventh Parliament hon delegates are foregrounded over 30 years of progressive transformation, which is aimed at tackling the persistence of the legacy of apartheid colonialism. The Medium-Term Development Plan provides targets and measures for each of government's strategic priorities. Parliament will need to strengthen its oversight mechanisms to ensure a more responsive and accountable government. This includes the manner we respond to matters of public interest timeously, effectively and in a much more credible way.

In the period ahead, we will also have to focus on facilitating meaningful public participation and involvement in legislative processes through collaboration with civil society to ensure that government actions reflect citizens' needs and concerns. The Strategic Plan for the Seventh Parliament was tabled in December 2024, setting out the impacts and outcomes for the institution over the next five years. The 2025 annual performance plan and budget equally

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specifies the planned performance, and expenditure estimates of Parliament for the financial year, to achieve the outcomes set out in the Strategic Plan.

On international engagements hon members, Parliament continues to operate within a global context and participates in international bodies such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Pan African Parliament and SADC Parliamentary Forum for continental, regional, national and global governance. Our strategic orientation is the pursuit of an Africa centred agenda, that promotes self-sufficiency and independence, for a better Africa and better world, to be reborn.

What we seek in thinking the present and future, is the full expression of an African Parliament rather than parliaments in Africa. In this stead, the Pan African Parliament, must provide a platform for the re-engineering and also for repurposing of parliaments. In so doing, we will have to enact ways that elevates African personality, African identity and Africa's reawakening, through a restitutive and reparatory discourse. Accordingly, South Africa will be the first African nation to preside over and host the G20 Summit.

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The hosting of this Summit, under the theme of: "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability" will be a significant milestone, allowing South Africa to influence discourse setting, and amplify the voices of the Global South. In turn, Parliament will host the P20 Parliamentary Speaker' Summit from 01 to 03 October. In this way, opportunity shall be provided for public representatives and broader public, to understand and be exposed to global common challenges and ways that governments are responding.

On the context of Vote 2 hon members, the 2025-26 budget for Parliament is set against the backdrop of a fiscal situation, putting more pressure on Parliament to manage its budget downwards. In addition to the reduced budget, composition of Vote 2 carries structural challenges, skewing the appearance of resource availability. Over the period ahead, the composition of the budget should be reviewed to reflect the availability and use of resources, in sync with our current challenges and rising expectations, within an evolving environment of our broad mandate.

Therefore, the total budget allocation for Parliament for the 2025-26 financial year amounts to R5,084,640 billion. The total allocation received from the National Treasury amounts

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to R3,586,862 billion. Of that amount R500 million is allocated for the restoration and refurbishment of the parliamentary buildings because of the fire damage. The budget of Parliament has been allocated as follows:

In terms of Programme 1 which is Administration: An allocation of R2,688,210 billion. On Programme 2 which is Legislation and Oversight: An allocation of R992,066 million has been allocation, which then marks a significant shift and increase in funding model that speaks to current priorities and commitments that are made. In terms of Programme 3 which is Associated Services and transfer payments to political parties: An allocation of R885,312 million has been allocated. We also have the direct charges to members' remunerations to a tune of about R519,083 million.

Therefore, we've also made provision for the Parliamentary Budget Office which a separate entity in terms of the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, which receives a transfer payment under Programme 3, and will need more funding over time, through a thoroughgoing process that strengthens its mandate and its operations.

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As I conclude hon members, may I take this opportunity and thank the presiding officers of both Houses for the strategic support and leadership. Notwithstanding the support that we are getting from the Chief Whip of the NCOP, as well as the Programming Whips of our respective provinces, as well as Whips of Committees, the chairpersons of the Select committees for the roles that they have played to ensure that the work of the NCOP is done earnestly.

Having said that, we want to take this opportunity once again to also thank Adv Phindela for playing an important day-to-day management role in managing the business of the House. We also want to thank our fellow comrades in the caucus, the ANC Women's League and the ANC for confidence shown in me in making sure that I steer the ship of the NCOP forward.

Lastly, we want to thank all the political parties represented in this House for being part of making sure that we hold the Executive accountable, starting from our Government of National Unity, GNU partners, hon Badenhorst and for making noise as well the DA. We've got hon Farmer over there ...

Mr F J BADENHORST: [Inaudible] ... it's President's alliance.

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The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: No, no, PA, progressive alliance.  
We also have ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... utata phaya. Siyabulela tata ...

*IsiZulu:*

... ukubambisana nani. Sibonge futhi naku-EFF kanye ne-MKP.  
Sithi siyabonga.

*English:*

Together we stand strong and together we shall conquer the  
challenges we are facing as a nation.

*IsiZulu:*

Siyabonga.

*English:*

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much hon  
Chairperson of the NCOP for the report. I think you forgot to  
mention your thanks to the IFP, but we are here. [Laughter.]  
Thank you very much hon Chairperson. We now move to the next  
speaker. Hon Chairperson, you took three minutes of your  
closing comments. We will keep that in mind for later. I now

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call upon the House Chairperson for Members' Support and International Relations the hon Radebe. Hon Radebe you have 15 minutes.

Mr B A RADEBE: Hon Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, the Chairperson of the NCOP, Mme Mtsweni-Tsipane, the House Chairperson Ryder, Chief Whip Mmoiemang and the Programming Whip Molokomme, permanent and special delegates of the NCOP, representatives of the SA Local Government Association, Salga, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen ...

*Sesotho:*

... dumelang.

*English:*

We gather here today to participate in the Budget Vote 2 of Parliament, fully aware that this pivotal moment coincides with the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter. This is not merely a numerical milestone. It is a profound reminder of our nation's enduring commitment to the values of freedom, dignity, and equality that have shaped our democratic journey. The Freedom Charter adopted in Kliptown in 1952, was not only a clarion call for

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liberation, but also a blueprint for South Africa. We continue to build a society grounded on the will of the people.

The Freedom Charter's visionary proclamation, "the people shall govern," has been the cornerstone in shaping institutions such as our Parliament. It forged a path towards transparency, accountability, inclusivity of our governance. Our Parliament as an institution stands as a living testament to these ideals, embodying the hopes and aspirations of all the South Africans. The former President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, one of the most liberation leaders, was unwavering in his belief in the transformative power of the Freedom Charter. Among his powerful clarion calls, Tambo declared, I quote:

The adoption of the Freedom Charter was a daring act of the people, asserting their vision of South Africa that belongs to all who live in it, black and white. It is not a blueprint for government, but a profound declaration of principles for which we are prepared to die for.

Former President Oliver Tambo, the Freedom Charter was more than a mere text. It was a revolutionary manifesto, a contract with the future, and a binding pledge among equals. He recognised that the struggle for freedom required a moral

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courage, an unwavering sense of justice. As we deliberate on this budget, let us draw inspiration from the unwavering courage of those who drafted the Freedom Charter 70 years ago. Let us honour their legacy by strengthening Parliament through deepening our democratic practises and elevating South Africa's standing in the global community. In so doing, we are not only paying tribute to our past but also secure the promise of a just future for generations to come.

The NCOP's role in building a better Africa and a better world, as the voice of the provinces in our bicameral system, the NCOP plays a unique role in shaping South Africa's international footprint. To give effect to this international footprint, the NCOP is expected at all material times to fulfil its constitutional obligation by doing the following:

One, to exercise oversight and to ratify bilateral and multilateral treaties to ensuring that the agreements benefit both the national and provincial specific needs, as we have approved the Southern African Development Community, SADC, protocol two weeks ago.

To conduct parliamentary diplomacy by hosting sister Parliament's delegations, thereby strengthening legislative

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exchanges and sharing best practises on governance in parliamentary democracy. We have done a lot in that regard. Tomorrow, we'll be hosting a delegation from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as the NCOP and Parliament and the NA. Therefore, it shows that our footprint in the international space is there.

To participate in co-ordinated parliamentary networks, lending the NCOP's voice to discussions on peace, security, and democratic renewal. Through these interventions and participation, we contribute to a stable, prosperous continent and to a world where our country's values of human dignity, freedom, and socioeconomic justice resonate across every border. In doing so, we help build an Africa that is connected, competitive, and continentally integrated, and a world where co-operation triumphs over the conflict. Through the Parliamentary Group on International Relations, PGIR, our Parliament maintains vibrant affiliations with several key multilateral organs by honouring our annual subscriptions, thereby preserving our good membership and standing and influence.

Among the esteemed organisations the Parliament is affiliated to is the Pan-African Parliament. The Pan-African Parliament

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is instrumental in promoting human rights, good governance, democratic principles, while serving as a platform for consultation and decision-making on the issues that matter most to Africa. The Parliament is also affiliated to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, CPA, a body dedicated to strengthening parliamentary democracy by promoting good governance, respect for human rights, and the rule of law.

The Chairperson of the Council is the leader of the South African delegation in both institutions.

The CPA has reached the defining crossroads. For over a century, the CPA has operated as a charitable organisation dedicated to promoting democratic governance and parliamentary best practises and co-operation among member states.

The CPA is now at the advanced stages of transitioning from a charity organisation to a diplomatic multilateral institution vested with the necessary powers and authority to advance its critical mission on the global stage. This change has been led by South Africa through the sub-branch of CPA of Gauteng and the national branch, which is the National Parliament.

Therefore, it means that wherever we go we lead as South Africa.

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Hon delegates, together we are shaping the future of parliamentary diplomacy and ensuring that the commonwealth remains a force for positive change in the world. Also, we are affiliated to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, SADC-PF. These two structures are led by the Speaker of the National Assembly. Therefore, what is also very important, we have our affiliation to SADC Parliamentary Forum, Brazil, Russia, India and China, Brics, Parliamentary Forum, and High-Level Dialogue with the European Union Parliament, each of which amplifies our commitment to regional integration, south-to-south co-operation, and the promotion of the equitable world order.

Our participation in this international event is not merely ceremonial. It is an investment in our nation's future, a commitment to ensuring that South Africa's voice shapes key global decisions. What is very important here, since the inception of the Seventh Parliament, we have collectively achieved a series of significant milestones that have strengthened the institutional capacity and global standing of our Parliament. At the heart of this achievement is our unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and elevation of parliamentary diplomacy in the service of our democracy. Earlier this year we convened a highly successful

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parliamentary group workshop. This initiative was not only a testament to our dedication to continuous learning and professional development, but also a strategic move to empower members with the necessary knowledge and tools to navigate the complex terrain of parliamentary diplomacy.

By deepening the members' understanding of diplomatic protocol and legacy processes, we are laying a solid foundation for impactful and informed engagement at the international stage. Therefore, what is very important, the very same PGIR has issued a document known as the Policy on Parliamentary Diplomacy. This policy, once finalised, will serve as a compass, guiding our international engagement ensuring that our actions abroad are principled, strategic, and aligned with our national interests. We cannot have the Members of Parliament differing with the policy of the country in the international platform in the other countries. Therefore, this policy will help Parliament guide us, all of us, so that we will be bound by it, so that if there is anyone who deviates from that, that person will be able to be held to account.

What is also very important is that in this PGIR, we have adopted more than 30 reports last year. We are also in the final stages of developing a formula for the composition of

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parliamentary delegations, an endeavour that will soon see the establishment of focus groups. This focus group will serve as an engine of strategy implementation, accelerating our Parliament's programme of action within multilateral bodies, and ensuring that our path is both coherent and impactful.

However, what is very important is that this NCOP, this august House, in the previous three weeks adopted the SADC protocol, which transformed the SADC-PF into a SADC Parliament.

In doing so, we'll be able to oversee what our executives are doing in the various countries within the SADC, so that we do, as the SADC region, we put the interests of our citizens first, more than of those of the business people, as it has happened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC.

However, what is also very important, with the SADC Treaty, it resonates what President Thabo Mbeki once said: "The true African unity must be built on the Pan-African dream of a continent that is integrated, outward-looking, and prosperous. A regional Parliament will be the institutional cornerstone of that unity." Let us seize that moment.

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However, in dealing with the same thing again is that we know very well that the United Nations has developed the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs. Those Sustainable Development Goals must have been dealt with by the year 2030. Therefore, what is very important is that the United Nations said that the Parliament cannot be on the sidelines, they must lead. That's why they say that the world is ... [Inaudible.] ... upon our shoulders has never been greater. It is in our power and indeed our mandate to ensure that the voices, hopes and aspirations of our people are transformed into meaningful action. It means that as we adopt the various budgets from the various departments, we must ensure that the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated in those budgets because that's where Parliament ensures the oversight.

However, what I'm going to appeal for in this House, I therefore seek the unwavering support of this distinguished House to convene a high-level seminar on the role of Parliament in achieving the SDGs. Such a gathering is not only timely but essential. Therefore, early next year we will have that seminar here so that we can check what our government has done in implementing the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

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However, in my portfolio, there's also the issue of member support. The member support forum mandate is broad and impactful. We facilitate and oversee members training, learning and development, capacity building, tools of trade, information and communication technology, ICT, systems, as well as the accommodation of members at parliamentary villages. Furthermore, we ensure that our policies are inclusive, addressing the diverse needs of our people with disabilities.

As a co-chairperson of the Bursary Committee of Parliament, I can proudly say that in the Seventh Parliament, the Parliament has awarded 65 bursaries to the Members of Parliament, six of which the members are studying for their Doctors of Philosophy, PhDs, seven for masters' degrees, two for honours degrees, seven for postgraduate diplomas, two for diplomas, 27 for undergraduate degrees, and one for short courses. We're serious about empowerment of our members, because if we've got empowered members, we'll have an efficient Parliament.

What is also very important, we will deal with in-house training. In the in-house training, in the third term when we come back, we will have training whereby we will train the delegates on the Rules of the House. You can see that as I

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agitated last week that I was disappointed with the way the House was degenerated. Therefore, it's high time that again we refresh on the Rules of the House. We refresh on the imperatives which the Constitution imposed upon us as the delegates here, as the freely elected representatives of the people, so that we can be a hope of our people in the Republic of South Africa.

The other training which is going to be done is the protocol skills and ethical standards. What is also very important, we will train members on the issue of the writing of petitions, so that we're able to represent the constituencies where we come from. Ultimately, the in-house training represents a proactive investment in the professional capabilities of our members, through forecast instruction and capacity building. We aim to enhance both individual performance, collective institutional effectiveness, ensuring we remain responsive and relevant to the needs of our people we serve.

In conclusion, Chairperson, let us draw strength from the wisdom of former President Mandela, who reminded us that the most formidable challenges can be overcome. In his *Long Walk to Freedom*, he said that when we reach the summit of a hill you find that there are many more hills you must ride, you

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must climb. Therefore, we are faced with challenges in this Parliament, but we have the capacity to deal with that. As the journey to amplify Parliament's global influence, reform SADC governance and empower members is undoubtedly challenging, yet it is not beyond our reach. Anchored in the Freedom Charter's timeless call for peace, friendship among nations, and propelled by our steadfast dedication to the dignity of all South Africans, we have both the mandate and the moral obligation to succeed.

I wholeheartedly pledge my support to the Budget of Parliament. I request every member in this House, with what I've just said, this Parliament can only be better. I request each one of you to support this budget, even MKP, even EFF, it is to your advantage. I wholeheartedly like to thank Madam Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, whose integrity and vision continue to guide us forward. Profound gratitude is owed to the Secretary to Parliament, Mr George, the Secretary to the NCOP, Advocate Phindela, the Executive Director, Mr Mbatha, and all the parliamentary staff for your unwavering commitment and administrative excellence from the backbone of this institution. To my own team, whose dedication ensures our continued effectiveness, I offer my sincere thanks. Together, let us honour our mandate, rise to the

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challenge, and shape the legacy worth of our democracy. I support this budget. Thank you.

The DEPUTY HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon delegates, at this juncture before I call on the next hon member to speak in this debate, we've been informed about our hon member, hon Swart, whose wife passed on. I would like to ask the House to please rise for a moment of silence. May her soul rest in eternal peace. Thank you. Hon members, now we move on to the next contributor to this debate, and that's hon Mokae from the DA who has eight minutes.

Mr O J MOKAE: Hon Chairperson, hon members, fellow South Africans, good day. Today we debate budget of Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, totalling just over R3 billion, excluding the rebuilding fund. This budget is allocated against a backdrop of 31 years of a democratic Parliament which is testament to the profound and transformative journey to freedom. Parliament has uniquely evolved over the years to represent key priorities and focus areas, laying the right foundations for democracy. It is important to take note that the existence of Parliament is not synonymous with the democracy, but democracy cannot exist without Parliament. This institution should always carry the interest and aspirations

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of all South Africans, and we, as public representatives should carry that responsibility with honour and dignity. South Africans expect us as members, to truly represent them and be in touch with issues that affect them directly. This Parliament must always remain relevant and preoccupy itself with the needs and aspirations of the citizens of this beautiful country. At the core of our jobs as Members of Parliament should always be about the citizens of South Africa. Hon Chair, I'm going to turn my attention to the work of the committees.

The bulk of the work of Parliament takes place in the various committees of the two Houses in the National Assembly and in the NCOP. This is where we flesh out and give expression to oversight and accountability over executive action. We have come now to know parliamentary committees as the engine rooms of Parliament. While funding has improved, it remains insufficient. Funding should address and enhance the very important function of public participation, especially, with regards to processing legislation, so that quality inputs are solicited. Especially when processing legislation, meaningful oversight can be expensive. In addition, hon Chairperson and members, these resources should address the critical staff shortages in the committee section. Crucial vacancies such as

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candidate advisors and researchers should be filled as a matter of urgency. No committee should function without the necessary human capital. Before Parliament adopted an activist orientation to its work, during this term, the legislative sector developed a public participation framework for Parliament and provincial legislatures. This framework guides Parliament's response to the public's expectations and greater participatory democracy.

Concerning the obligations of Parliament to involve the public in its processes, the Constitutional Court confirmed that failure to comply with this obligation rendered resulting legislation constitutionally invalid. This is a serious indictment on the side of Parliament, and earlier I spoke about soliciting public inputs. Public participation is a constitutional requirement in our democracy and it should be treated as such. It is also a fundamental part of our cultures. Consultation is a cornerstone of South African leadership. The select committee that I chair in this House, the Public Petitions and Executive Undertakings, has also reviewed its role in enhancing public participation, and to this end, we are developing a comprehensive public education and outreach programme to reach as many communities as possible regarding the work that we do. This is done in

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collaboration with provincial legislatures who also have petitions committees and must hold hands with us as we educate citizens about petitioning Parliament or the legislative sector in its totality. This will be done with the firm view of covering rural and marginalised communities, bringing them on board on how we can assist to make their lives better, and that is what I call Parliament in action.

Additionally, the digital transformation that Parliament is undertaking is a step in the right direction. We are in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 4IR, and our work must keep up with advances in technology of our times. Parliament plans to implement a digital transformation strategy that will support the automation of core business processes, monitoring and evaluation capabilities, analytical use for decision making and predictive capabilities for proactive oversight action. There is also the e-petition system, and I'm very passionate about it, hon Chair, because it's going to make a seamless process of South Africans petitioning Parliament where people can just log on to the parliamentary website and lock their petitions online and we as a parliament will process it, but you also give them the opportunity to track the work that we are doing on their petitions. This system will also be extended to incorporate public submission on Bills,

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strengthening participated democracy by creating a digital channel for citizens to engage meaningfully in the lawmaking process.

Hon Chairperson, these advanced are crucial, and as a DA, we'll ensure that they are carried out. The Constitution requires that Parliament maintain oversight over the executive to ensure a government that is open, responsive and accountable. We note in the strategic plan of the Seventh Parliament, the institution aims to improve existing mechanisms for effective oversight and accountability by tracking and reporting on the responsiveness of the executive towards resolution taken in Parliament. Currently, there is no effective machinery by which Parliament can compel the executive or an organ of State to answer to it. This process should address the close lose games our democratic dispensation provides for checks and balances in our system of government, and the role of the national legislature should always be improved for us to play an effective oversight over the executive. Accordingly, Parliament's constitutional mandate requires that it provides meaningful opportunities for the involvement of the people in legislative and other processes. This means that Parliament is placed at the centre for public discourse by creating platforms for engagement with

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the public and targeted sectors of society, particularly, the marginalised and the vulnerable.

This is our unique role and we must champion it. As I conclude, hon Chair, the Zondo Commission report laid bare weaknesses and gaps in Parliament's oversight and accountability mandate and made recommendations to improve our role. The strategic and annual performance plan, APP, makes provision to improve our role and constitutional mandate supported by the budget. Ours is to make sure that this takes place to better the lives of all South Africans. Let what happened in the past never take place again, where a relatively small group of actors and collaborators defied the Constitution and redirected resources from the state for their own gain. South Africans deserve better. I thank you.

*Setswana:*

Ke a leboga.

*Afrikaans:*

Baie dankie.

Ms S M MOKOENA: Chairperson, hon members and fellow South Africans, I stand on behalf of the MK party with the deepest

respect for the ideals that this institution was built upon. This Parliament is the heart of our democracy. It is the House where the voiceless should find voice, where power is scrutinised, where truth is spoken and where hope is restored when the executives fail. Let me begin by acknowledging that there are many dedicated people who work tirelessly behind these walls. The staff who keep the engine running, even the makeshift of spaces, after the devastating fire. The researchers, legal advisers, committee clerks, translators, who ensure that our work reaches every corner of this country in every language.

The honest Members of Parliament across benches who fight every day to make oversight more than a box ticking exercise. We commend the fact that Parliament has managed to maintain a measure of stability and in turbulent times. We note the clean audit outcomes, which speak to some financial discipline in part of administration.

We also recognise the efforts to rebuild, pressing to restore the National Assembly and modernise systems that were outdated long ago. We see attempts to professionalise the parliamentary services, build better research capacity and roll out digital

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tools to connect more South Africans to Parliament. We appreciate this effort, but hon members, this is not enough.

If we do not say so in this Chamber, then where will we say it? The reality is Parliament's duty is not simply to exist. It is to hold power to account, fearlessly, regardless of who it is that is in the Union Buildings. Yet too often, this House has become a safe shelter for complacency, a place where the powerful are called in to give gentle words and are then sent on their way while the rot continues outside.

The annual report boasts an 80% performance rate, but when you unpack it, you find that performance often means more policies, more frameworks, more consultations. Where are the deliverables that the people feel? Are we to tell a mother in Lusikisiki whose child walks 15km to a broken school that we did well because we finalised a big data maturity plan? The strategic plan for serving Parliament rightly acknowledges that public trust in Parliament is at its lowest. This is not a statistic - it is a crisis. People are no longer seeing us as their shield against corruption, they see us as a closed club. That perception is earned when oversight reports are written but never enforced. When we bark in the House but never bite. Let us be clear. There are bright spots. The new

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oversight models, the pilot country's dashboard, the attempt to monitor NDP outcomes more closely, these are steps in the right direction, but steps alone are not enough when what is needed is a leap. The same Ministers appear before our committees, repeat the same excuses, make the same promises and face zero consequences when they fail to deliver.

How is that acceptable for a Parliament that says it is transformative? Let's look at the numbers. Over 3 billion in requests is requested. Yes, a significant portion is rightly allocated to restoration projects, and we support that. We want this Parliament fully to rebuild, fit for purpose and open to the people. But we do not support a budget that protects inefficiency and cohesiveness with the executive. We do not support a budget that pads bureaucracy while ignoring consequences for departments that defy committee's recommendations.

We do not support more culture realignment dialogues while millions remain jobless, and corruption cases remain open-ended. The MK party believes in an active Parliament, not an ornamental one. It believes in a Parliament that enforces consequences when departments underperform, tracks every recommendation to the end with deadlines, accountability and

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follow-through. It also believes in a Parliament that leads by example in cutting redundant activities and focussing more where it matters: oversight, lawmaking and genuine public participation, becomes a House of discomfort for the corrupt - not a place where they visit for tea. We acknowledge the good, but the good is overshadowed by complacency.

Our rejection today is not a vote against Parliament. It is a vote for a better Parliament; a Parliament that our people trust because they see it doing its job without fear or favour; a Parliament that tightens its own belt before asking the nation to tighten theirs, and a Parliament that stops rewarding underperformance with bigger budgets and bigger excuses.

So, on behalf of the MK party, we reject this budget in its current form. We do so out of loyalty to the Constitution, respect for our people and belief that if we do not hold ourselves to the highest standard, we can never hold anyone else to it. Let this rejection be a wake-up call - a line in sand. Parliament must not only look transformative in its plans, but it must also be transformed in its outcomes.

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It must not only talk about oversight, but it must also deliver it. It must not only build new chambers, but it must also rebuild trust. Until then, the MK party will stand on the side of the people who sent us here to remind you that every rand spent here must echo back in the lives of those who have paid for it. We reject Vote 2 and we will not apologise for expecting better. I thank you.

Ms T BREEDT: Deputy Chairperson, it is good to be back in the House. Deputy Chairperson, at this pivotal moment in our nation's journey, we are confronted by profound and complex challenges. South Africa, much like the rest of the world, is shaped by the relentless tide of technological change and political certainty. From the instability in our electricity supply to rising unemployment, surging living costs, pervasive crime and entrenched social issues. Our society faces mounting pressures on every front.

The shadow of COVID-19 and the scars of state capture persist, aggravating persistent fraud, ongoing corruption in public institutions and the collapse of service delivery most acutely experienced at the local government level. These compounded difficulties have left us with a troubling legacy, a dramatic erosion of public trust in the institutions that are meant to

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serve and protect our democracy. Confidence in our government, in the judiciary and crucially in Parliament has reached a historic low.

According to the most recent South African social Attitudes survey by the Human Sciences Research Council, trust in Parliament has tumbled from 65% in 2004 to a mere 26% in 2023. Nearly 6 out of every 10 South Africans now doubt Parliament's capacity to uphold its constitutional mandate or deliver meaningful oversight and services. The sobering reality demands an urgent and principled response. The Seventh Parliament, constituted against the challenging backdrop following the 2024 general elections, has articulated for strategic priorities strengthening our oversight abilities, refining legislative processes, improving the integrity of public appointments and enhancing international engagement.

While these priorities are both ambitious and necessary, they risk becoming empty rhetoric in, if not translated into tangible and measurable progress that the restore faith in our democracy. Yet, at the bedrock of any democratic society is the active trust and participation of its people. Public engagement must be elevated beyond mere formalities. Too often public participation is treated as a procedural checkbox, an

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obligation fulfilled only to meet legal requirements rather than to genuinely integrate the voices and aspirations of all South Africans.

It is especially significant in the context of the National Council of Provinces, where provincial mandates are even more rigorous and inclusive public participation processes. The National Council of Provinces, NCOP, stands as a unique forum designed to embody the will of diverse communities and ensure that provincial interests are not only represented but also respected and acted upon. We must not allow the processes intended to amplify the public's voices to be reduced to mere rituals.

We must take note that according to the previously mentioned survey, the Human Sciences Research Council, HSRC, found that 81% of respondents that said they would not vote in the 2024 general election stated their reasons as disillusionment. That means colleagues that they are disappointed in us. Our efforts to rebuild trust must confront the conduct within our own ranks, instances of disrespect, lack of professionalism and disregard for parliamentary rules undermine the dignity and authority of this House.

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Hon Chair, our Constitution reminds us that South Africa belongs to all who reside within its borders, united in our diversity power. Parliament, as the living expression of the people's will, is not to be commended for private interests or manipulated at the expense of those who serve. It is our solemn duty to fulfil our mandate with integrity, humility and unwavering accountability. Only through steadfast commitment of principled government and authentic engagement with its citizens of our nation can we hope to repair the bonds of trust that we have frayed. Let us resolve to do this. Deputy Chairperson, thank you.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon members and fellow South Africans, good day. Parliament is not a building, Parliament is not a brand, Parliament is not bureaucracy, Parliament is the people. When the people sent us here to this House, they do so with the full expectation that we will ask the difficult questions, speak truth to power and ensure that every cent spent carries the weight of the public trust.

Today we are asked to debate Budget Vote 2, but before we start talking about numbers, let us talk about some principles, because there is something deeply disquieting about being asked to vote on the budget while the basic

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questions from our own oversight committee, the Joint Standing Committee on Financial Management of Parliament, remains unanswered. What confidence can we place in Vote 2 when the parliamentary administration remains unresponsive to repeated committee requests for something as fundamental as a costed organogram?

We have asked for salary scales, we have got silence. We have asked about the employment status of so-called temporary advisers in the Office of the Secretary to Parliament. Some now embedded for over three years of no accountability, no performance matrix and no explanation. Still nothing. Is this the transparency the people of South Africa deserve? One can ask, I think not. Then we come to the Secretary to Parliament, an office has become synonymous not with service, hon members, but with secrecy. The public record, however, is very clear.

In 2022, Parliament approved Mr Xolile George's appointment based on a salary of R2,6 million annually, but a different number has been implemented. Advocate Pillay found a case to answer, to date no action, no accountability and no clarity. In the meanwhile, his salary has ... wait for it ... rocketed to well above R6 million annually. If that is not enough, six

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advisors are also required at more than R2 million annually each. And, we are expected to simply move on.

Deputy Chairperson, let us follow the money now. Just over R3,5 billion is what Parliament will receive in 2025-26. I am following the budget not the Estimates of National Expenditure, ENE. Of that, R1,5 billion just over 50% goes to Programme 1, that is the administration. Just over R1,5 billion goes to administration. Only R704 million, which is less than 23% goes to Programme 2, which happens to be the core of our constitutional mandate, legislation and oversight.

Meanwhile, Programme 3, Associated Services, political party transfers and members' support absorbs R829 million, add to that, the R519 million direct charge for members' remuneration.

How can Parliament be the guardian of public resources when it is unable or unwilling to realign its own? We are told that tens of millions are allocated to staff appointments but these positions are tied to a realignment project that remains incomplete. We are budgeting for posts we cannot even describe. That is not planning, hon members, that is theatre.

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Still, we hear nothing from the executive authority about return on investment. What will these appointments achieve?

What are the costs and benefits? Where is the proof that this money will strengthen oversight, deepen democracy or improve the lives of the very people we serve?

Parliament speaks the language of modernisation, but its spending habits remain stuck in the past. Personnel costs continue to balloon unchecked, bloated over time, unchecked acting allowances and often it looks like cellphone reimbursements. Oddly enough, procurement for committee staff tools of trade crawling along at a glacial pace, yet the money flows out anyway. One has to ask: If the laptops, cell phones and software are not reaching the desks of staff supporting committees, where exactly is that budget going then?

Cost containment has become a buzz word without a backbone, invoked selectively like a fire extinguisher kept on standby but only used to put out the small flames, never the blaze in the executive suite. It is more of an illusion than an intervention, trimming the edges while the centre bloats.

Three years after the fire, Parliament still rents external venues for meetings because there are not enough functional

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committee rooms. Three years later, we still waltzing around permit applications, signing contracts based on wishful thinking, finalising designs that never seem to be finalised and paying consultants, but not for buildings for beautifully animated fantasies that would make world Disney jealous.

We are told the restoration project is 80% implemented, but let us be honest, it is nowhere near 80% functional. South Africans are not interested in milestones achieved. They want a Parliament that works. I am always the optimists, Deputy Chair. So, I will refer to the green shoots as well. The clean audit is commendable. The refinement of the oversight priority model, the implementation of the country outcome dashboard and the strengthening of executive responsiveness tracking are all important tools, but they are tools, they are not outcomes, they are movements, they are not progress and there are not enough to offset the institutional complacency that has crept into the top structures of this institution.

Let us not ignore the elephant in one Chamber that is still standing, that is our Chamber. Parliament is being asked to do more with less. Over R1,1 billion has been cut from the budget over the last six years, even with a 10,7% increase in this year's allocation, it still fails to keep pace with real

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demand, inflation and operational needs. Meanwhile, the Parliamentary Budget Office, Parliament's own fiscal engine is scraping by on a mere R20 million allocation. An office meant to bolster oversight is treated as an afterthought in the very budget it should be helping us interrogate.

Why, could one ask? Why is an institution designed to ask the hardest questions left with the fewest resources? Then, we ask: Why there are problems in the office? Hon members, we are entering a new political terrain, one defined by coalitions, by negotiations and by complexity. That means Parliament must rise to the challenge. That job cannot be done with gaps in the organogram, underfunded research support and delayed rebuilding an executive silence. This is not a call to reject the Vote, MK like you have just done, this is a call to wake up like you should. It is a call to this House and to this Parliament to stop congratulating itself for hosting international delegations while we still cannot sit in our own committees in functioning buildings.

Stop boasting about transformation while critical vacancies remain unfilled and accounted for and unexplained. Parliament must be what the Constitution demands of it, a force of oversight for transparency, for public participation and for

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value. How can we claim to light the way for accountability while we are stumbling around in the darkness of our own House? Vote 2 is not just a budget it is a test. The question is not whether we will fund Parliament, the question is whether Parliament will fund the future or merely subsidise its own administrative dysfunction. I thank you.

Mr B J FARMER: Hon Chairperson, hon members, fellows South Africans, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, the God without whom we will not succeed. Today I rise to speak for the PA in support of Budget Vote 2. The budget expands a very heartbeat of our democracy, Parliament itself. Chairperson, Parliament is not the building, Parliament is a promise. It's a promise that the cries of our communities echoes in this Chamber, it's a promise that no public servant, no department and no executive can stand above the people's representatives. Let us be honest with ourselves and with the people who sent us here. Parliament must do more to earn the respect it demands. Too often, oversight has become a tick box exercise. Committee said reports are tabled but the impact on the ground remains invisible, Bills are debated here, but outside these gates, the people still wait for change. Chairperson, the PA supports this budget because a strong Parliament means a stronger people. However, our

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support comes with a clear call, Parliament must be more than a speaker's list and it must be the spearhead accountability. We must use this budget to run strengthen our oversight capacity so that no official escape scrutiny and no misused rand goes unnoticed.

Secondly, equip members with modern research tools and its expert support so we debate facts, not slogans. Thirdly, expand community outreach to the Parliament sit, not just in Cape Town, but in every province, every ward, every forgotten village. Fourthly, embrace digital platforms that bring ordinary people directly into our work, especially, the youth who must see Parliament not as a distant fortress but as their House too. Hon members, too often we say we represent the people, but do they feel it? Do the mothers in the informal settlements, the farm workers in the rural areas, the unemployed graduates in our townships, see Parliament as their ally or as an island for the elite? It is time we restore public trust by restoring public visibility. Let us sit in communities more often than we sit in committee rooms. Let us report back not once every five years at election time, but all the time. Chairperson, this budget vote must also strengthen the security and integrity of this institution. We must protect this House from threats, from intimidation and

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from becoming a playground for those who want to disrupt that rather than deliver. We must also protect our support staff, from researchers to cleaners and to committee clerks. They make Parliament work behind the scenes and deserve to work in a professional, safe and well-resourced environment.

As the PA, we say we will not stand by while Parliament is weakened by fictional games or internal delays. We stand for a Parliament that works for the people, that ask the hard questions, that produces real answers and that brings hope back to our communities. In the Seventh Parliament, let us prove that oversight is not a ritual, it is our sacred duty. Let us prove that representation is not a title, it is a daily task and let us prove that when we stand in this House, we do so on behalf of millions who cannot stand here by themselves. Chairperson, we support this Budget Vote because when Parliament works, democracy works. Let this budget be the fuel that fires up our oversight, sharpens our debates and closes the gap between these benches and the streets of our communities from Hillbrow to the Cape Flats. Let us be the Parliament our people deserve. Salute!

Mr S MASANGO (Mpumalanga): Greetings to the Chairperson of NCOP Mme Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane, hon Deputy Chairperson of

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National Council of Provinces, NCOP, Mr Les Govender, hon Chair of Chairs, the Chief Whip of Council, and hon permanent members of the NCOP,

*IsiNdebele:*

Lotjhani.

*English:*

It is an honour to participate in this debate this afternoon, where provincial legislatures are presented an opportunity to acknowledge and commend the crucial role that the National Council of Provinces plays in promoting corporative governance.

It is to ensure that by providing a platform for the nine provinces to articulate their concerns and interests at at national level. As provincial legislatures, we continue to work closely with the permanent delegates of the NCOP in achieving this role.

Oversight is a critical aspect of a democracy society committed to effective governance and transformation. It ensures that government remains in touch with the people and

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that problems in service delivery are recognised and addressed.

In this regard, the Constitution establishes an inherent oversight responsibility for the NCOP because the constitutional role is to represent provinces, local government in the national sphere of government.

Its main concern is in relation to the budget must be the equitable division of revenue amongst the three spheres of government and the subsequent horizontal division amongst the provinces, as well as the conditional grants to provinces.

The NCOP's role in overseeing the budget is to ensure that provincial and municipal interests are properly accommodated in the budget and that the division is equitable.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, one important aspect in ensuring proper budget allocation is public participation. Public participation programmes can contribute in alerting the NCOP to problems and achievements, strengthening its ability to oversee the executive at a provincial and local level.

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However, we have noted the mechanisms that have been employed by the NCOP in strengthening public participation in the provinces. These include receiving petitions, representations, or submissions, which allows individuals and organizations to voice their concerns, opinions, and proposals on various issues, including draft legislation.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, despite a firm policy framework on the provision of infrastructure, South Africa is dealing with a growing number of delayed, abandoned and incomplete government infrastructure projects. These projects across the country include schools, health facilities, housing, roads and water projects, which sit idle and incomplete for various reasons, costing the taxpayer billions of rands.

The Provincial Week Programme, therefore, provides an opportunity for the NCOP and legislatures across the country, to engage directly with citizens on challenges they experience.

It further provides an opportunity to receive reports from government departments and municipalities on progress made regarding service delivery.

The 2024 Provincial Week Report indicated the challenges that were identified including amongst others delays and incomplete projects that were detected: Many infrastructure projects across provinces face significant delays, are incomplete, and have been abandoned. Common reasons include budget constraints, contractor performance issues, community unrest, extortions, theft and administrative inefficiencies.

Hon Deputy Chairperson with regards to maintenance issues: Aging infrastructure and inadequate maintenance are recurring problems, leading to frequent breakdowns and service interruptions.

Hon Deputy Chairperson with regards to financial constraints: Several departments report severe budget cuts, impacting their ability to complete projects and maintain existing infrastructure.

The misallocation of funds instances of funds intended for infrastructure being used for other purposes, such as salaries, have been noted.

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With regards to poor project management: There is a lack of effective project management and oversight, leading to cost overruns and delays.

With regards to the use of consultants: Over-reliance on consultants for compiling financial statements and managing projects, often resulting in poor quality and additional costs.

Hon Deputy Chairperson we need to indicated that the Auditor-General warned and cautioned that we need to advice municipalities and all provincial governments not to utilise private consultants because we have Chapter 9 institutions deposited by the Constitution that are meant to facilitate and assist efficiently in terms of cost-cutting measures in addressing such.

However, we do take note of the huge investments by the government in the road infrastructure, water supply schemes sanitation infrastructure, energy projects, as well as the successful implementation of innovative human settlement solutions to address spatial development needs.

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It also demonstrates that where progress was made, the delegates expressed support for the efforts made. For example, in the case of the road paving project at Pniel near Kimberley, the delegation applauded the implementation of a model for the empowerment of contractors and called for it to be used as best practice in other provinces.

The taking Parliament to the People Programme is also one that involves the NCOP visiting communities, particularly in rural and marginalised areas, to engage with citizens directly.

During these visits, communities raise issues and concerns, and the NCOP undertakes to follow up with relevant government departments to address those issues. For an example in Thaba Chue, where the NCO conducted a very extensive work which we appreciate as a province in particular.

Now to emphasise the important of the budget tabled here we appreciate and also the NCOP committee often hold public hearings on specific Bills issues allowing direct interaction between the public and NCOP members.

Public Education also plays a crucial role in Parliament provides information and educational resources to help the

public understand legislative processes and engage more effectively. The NCOP aims to provide feedback to the public on the outcomes of their engagement, ensuring that citizens are aware of how their input has influenced decision-making through participation.

Parliament is committed to providing information and feedback to the public, fostering open communication and accountability.

Reports on feedback are often made publicly available, allowing communities once more to track the progress of issues they raised, and the actions taken by the NCOP.

The NCOP and legislatures will continue to advocate for improved governance, better financial management, and stronger accountability mechanisms to enhance the delivery and maintenance of public infrastructure and other services across the country.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, as I conclude, in line with the Constitution, such as subsection 66(2) and 92, the NCOP's oversight role is limited to issues which affect provinces on a national level and intergovernmental relations.

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As legislatures, we commit in providing the support and collaboration in achieving this role and ensuring that the interests of the people are put first.

*IsiNdebele:*

Siyathokoza, siyasebenza begodu sitjhingaphambili.

*English:*

Thank you very much, hon Deputy Chairperson.

Mr M M PETER: Hon Deputy Chairperson, let me greet the hon members as well today in the name of the Holy Spirit. It is an honour to rise in this House and contribute to the Budget Vote on Parliament, the cornerstone institution of our democracy, which must serve as the embodiment of the will of the people, the guardian of the Constitution, and the ultimate forum for democratic accountability. Yes, we cannot perform these roles effectively without reflecting on our institutional limitations and boldly charting a new course.

One of the most urgent issues Parliament must confront is the slow pace of legislative processing. Too often, we see Bills stagnate for years, while the needs they seek to address compound in our communities. Where other parliaments move with

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urgency and precision, we dawdle and delay. In countries such as the United States of America, USA, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, we see Bills processed in a matter of months, often with extensive consultation, because those systems have invested in legislative efficiency, rigorous research support, and clear timelines.

The SA Parliament must similarly enhance its legislative drafting capacity, institutional knowledge, and time management if it wishes to fulfil its constitutional mandate. The impact of legislation lies not only in its passage, but on how inclusive and democratic its formulation has been.

Public participation is a constitutional imperative, yet our record remains uneven. Too often, marginalised and rural communities are left out of critical deliberations, either due to language barriers, inaccessible venues, or inadequate notice. Parliament must broaden its reach and invest in better preparation, including expanding funding outreach efforts, and improving feedback mechanisms. It is not enough to hear the public, we must also respond meaningfully and transparently.

Moreover, robust and inclusive public education on the legislative process must be prioritised. Democracy cannot

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flourish in the absence of knowledge; if people do not understand their right to participate, then that right becomes meaningless. Thus, improving our approaches to civic education and establishing new participatory platforms, particularly digital ones, must be integral to our work.

Hon Deputy Chairperson of this House, we must also consider the critical link between legislative work and oversight.

*IsiXhosa:*

Hayi lento yokube sijongelwa phantsi ngabaPhathiswa xa besiza kuphendula apha. Uya kufika bephendula ingathi baphendula abantwana babo babe behlisana nezidima zamalungu ale Ndlu. Sifuna iimpendulo ezibalulekileyo nesidima esihloniphekileyo.

*English:*

Lastly, we must speak plainly; since 1994, while the volume of Bills has declined, the quality of some has not withstood constitutional scrutiny. That is a shameful indictment of our legislative process. Parliament must correct this trajectory, not only to fulfil its constitutional mandate, but to protect the integrity of our democracy.

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In conclusion, Parliament must not be reduced to a rubber stamp, it must become what it was always intended to be; a dynamic, responsive, and capable institution that is a custodian of democracy, a watchdog of accountability, and a tribune for the people, especially the most vulnerable. This Budget Vote must not simply fund Parliament's existence, but its transformation. Therefore, the UDM supports this budget. I thank you, Deputy Chairperson.

Mr D R RYDER: Hon members, When I stood here last year, I spoke of a vision: to transform our committees into strategic, decisive, and outcome-driven engines of the NCOP. I challenged us to harness our constitutional role as provincial champions, to reassert leadership over our agendas, and to drive the NCOP's work away from bureaucracy and toward real service delivery outcomes.

South Africans from all walks of life are democratically represented in a bicameral Parliament. This means that our Parliament consists of two Houses; each distinct, yet equally important in fulfilling our constitutional mandate. These are the National Assembly, and the National Council of Provinces, or the NCOP.

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Regrettably, over the years, the NCOP has not enjoyed the same level of attention, prominence, or respect as its counterpart. It has, in the eyes of many, remained largely irrelevant. Yet this House, this Council, is a constitutionally enshrined institution with a critical and uniquely admirable role in our democratic architecture.

It is up to us to promote the relevance of the NCOP. We must help the people of South Africa appreciate the importance of the work that is done here. The Constitution draws clear lines of responsibility: The National Assembly solely oversees the work of the national executive, its departments, its budgets, and the delivery of its services.

The nine provincial legislatures exercise similar oversight over provincial governments, while over 250 municipal councils do the same for their local municipalities. This is the beauty of our constitutional framework; a system in which the three spheres of government are not hierarchical but distinct, interdependent, and interrelated. No sphere of government is more important than the other.

So where, then, does that leave the NCOP? Why does it exist? What is its relevance? The answer lies in one of the

Constitution's most essential principles: co-operative governance. This principle recognises that no single sphere of government can deliver effectively in isolation. Without co-operative governance, service delivery stalls. Without co-operative governance, the lives of South Africans remain unchanged. Without co-operative governance, South Africa cannot move forward. No sphere of government is an island unto itself.

The national Department of Basic Education may set the policies, norms, and standards, but the provincial governments are responsible for infrastructure and staffing, but unless the municipality maintains the road to the school and ensures the water and electricity are connected, quality education will not be delivered. Each function is dependent on the next. And this is not limited to education.

If the national health department allocates funds to provincial governments to build and equip hospitals yet a municipality fails to manage waste removal, then the entire ecosystem of healthcare collapses. And if the root of the failure lies not with the municipality, but with national procurement laws that delay or prevent the purchase of

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adequate waste trucks, then the problem is structural, not local. This is where the NCOP finds its purpose and relevance.

The Constitution mandates the NCOP to serve as a forum for provincial interests within the national sphere of government. But it goes beyond that. Because provincial governments exercise a close relationship in the workings of local municipalities, the NCOP also becomes the voice of local government in Parliament. That is what sets this House apart. We are not the National Assembly. We are not designed to mimic its functions.

Where the National Assembly exercises oversight for accountability, the NCOP exercises oversight for fact finding; oversight that seeks to diagnose and resolve, not merely to call out and condemn. That is why our oversight must be softer in conduct, but sharper in focus, grounded by cooperative governance, collaboration, and consensus, driven by the imperative to unblock bottlenecks and impediments to service delivery across all three spheres of government.

Unless we exercise this function fully, the disjuncture in service delivery will persist, and with it, the growing disappointment of the South African people. As was beautifully

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captured in the Speeding Transformation report commissioned by Parliament at the turn of the century, the NCOP is, "A body that protects the relationships between the spheres of government," and whose ongoing goal "... is to contribute to the effectiveness of South Africa's multisphered system of government and its representativity.

Indeed, the NCOP is the only place where all three spheres of government: national, provincial, and local meet under one roof. It is the only body that conducts oversight over South Africa's entire intergovernmental system. This is how we make the NCOP relevant and give it purpose. This is how we ensure that this House leaves its mark on our country's constitutional order.

Over the past year, I am proud to say we have made meaningful progress. And today, I offer an honest assessment, a status update if you like, of a work in progress. I hope to highlight where we have strengthened our foundation, where we still struggle, and how we can press forward in alignment, leadership, and delivery.

Since our sessions at the start of the year, committees have embraced a logic-based structure comprising inputs,

activities, outputs, outcomes, and measurable impact in line with the model proposed in Parliament's strategy document. We've shifted from activities-for-activity's sake to work driven by clearly defined objectives, rooted in provincial realities and focused on tangible outcomes.

This approach is directly tied to our alignment with the 7th Parliament's Strategic Plan (2024-2029). Committees are now selecting priorities that map directly to the five strategic outcomes:

- Responsive and accountable institutions
- Coherent intergovernmental cooperation
- Optimised legislative reform
- Enhanced public participation
- Strengthened oversight and delivery

This is not mere rhetoric, it is realignment in action. Committee Chairpersons and Members have reported that strategic planning is now integral to their work, ensuring that every meeting, workshop, oversight visit, and report ties back to the strategic plan and, ultimately, to community impact. The buy-in by Committee Chairpersons has been

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remarkably good and we are finding programmes that are well aligned to our vision.

The work of programmes in the NCOP, like Provincial Week, Local Government Week, and Taking Parliament to the People have shifted from symbolic gestures to instrumental components of oversight. Committees are now feeding insights from these interactions back into legislative scrutiny. The result: oversight that is informed by lived experiences, responsive to context, and more likely to yield sustainable solutions.

This shift has begun, not perfectly, but noticeably. Provincial delegations are reporting stronger relevance, municipalities are engaging more seriously, and the NCOP brand is renewing its credibility as a champion of provinces. In short, our institutional machinery is improving, but the people component needs to catch up. Effective teamwork, professionalism, and discipline from selected leadership teams are non-negotiable.

Now to the issue that baffles many of us: the committee budget. We have done the strategic planning; we have the vision. Yet our toolboxes remain empty. The proposed parliamentary estimates leave committees without sufficient

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funding for meaningful oversight visits, expert engagement, and technical support. Worse, budget allocations continue to be administration-led, not politician-led.

As elected representatives, it is our constitutional role to prioritise resource allocation. That role is being sidelined, and this translated into the across-the-board allocations to committees. Both Hon Frolick in the National Assembly and I on behalf of the NCOP advocated for a more tailored approach, taking workloads and responsibilities into account.

Yes, the economy is under pressure. Yes, there are many competing demands. But that cannot justify underinvestment in parliamentary oversight; especially when we are strengthening our capacity to hold the Executive to account. The administrative budgeting model does not reflect our strategic aspirations. It reflects a bureaucratic default, not political prioritisation. And this disconnect undermines our credibility, weakens our message of active oversight, and in many cases, renders committee work aspirational rather than actionable.

To be blunt: our committees are constrained not by their vision but by the limits placed around their budgets.

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Regrettably, many of the bad habits from the 6th Parliament persist; particularly the desire to emulate the National Assembly. Let me repeat my mantra: We are not a second National Assembly. We must resist this misconception and revert to the systems and practices that defined our original NCOP. That means re-doubling our focus on provincial mandate oversight, not portfolio duplication.

We need to ensure provincial input is not tokenised, but central to debates and scrutiny. We must implement systems to maintain separation between our provincial role and national legislative senatorial functions. We must remember what made the NCOP distinct and powerful: its roots in cooperative, provincial governance; its embedding in lived experiences; and its role as a bridge, not a replica, of the National Assembly.

To consolidate these gains, we must continue to improve systems; informed by experience but strengthened by innovation. Annual committee planning workshops must be an area of focus and attention: All committees must hold two-day planning sessions each year, complete with technical support, alignment to strategic outcomes, and stakeholder timelines.

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Presiding Officers' Meetings are a must-have to chairperson alignment, code sharing and avoidance of siloed agendas. Each committee must submit quarterly updates against strategic plan outcomes, between Provincial and Local Government Weeks. These systems will rebuild crucial administrative discipline in our House, but they depend on political will. We must collectively agree to support them; institutional inertia cannot remain an excuse.

Colleagues, the opportunity to transform the NCOP is real; but it is fragile. It will take more discipline, more clarity, more self-direction, and more political leadership. This project can so easily be forgotten in our already full programme, because of the volume of work that must be done. I call on you now to join me in reclaiming our place, not as secondary players, but as primary agents of accountability and provincial voice.

Finally, let us remember why we are here: to serve the people of South Africa, not to preserve process, but to deliver substance; not to generate rhetoric, but to show results.

We have a constitution that gives us a clear mandate. We have strategic instruments that align our work. We have the talent

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and energy in this House to deliver. What we need now is political intention, cohesive leadership, and a refusal to accept 'that's the way it's done'.

We owe it to our provinces. We owe it to the local communities striving for better roads, schools, clinics, and services. We owe it to every South African hoping for a government that is responsive, accountable, and connected.

Before I conclude, I want to pause and appreciate the teams that support our work. The army of officials who ensure that things run according to plan. The teams in the offices of the Presiding Officers, Chief Whip and Programming Whip. The committee secretaries, content advisors and researchers. The Secretariat and table staff. The translation teams, the ushers and transport and security teams. The South African Police Services and of course, the caterers. The library staff and the media team. So many people who make our work possible as MPs. Thank you all for the dedication and drive that you display.

Hon members, our House operates with a high degree of collegiality amongst Members. The Provincial Whips, Committee Chairpersons and each and every member here work together,

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clashing on ideology, but agreeing that work needs to be done because we are all South Africans, and we are all here to bring about a better South Africa.

Thank you all for the constructive manner with which we engage one another. This is not a sprint, it is a marathon. We have four more years together and the power lies with us to bring about meaningful change. Madam Chair, hon members, the work continues. Let us seize the moment - lead with conviction, reclaim our systems and build an NCOP that delivers, not just deliberates.

*Sesotho:*

Re tswelopele, kaofela.

*English:*

Together, we move forward. Thank you.

*Setswana:*

Moh T I LEGWASE: Modulasetilo wa Ntlo, Motlatsamodulasetilo, Semesegolo sa Ntlo, ...

*English:*

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... delegates - permanent and special - members of the public, ...

*Setswana:*

... ke a le dumedisa.

*English:*

Hon Breedt, it was expected of me that instead of misleading the public about public participation, you would actually inform the public that public participation is our constitutional obligations enshrined in section 59, subsection 1 and section 72, subsection 1 of the Constitution. Nonetheless, hon members, we meet today to debate policy relating to one of the most important institutions in our democracy, Parliament. It is important to note that, as hon Ryder has already mentioned, Parliament has two Chambers, which is the NCOP and the National Assembly. Also, the term Parliament has been reduced to mean the National Assembly, the NCOP being looked at as a by-the-way-House.

It is important to understand this institution of Parliament so that we are fully aware of its powers, responsibilities and mandate. Without thorough understanding, we might make certain assumptions which may lead us to fundamental mistakes. As we

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meet here, hon members, we meet in the first month of the second year of the seventh administration. Our people went to elections and crafted the composition of this House called Parliament, which is the NCOP in our case. Our presence here today is proof of democracy in South Africa and that it is alive and that it has no limit other than the people themselves.

Parties represented in our Parliament come from all walks of life, from the extreme left to social democrats, far right and centre, and so on. Perhaps this is the first appreciation that all of us must recognise and applaud. In other parts of the world democracy is a luxury, but in South Africa it is a lived experience of all citizens whose trust has placed all of us here in the NCOP. Our story as a country does not only begin in 1994 but begins many years ago before 1994. The reality is that what shapes us today but certainly does not define our identity as a people.

Over the past 30 years our Parliament has gone through different stages that have led us to where we are. Our work has not been complete until the Freedom Charter, the Bible of the liberation movement, the ANC, is achieved. As we reflect and celebrate the 70th anniversary of this historic document,

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we ought to remember that it was blood that resulted in the adoption of this document in June 1955 in Kliptown. Today, not a single one of us can deny that we have a functioning robust democracy. Within this democracy, the people of our country have the opportunity to see the functioning of Parliament in an open. They see and hear debate, disagree with each other and sometimes we do agree. We all agree on fundamental issues. We agree that we must deal with poverty, unemployment and inequality. However, we disagree on measures that must be taken to address these issues.

Although the history of our country is one that is written in blood, exclusion, and oppression of black people, it was the ANC, and it continues to be the ANC that holds together the society and nation we all call South Africa. It is and it has been the policies of the ANC that has transformed our society to reflect in its social makeup for all its people. Of course, the ANC does not operate in a vacuum and certainly South Africa is not an isolated geographical location. We are part of the world. This explains why anti-transformation forces have since 1994, been working hard to ensure that transformation does not happen. And, hon members, the justification that redistribution measures aimed at creating equality are detrimental to the economy, and it tells a story

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that we need to enforce our grounding as a country to lead transformation and for more radical approach that we have ever been before.

Hon members, this is the work this House of Parliament must oversee, enforce constitutionally and most importantly, debate. We must move from the presumptuous notion that all of us here represent the people honestly. The ANC is the only political party that all of you can attest that its birth and mission has always been about the people. We took charge of Parliament in 1994 and our goal as the ANC was to use Parliament to transform legislation and build institutional foundation. Between 1999 and 2004 we strengthened oversight and public participation, and from 2014 to 2019 our aim was to deepen democracy and public participation.

In this seventh administration, our aim as the ANC is to focus Parliament's work to be a transformative, activist Parliament. This goal can only be possible if there is close co-operation and co-ordination between the two Houses of Parliament, which is the NCOP and the National Assembly. We must complement each other. What happens in the National Assembly must inform our work as the NCOP and vice versa. Where we see there is little attention on issues in the National Assembly; where we see we

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have competency, we must take up matters and address them sharply. When people see Parliament, they must see themselves. The language in our speeches must reflect the daily struggles of our people and also, we must share with them the joyful moments that place our nation in the global stage.

Hon members, once again, in 2026 South Africans will have another chance to cast their votes in the local government elections. Within this House, we have South African Local Government Association, Salga, representation and constitutionally, as a House, the NCOP, we are empowered to deal with matters related to local government. Section 154 of the Constitution mandates this House to support and strengthen local government to ensure that there is ability and capacity with local government to function optimally to address people's needs. This is not only a matter of assisting local government to achieve clean audits from the Auditor-General. Yes, audit outcomes are important, and we condemn the use of incompetent consultants by municipalities that are not helpful in anyway. We need to assist municipalities give a true meaning of the clause of the Freedom Charter that: "the people shall govern". That should be our vision in dealing with local government.

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Let me alert this House and the people of South Africa on the important of local government and its relationship with the Freedom Charter. Hon members, when we are in the Western Cape, there are quite a number of challenges. Beyond these beautiful walls, our people are subjected to the most modest apartheid and spatial injustice. Working class people are driven away out of the city. They are being priced out by the City of Cape Town. People from Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Gugulethu and other places are victims of spatial injustice led by the DA.

Our people spend time travelling to work and research has suggested that people spend almost five hours travelling to work and from work and are spending large portions of their salaries paying for taxis. Low-cost housing schemes are built far from the city centre to exclude the people. Yet, the DA boast about clean audits all the time, but their political judgment and planning is tailored from the painful history of apartheid.

Another criminality in the Western Cape is shunning the service delivery issues in wards where they are not controlling and those populated by black and coloured people. Sewer in the yards where people are supposed to walk and live, where young kids are supposed to play. We must utilise the

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powers of this House as the NCOP to deal with such issues. Local government is our responsibility. Demarcations must be done in ways that aligns with the goals of our country. That is to say there must be justice and non-racialism.

As our ANC strategy and tactics document clearly outlines, our vision of a Parliament that is of the people, by the people and for the people. We are committed to prioritising the will of the people and ensuring that government is accountable to us. As we stated in our January 8 statement, we must build a society that is based on the will of the people, not only the will of the few individuals. The symbiotic relationship between the NCOP and National Assembly that I referred to earlier is essential in ensuring that Parliament is efficient and it also effective in its role.

Hon members, public participation in the life blood of our democracy. We must continue to create spaces for our communities and citizens to engage with us, to share ideas and to hold us accountable. As Nelson Mandela so eloquently put it: "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others". We will utilise or we must utilise the community radio stations to make oral submissions and leverage advanced

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technology to make parliamentary work more accessible and expand our reach to broader public. To strengthen public participation, we must employ new and modern strategies, take advantage of modern technology, and use tools that our people understand.

As we embark on our programme of Taking Parliament to the People, our core vision must be the people. We will enhance our legislative processes and ensure that the laws we pass are a process of broader consultation and consensus building. We must ensure that we strengthen accountability, especially to the executive. That we utilise other state organs like the judiciary to help us deal with issues of law. We must take seriously this work, including implementing the Zondo Commission recommendations. We recognise that Parliament has done an excellent work to ensure robustness of the House by implementing Rules and measures that ensures robustness happens in an honest, and yet civil manner which reflects ubuntu.

It is important, hon members, that indeed a revolution for those who are in the revolution is an act of love, but not dishonesty. As the ANC, we continue to reaffirm that we will continue to use this House to improve the quality of life of

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our people; that we will continue to raise issues that reflect their daily experiences and; that we will remain focused to ensure that we are not defocused, especially on the transformation agenda, even under the difficult challenges that we have under the Government of National Unity, GNU. As the ANC, we continue, and we will continue to prioritise our people. We support this Budget Vote. I thank you.

Ms A M SIWISA: Deputy Chairperson, let me first start by greeting the commander-in-chief of the most progressive movement in Africa - the only movement that give many sleepless nights on plans how to destroy it, irrespective of the massive work it does for the many marginalised South Africans. I greet the commander-in-chief and president of the EFF, Julius Sello Malema ...

*Sepedi:*

...dumela, Moshabi ...

*English:*

... commissars and fighters, South Africans ...

*IsiZulu:*

... sanibonani.

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*English:*

Hon Jane, can you please pay attention? The EFF reject the proposed job budget on Parliament. We reject the budget of Parliament which fails to fulfil its constitutional mandate of representing the interests of our people as well as the interests of the provinces in the national sphere of government. Section 55, subsection 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 stipulates that the role of Parliament is to oversee the activities of government and any organ of state so as to realise a better quality of life for all the people of South Africa. However, Deputy Chairperson, this Parliament has been unable to fulfil this primary responsibility of holding the executive to account for many challenges faced by our people.

Parliament is completely failing to play its oversight role as Members of Parliament have abandoned all senses of accountability. We see it even in the way in which they respond to questions put in this House, whether it is in written or oral form. Their responses have turned into mere administrative duties rather than an act on the matters that are brought to the departments. This Parliament has also demonstrated incapacity and incompetence in resolving many of the crises confronting South Africans and it, along with its

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executive, has been persistent in attempts to avoid genuine accountability and transparency. There exists an absence of standards of accountability in this Parliament, which is why it is failing in its constitutional mandate to hold the executive authority accountable.

Under the leadership of this Parliament, we have seen austerity measures intensified and help to the needy being reversed. Under the leadership of this Parliament, the level of unemployment has increased, the degeneration of the living conditions of South Africans and a massive increase in the cost of living. The dream of quality health care and housing for all, free education and transformation in the corporate sector has dwindled in the insignificance of the altar of the Government of National Unity, GNU, coalition.

Deputy Chairperson, we are also concerned regarding the funding to the Parliamentary Budget Office, PBO. The PBO plays a significant role in assisting committees to understand the budget processes, further assisting Parliament in ensuring that it allocates funds accordingly. But this office is underfunded, and the underfunding of this committee may lead it to being unable to perform its functions diligently.

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The budget of Parliament is at a shortfall of R521 million, which has already clearly affected the work of Parliament and the capacity of committees to execute their jobs. At some point, the executive authority needs to take this House into confidence and explain as to how Parliament came to have its reserve funds being depleted over the years. The shortfall has led to vacancies and unfunded vacancies to the total of 203. This clearly indicates that the skeleton staff that is currently in place will be overworked and miss critical information that can be crucial in holding the executive accountable. This cannot be raised without raising the issue of the six programme managers within the Office of the Secretary to Parliament. What role do these people play? What are their responsibilities and duties? These programme managers or advisers - whatever title they have been given, cost the Parliament R2,2 million, with the already a strained budget for this institution.

As it stands, one of the so-called project managers is appointed as a project manager. Does he have the qualification or the experience to lead such a prestige programme? This is a question that still needs an answer. Committees are also allocated R3 million across this, irrespective of the workload and size. How Parliament arrived at this is also still a

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mystery. Another concern is the mismatching of skills in staff capacity. Now, in as much as it is clear that Parliament needs to follow due processes in enacting legislation, especially when it comes to public hearings and public participation, we are, however, concerned at the amount of time which is often allocated to perform such tasks, as the public is not often given enough time to engage and respond to inputs on Bills.

We are also concerned at the general slow pace of passing of Bills in Parliament. We have time and time again emphasised the importance of strengthening Parliament's internal capacity so as to ensure quality and not quantity in all functions. This legislative body lacks capacity to draft legislation and still does not do this to date. Parliament is still using old apartheid laws and acts which will disadvantage our people. There has been no commitment to make this Parliament a people's Parliament. Its processes remain exclusionary and do not include people in rural areas, like people living in Kuruman, Nquthu, Qumbu, Qwaqwa, Modimolle, and Mogwase. People in Namakwa, Prince Albert, Victoria West, and Makwassie are still excluded.

We once again draw your attention to the deteriorating language service department - a department which has been left

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to collapse. There are still vacancies in this department which have been left vacant for years. Parliament needs to hire more translators in all official languages. We also hope that there will be improvement in feedback to communities after public hearings have been championed. Citizens need to be updated pertaining to what contributions they have made during public hearings, and they need to be consulted again pertaining the final decision taken by committees. This will build trust in Parliament by the citizens. There needs to be consequence management applied especially towards Ministers who do not produce any positive results pertaining to service delivery. It cannot be business as usual when Ministers are given responsibility and their actions do not yield positive results.

Consequence management is commendable but will need strong legal backing. Parliament lacks the power to compel departments to act on its resolutions and recommendations by committees. That has led to hampered effective governance. Should Parliament push for a constitutional amendment to gain enforcement powers, or would that interfere with the separation of powers? That is debatable but should be considered. Parliament needs to relook timeframes that's put forward for public input participation especially when it

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comes to the processes of budget. Money has been spent to transport the dome to Cape Town only for it to be found not user friendly with faulty air conditioning and ablution system that is not maintained.

To date, R8 million has been spent for the installation of a useless dome. At present, the dome is not utilised due to not being stable enough to sustain the Cape Town weather. And the City of Cape Town has produced or has given Parliament a quotation of R3 million to instal a substation. This is when a further R2 million was spent on furniture for the setting that took place between the 10 February 2025 and the 3 April 2025. Parliament is spending more money to waste money. There is no value for money but rather wasteful expenditure. There is not a single goal that has been reached by this fruitless exercise. The only thing that Parliament managed to do is to transport the dome period.

These are but some of the issues and concerns which the EFF has raised in the meetings with the executive authority, but to date we have not seen any changes. As an organisation, the EFF remains the most dependable force for the poor, rejected and forgotten masses of our people and will robustly hold the

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Parliament accountable in both the National Assembly and the NCOP - and legislatures.

I need to respond to the hon Radebe. It is good that people are studying and that Parliament is boosting that they are allowing people to study, but we must not forget till today there are some members whose monies have not been paid to the institution for them to further their studies and they have been left frustrated. On that note, Chairperson, we reject this budget. Thank you.

Mr J H P BRITZ: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon Ministers present, hon members and fellow South Africans, good day. At the conclusion of the sixth administration, there was a considerable trust deficit between Parliament and the residents of South Africa. A year ago, we entered the seventh administration with our work cut out for us. As members of the seventh administration, it is up to us to restore the trust relationship with our citizens. We are judged by our citizens - not by our speeches - but by our conduct. By the way, we got public finances.

In my maiden speech a year ago in the same debate on Parliament's Budget, I reminded members that it can't be

business as usual. The findings of the Zondo Commission made it clear: "state capture was not just a failure of governance, but a failure of parliamentary oversight". We were warned. In the Annual Performance Plan of Parliament, the outcomes of this Parliament are set out to improve Parliament's performance and effectiveness through information and culture optimization to increase government's responsiveness and accountability by strengthening oversight over the executive and impactful lawmaking. These are powerful plans to achieve powerful outcomes.

Some positive actions we witnessed over the past year that contributed to achieving Parliament's goals. As co-chairperson of the Joint Committee on Parliament's Ethics, I look forward to the positive achievement that will be announced by the committee soon. This achievement will be a positive step in decreasing the trust deficit.

Hon members, ethics is not only about declaring interests. It is about holding members accountable to the highest degree of ethical conduct. In this regard, the committee has received a number of complaints against members, and we give the public the assurance that the Ethics Committee, as custodian of the code, objectively enforces the rules of the Code of conduct

without fear, favour, political affiliation or even threats. But the public has also the right to know that members do not indulge themselves in an unacceptable personal conduct. That is why the Joint Ethics Committee is currently embarking on a revision of the code to expand the scope of ethical conduct. Ethics is not a checklist it is a culture.

That brings us to the Budget under discussion. We require that funds allocated to Parliament to fulfil its constitutional obligations in working to achieve their goals are spent prudently. Every cent must be accounted for. The public deserves to know what the salary of the Secretary to Parliament is, by who, and when it was determined. Internal politics in the administration of Parliament do not serve the best interest of either Parliament or the public, and it must be addressed when it raises its ugly head. Where individual officials have been acting in positions since the fifth administration without being permanently appointed, while others are surrounded by special advisers, questions need to be asked, and remedial action needs to be implemented.

An aspect of public interest is the restoration of the Old Assembly and the rebuilding of the National Assembly building. Working of Parliament's 989 committee meetings, 71 public

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hearings, and seven joint sittings over the past year have been disrupted at a cost that is sometimes hard to contemplate. The rebuilding of Parliament deserves - not only the public's attention - but also Parliament's detailed attention. This project has been dragging on for some time and its speedy and effective conclusion will be in the best interest of both Parliament and the public. Yet, four years later, progress remains painfully slow. Members must watch this project with hawk eyes because the public will be watching us.

Hon Legwase, your political rhetoric was misplaced today and your attack on the DA is a stark contradiction of your praises earlier this morning in the Select Committee on Finance when you have praised the Western Cape. But in conclusion, hon Deputy Chairperson, this Budget must enable Parliament to do its job. It must empower oversight, not to protect failure. And above all, it must reflect a return to ethical leadership. Parliament cannot demand integrity from the executive if we do not first demand it from ourselves. Hon members, let us be the Parliament; let us be the National Council of Provinces the people can trust again. I thank you.

*Setswana:*

Rre K M MMOEIEMANG: Motlatsamodulasetilo wa Lekgotla la Bosetšhaba la Diporofense, motl Govender, e re ke tseye tlotlo ya me e tonna ke e lebise go boeteledipele jwa Lekgotla la Bosetšhaba la Diporofense, e e eteletsweng pele ke Mme Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane, a patilwe ke Baduladitilo ba Ntlo ba rona ba babedi ba ba tlotlegang, Rre Radebe le Rre Ryder, ke tlotle gape ...

*English:*

... provincial whips, party whips ...

*Setswana:*

... le Baduladitulo ba dikomiti le maloko a Ntlo eno ...

*English:*

... special delegates ...

*Setswana:*

... baemedi ba Mokgatlo wa Puso Selegae wa Aforika Borwa, Salga, ke re baagi ba Aforika Borwa dumelang.

*English:*

This budget policy debate takes place after one year of the historic 2024 national and provincial elections that have

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ushered in the Government of National Unity, GNU, and just three days before we celebrate the 15th anniversary of Nelson Mandela Day, which is an annual global celebration that takes place on 18 July to honour the life and legacy of our founding father of the Constitution, Rre [Mr] Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Mandela Day was officially declared by the United Nations, UN, in November 2009, with the first UN Mandela Day held on July 18 2010.

Indeed, President Nelson Mandela devoted his life to serving humanity as a human rights lawyer, a prisoner of conscience, an international peacemaker and the first democratically elected President of the free South Africa.

Hon Deputy Chair, I invite you to join the global community in observing Nelson Mandela International Day by making a positive difference in our communities. Everyone, indeed, has the ability and responsibility to make the world a better place.

When former President, Nelson Mandela, bid farewell to Parliament and the people of South Africa on 26 March 1999,

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ahead of the 1999 elections, he told a Joint Sitting of our Parliament:

It is in Parliament that the tools for transforming our society have been created to improve the lives of everyone. It is here that government oversight has been carried out, it is here that our society in all its forms has had a chance to influence policy and its implementation.

Today's debate also takes place just a few days after we converged at Hoërskool Bergvlam in the Mpumalanga province to pay our last respect and honour to the life of the former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa and ANC, Rre David Dabede Mabuza, for his tireless service to our nation and the people of Mpumalanga.

We join our people in mourning and remembering the wonderful memories of the illustrious life he led, and we honour his contribution to our society and in this esteemed House.

Today's debate also occurs at a time when our country continues to face multiple challenges such as persistence of the deepening crisis of new liberal democracy and its

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institutions which keep reinventing and perpetuating the 2008-09 global economic meltdown.

Indeed, our nation is also facing extremely concerning deepening levels of unemployment, poverty and inequalities and the proliferation of national disaster in the form of floods that continue to inflict untold human and socioeconomic miseries on our communities, especially in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones.

While we welcome the detailed plans aimed at addressing accommodation for people displaced by disasters in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, we want to appeal to all the municipalities and government departments and agencies to move with greater speed to assist flood victims to rebuild their lives and ensure that our people are treated with the most deserving dignity in this most difficult time.

Most critically, this budget policy debate takes place in the year that coincides with the 70th anniversary of Freedom Charter, which remains a firm tribute to the valiant people of South Africa whose struggle for liberty and justice has found an echo in every part of the world.

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I, therefore, stand here to join hon Chairperson of the Council, Mme Mtsweni-Tsipane, and my colleague, hon Legwase, Rre Radebe, Rre Ryder, not to engage in debate but to reaffirm the fundamental principles of the Freedom Charter that underpins our democracy.

The people shall govern. This is not just a slogan but a living embracing principle because democracy is meaningless unless it is in the hands of and shaped by the people, especially the poor, the working class and the vulnerable, as the architects of their own future.

We stand here confident that this august House has, over time, through internal arrangements, as articulated in the rules, become a true embodiment of the vision of the Freedom Charter as a decisive expression of the people's will and determination to put our people in the farfront of our democracy and ensure that their voices inspire our pursuit of just, inclusive and equitable country.

It has been and continues to be achieved by ensuring equal voices and participation from all provinces and political parties in the work of councils and its committees, as well as through its public participation framework that provides a

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tangible expression of the people's voice in the legislative processes and other activities of the council and its committees.

Through plenary debates, Ministerial briefing, Local Government Week, the National Council of Provinces Provincial Week, Taking Parliament to the People and the oversight work of select committees, this august House continues to give concrete effect to its distinct constitutional oversight mandate, of which the integration of the system of provincial and local government into the national policy framework is quite critical.

Under the leadership of our esteemed Chair and the presidium and the collective of Chairs, we have reaffirmed these mechanisms in the Seventh democratic Parliament and hit the ground running with the successful 2024 Provincial Week programme, Ministerial briefings on various topical issues of public interest that affect the provinces and hosted the annual addresses of both the President and the Deputy President as one of the key institutional oversight and accountable mechanisms.

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We have observed increased and strong participation from the provinces and local government, which concretely exemplifies the core principles of integrated co-operative governance and the role of our Council in advancing its constitutional mandate of representing the interests of provinces in the national sphere.

The configuration position and role of the Whippery in the National Council of Provinces is distinct from a conventional legislature where its role is a party-political function. In the context of the National Council of Provinces, the Chief Whip is elected by the House and the provincial Whips are designated by their provincial Premiers as heads of delegation in the absence of a designated special delegate. This arrangement was consciously chosen to give rise to the dual functioning of the Whippery. This is to give voice to the minority parties.

Also in line with the Constitution, we have a party-political Whips who constitute the National Council of Provinces Whips Forum. At the core of the function of the Whips Forum of the National Council of Provinces is to give effect to the constitutional imperative of ensuring effective participation of provinces and political parties in the shaping of the

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agenda and business of the House in support of the presiding officers.

We stand here inspired by the fact that despite the diverse composition of the Whips Forum, its functioning and decision-making have and continue to be driven by persuasion, consensus, compromises, rather than a blind majority.

The magnitude and urgency of the strategic task of the Whippery in the National Council of Provinces require deliberate and dedicated administrative and logistical support.

We, therefore, participate in this debate to reiterate our humble call for the appointment of administrative support staff to the Whips and the provision of necessary tools of trade as well as capacity building and training. This has been a clarion call by the Whippery. I can see hon Mokwele is smiling.

The provincial Whips are the forefront of the interface between this august House and the provincial legislatures and executive. This demands a dedicated support to enable them to perform their constitutional duties diligently and

effectively. The Whips cannot be the vanguard of the provincial interest and build a strong link between our Council, the provinces and organised local government if they are not sufficiently resourced.

Engaging in this budget policy debate without touching on the critical fault lines and weaknesses in our work will be an omission, for which history will not forgive us.

Whilst we take pride in the success of the past, we must also identify key weaknesses in our work and determine how to address them in the future.

What stands out in this regard are two interrelated questions: The facilitation of public involvement in the legislative process, which the hon Legwase has touched upon, and critical appraisal of our role in section 139 interventions of the provincial government in local government administration.

The role of the National Council of Provinces in facilitating public involvement in section 76 ... [Inaudible.] ... has been a focus of considerable attention by the Constitutional Court, ConCourt, most recently in the 2024 Mogale case, but also the fact that the Expropriation Act has been taken on review on

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the basis of public involvement and also the mandating procedure. Indeed, this needs serious attention.

The issue of urgently addressing the inadequacies in our public participation and involvement process require urgent attention so that we are not found wanting in the future. It is my humble submission in this budget policy debate that we must dedicate the whole day to this critical question in the form of workshops to determine the fault lines in our approach based on the case law review of our current public participation model and mapped out an integrated blueprint for the future in the Seventh Administration.

Without pre-empting the outcome of the workshop, a new blueprint, I submit that the presiding officers and the Whipery, in collaboration with their counterparts in the provinces, should be at the farfront of political coordination for public involvement projects in the legislative process. This will go a long way in ensuring that uniformity and strategic cohesion among the provinces. There is a mistake by one province in public participation can render the entire piece of legislation null and void if challenged in the ConCourt.

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Through various interactions with organised local government during Local Government Week, we have observed that the current framework of intervention in municipalities does not yield the intended results. According to the President of Salga some municipalities, where interventions were implemented, have emerged in worst conditions than before and some interventions have taken longer than expected without producing intended results of improving governance and management challenges in these municipalities.

This requires a deliberate diagnosis to determine whether the fault lines lie serving as the basis for reviewing our approach to this critical constitutional function.

Strengthening municipalities as the sphere of government at the coalface of service delivery and development is at the core of section 139.

Among the critical challenges, we must accurately identify whether there are integrated early warning mechanism by the Provincial Treasury and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, CoGTA, to detect early signs of decay in municipal governance and financial administration as a basis for stepping up early interventions in terms of section 154 of the Constitution, as it has been raised by hon Legwase.

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It is my submission that this Act requires a serious and honest reimagining by this august body in terms of how do we give support in terms of section 154, including an assessment of the efficacy and effectiveness of the support provided by provincial and national government to local government.

In conclusion, hon Chairperson, through you Deputy Chair, allow me in my capacity as the Chief Whip to express my singular appreciation to the hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, the presidium, the Whippery, the Chairs Forum, of their support and hard work and the spirit of co-operation displayed by the provincial Whips and party Whips in the work of the Whippery.

It is only when we walk together that we will inspire national pride and confidence in our Parliament and the critical role of the NCOP in our democratic dispensation.

We must work tirelessly and with profound dedication to ensure that the makeup of this Parliament reflects the fact that the people of South Africa have spoken in all their diversity, affirming the strength of our unity in diversity.

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Of course, it is important ... just to touch on those parties that have voiced their rejection of the budget. I think it is important just to say that among the issues that they are raising, of the reasons for not supporting the budget is the issue of inefficiency, but paying closer scrutiny to this issue of inefficiency, the issue of advisers. To me it sounds like an assertion of a self-referential, narcissistic and disconnected from reality of the support that this Parliament gives to its members. Their reasons for not supporting the budget are nothing short of tragic comic.

Unfortunately, some of them are part of the left, but of course, not appreciating the fact that their divisive tendencies of the working-class base, it has ... they have become useful idiots of the right. What the right could not achieve by bringing the illustrious heroic liberation movement below 50 through their ego, the right has conquered.

Let me remind them ... let me remind them that Madam Zille has melt their ego and she is exploiting it with surgical precision.

Hon Deputy Chair, I think it is important just to characterize them because some of this formation ... to us they are a

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WhatsApp left formation, teacher formation that spring up and see itself as the messianic torchbearer of revolution. But none of them can mobilise a street vendor or a retrenched minor. They are not vanguards, they are egocentric mistaking pamphlets for power and twitter threats for theory.

Modulasetilo [Chairperson], May God protect our people.

*Nkosi sikelela i-Afrika.*

*Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso.*

*God seën Suid-Afrika.*

*God bless South Africa.*

*Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika Tshipembe.*

*Hosi katekisa Afrika.*

I support the budget vote, hon Deputy Chair. I thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon delegates, once again, we want to take this opportunity and thank all the members who participated in this important debate that we had today, which speaks to the core business of the institution, which is embedded at the heart of our citizens because us seated here, we're not representing our jackets, but we are the voice of reason for the communities of South Africa. We want to take this opportunity and appreciate the inputs made by the members

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in this debate, acknowledging the spirit of cooperation that was quite audible for all to see. Members were categorically in affirming the importance and the distinct role of this House and Parliament in general.

The public should be pleased, having listened and following on this debate through various platforms in the mainstream, the social and other forms of media clearly pronounced was a thinking together of ways and means. We can create new possibilities of Parliament in becoming more effective, responsive, accountable and relevant to the interest and the pressing needs of our people in reflecting on the matters that were before us today through this debate three components, if not four issues, came to the four which forms the basis and the core business of this institution which is around oversight. There was a common ideology and the arguments and seamless articulations around that matter and the issue of public participation, the institutional reflect effectiveness as well as, lastly, on the issues of governance. So, I have decided to sum up the issues because they are more or less interrelated in nature.

With regards to the oversight, hon delegates, our response to that is that our oversight will have to be strength so that we

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support our local government as the sphere of government that is at the coal phase of service delivery, noting the comments particularly that were made by His Excellency, our President, Cyril Ramaphosa, in his state of the nation address earlier this this year in relation to updating the White Paper on local government to outline a modern fit for purpose local government system and also to review the funding model as many municipalities do not have a viable and sustainable revenue base which was affectionately raised by the Deputy Speaker as well of Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, and also ensuring the involvement of traditional leaders in the implementation of local government programmes.

On the State Capture Commission report, matters that the members raised for consideration in the strengthening of parliamentary oversight. Our interventions are taking the reflection of the Commission into account. Indeed, we agree hon delegates with the need to continuously strengthen oversight and ensure that there are consequences for wrongdoing. However, rejecting this budget will make it difficult for us to achieve this and other priorities. Parliament should also use its constitutional powers to intervene in poor service deliveries and ensure transformation and the improvement of quality of life.

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On public participation, hon delegate that remains a key component for successful development of legislation. The collaborations with various organized groupings and civil society provides the basis for cooperative governance as a public hearing providing platforms for participation. This 7th Parliament seeks to improve access for the public to participate in the work of Parliament including public hearings and online petitions, where Parliament can follow up on citizens' concerns and poor service delivery from the executive, and that has been eloquently captured by hon Mokae. We believe that this and other interventions will improve citizens trust in Parliament.

In so far as the institutional effectiveness is concerned, in the same way, hon delegates that we seek government responsiveness. We must equally improve responsiveness of Parliament's administration. Parliament can only become effective and efficient with the support of the professional administration, which is focused on operational excellence. It is important to note that the legislation and oversight programmes is proposed for allocation of more than 100% of the requested operational budget. This is in recognition of the fact that support to core business is vital to the effectiveness of Parliament. Each parliamentary committee is

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supported by professional personnel in various disciplines, including content advice, legal advice and many more, and I want to indicate to this House as a heard hon Badenhorst that his reason for not adopting the budget is that this budget is going to fund positions that are not there, which is not the case. What we can affirm to this House is that already, 35 posts have already been approved in this current financial year to be filled, particularly to support the committee work that members are engaged on day-to-day issues. So, I do have a breakdown, but due to the time I'm unable to do that. But basically, that's what would be happening.

In so far as research, already about 13 posts were approved to be filled as well. Some of them, they are already being filled. So, we are in the process of making sure that members work is being made with ease in so far as that is concerned.

As I conclude, hon members, I think we must support the development of policy governing parliamentary diplomacy that is very crucial, hon Radebe. It's important that members do not diverge from our official policy position, however ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Chair, your time.

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The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Okay. Thank you very much hon Deputy Chairperson and thank you very much for steering the ship. Thanks.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender) Hon delegates, I'd like to thank the hon Chairperson for the presentation in the budget debate. I'd like also to thank all the hon members that participated in this debate and also thank the Deputy Speaker of Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature. Chairperson, thank you very much for your inputs and your summing up of this debate.

Debate concluded.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

(Policy debate)

Debate on Budget Vote No 37: Sport, Arts and Culture:

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ART AND CULTURE: Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Mtshweni-Tsipane, Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, hon Peace Mabe, Ministers and other Deputy Ministers here present, Chairperson of the Select Committee on

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Education, Sciences and Creative Industries, hon Feni, hon members, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, DSAC team led by Acting Director-General, Dr Khumalo, distinguished guests, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen.

It's been a year since my first budget to Parliament, having been given a chance by His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa to make me part of this Cabinet. In that action, he showed that second chances matter not by words but by deeds. It was a great risk President Ramaphosa took to appoint me as a Minister. I hope this act will inspire people who have been in conflict with the law at a young age, like me to reach for second chances and that we will give them those second chances as a society.

This is why to invest in all our talents, both in sport and arts and culture, as well as preserving our heritage, the department has a budget of R6,3 billion for the 2025-26 financial year. Under Programme 2, Recreation Development and Sport Promotion, we are allocating R1,2 billion. Under Programme 3, Arts and Culture Promotion and Development we are allocating R1,7 billion. Under Programme 4, Heritage Promotion and Preservation, we have allocated R2,787 billion which includes an amount of R1,6 billion for the building,

maintenance, upgrading and operation of our much-valued libraries.

To keep supporting sport in our country, we will be allocating R98,5 million towards federation support. One of the biggest changing changes coming for our federations will be the provision of an office building for them to share. Hon members, if you look at our sports team on the field, you will be shocked to know that some of the federations do not have offices. Some of the federations are operating out of a boot of a car and we are changing that as the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. We will do the same thing for our cultural and creative clusters.

We are also finalising the process of funding Video Assistant Referring, VAR to ensure that football matches from the Premier Soccer League through to the international features we host are fairer and meet global standards. It is a necessity. We see stadiums vandalised when bad refereeing happens. The success of teams like Mamelodi Sundowns make global teams want to come and play here, but they get second thoughts because we don't have VAR.

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Since we last stood here and share our vision for Team South Africa, the early games in 2028, the draft document on Project 350 has been developed. The roles of provinces and federations are also being determined so that we can send as many athletes as possible to the next Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Late last year, we travelled to the Olympic House in Switzerland to register our interest in hosting Summer Olympic Games in South Africa in 2036. We have already engaged the Cabinet clusters and South Africa is well positioned to become the first African country to host the Olympics in nearly a century and a half. We count on the support of all South Africans to make this dream a reality.

Many laughed when I uttered the words Formula 1 must come back to South Africa. One man who didn't laugh was a gentleman called Toby Venter, the owner of the Kyalami racetrack. When I told him government doesn't have the money to host Formula 1 because of more other urgent priorities, and we would not be in a position to help him pay for the track to reach F1 standards. As the owner of the track, he said it would be his patriotic duty to do that himself.

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Today, the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile, FIA, which is the FIFA of motorsport has given the green light for the upgrading of this track. We have had multiple meetings with the management of F1, with the most crucial one happening in two weeks. To those who say the country cannot afford to host the F1, I am saying the country cannot afford not to.

When you set the bar high for a country as we have in the past, you can't afford to take the bar back down. We hosted the best FIFA World Cup in the world. We put our country on the map for big events, and we should not turn back now. What will be different this time though, is that government will not be expected to pay for the Formula One.

Companies like MTN, MultiChoice, Heineken and many more have raised their hands, and they said, here we are, send us. Those who are saying Formula 1 is not important should consider all the countries who are holding on to the F1 spots on the calendar. They see the value in it, and it cannot be called a world championship if it misses an entire continent, Sub Saharan African in particular.

While on the topic of motorsport, I want to thank everyone one who has joined us in our mission to grow the sport of

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spinning. I want to thank Red Bull and Cell C, in particular. People who were laughing when we said we are going to make spinning big, but already this sport has left the townships. People like Sam Sam is vowing the likes of metaphors open with his skills in Austria.

We are also keenly exploring the potential of bringing Liv Golf event to South Africa as early as next year, especially given the platform that this exciting new tournament format also gives to performing artists on world-class stages. After the golf clubs have been put back in the bags.

We have had no massive golf tournament except for a very good Nedbank Golf Challenge. Golf has not unfortunately broken through to the masses. It's still a rich man's sport though, and we hope to achieve that with Liv Golf. It's not only golf, its culture.

We hope to eclipse Australia's attendance of more than one hundred thousand people at a single event over three days. As part of investing and cultivating our domestic talent, during the 2025-26 financial year, the department has allocated a total of more than R627 million through the conditional grant to support amongst many things, equipment and attire for

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schools, clubs and hubs, the training of people through coaching, technical officiating at administration courses and employment.

Thousands of schools participated in the school sport programme and the National School Sports Championship, while hundreds of community leagues are supported through grant funding. You cannot be competitive at Olympics and elsewhere if school sport is not working.

I want to thank companies like First National Bank, FNB who are about to put major investments into school sport for boosting league competitions. Through their Municipal Infrastructure Grant, MIG funding, we have approved 52 municipalities to implement 52 infrastructure projects with a budget of R452 million. A further R111 million has been committed towards constructing a 70 outdoor gyms and 30 combination courts, particularly in rural areas.

Since introducing the ring-fenced MIG for sport infrastructure, there has been a welcome increase in the supply of sports facilities. Hon Chair, I just want to pause here and say that no more shall money that is meant for upgrading sports be used by municipalities to pay salaries and

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for things that's unrelated to sport. Gone are those days. We are fixing.

We recommend in this House that the provinces should develop clear guidelines in collaboration with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Cogta and provincial confederations to establish legitimate local sports councils. We also intend to engage Cogta to change the MIG conditional framework or policy to allow investments in schools from 2026 to 2027.

During the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF the mass participation grant increased over the three years from R627 million in 2025-26 to R656 million in 2026-27 and it will reach R685,7 million in 2027-28. We will continue to need the provinces to help us make this a huge success.

This year we shall continue to repatriate the human remains of freedom fighters who fell outside the country during the struggle. Our heroes who fought for us like Duma Nokwe, Basil February, Todd Matshikiza, and Florence Mophosho have been brought home. But there are thousands more we need to fetch, and I am intending to fetch all of them during my term and asking Cabinet to assist with that further.

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Heading into the current financial year, our technical team is expanding its focus to Angola and Lesotho while we continue our work in Zambia and Zimbabwe. We have those that ask us how much it costs to bring back these heroes. My answer to them is very simple. They have already paid the ultimate price. They paid with their lives. We are also leading negotiations with Scottish authorities to repatriate the remains of our Khoi and San forebears from the University of Glasgow, Hunterian Museum by September 2025.

Chairperson, I want to thank the Hunterian Board for agreeing yesterday to the repatriation and not making this matter a fight between us and them. They are bringing the remains of the Khoi and San back with immediate effect. We are going to fetch our leaders.

We shall soon conclude the reburial of 58 ancestral remains from the Northern Cape in partnership with the Nama, Griqua and Korana and San communities. Last month, under the theme *Reimagining South African heritage for a new era*, we started the important process of seeing our museums entering the digital age.

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Hon Chairperson, our museums are old, they never changed young people are not interested in them. We are changing our museums and making them more interesting and bring them up to world standards. We have started with Robben Island. Robben Island is closed as we speak. We are fixing Robben Island. Robben Island will be unrecognisable in its defects. It will be brand new when we open it in the next month or so.

One of the first projects, as I said, is Robben Island. We are also fixing the transport challenges. The adjudication of the MGE open call has been completed and all 152 successful applicants have received their grant letters and now need to move quickly to submit their compliance documents.

I want to assure this House that what is different this time with people getting money from government is in three days we shall make available the names publicly of the companies that have won money. We are done with this secret thing where people continuously year after year and they don't deliver. So, in three days we shall be making public all the people that are getting money from the department.

The department has received R350 million from the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme and to entities have been

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earmarked to implement this. The National Film and Video Foundation, NFVF and the National Arts Council. We also want to be clear and say that government has been giving billions to the NFVF but there's not one blockbuster that has happened because we are trying to tell American stories better than Americans, while we have our own homegrown stories here screaming to be told about our heroes and our stories.

We will continue to create infrastructure and access to creatives. Construction is starting in partnership with provincial departments. We are bringing to life the Bakwena Arts Centre in North West, the Darling Intercultural Hub in the Western Cape, the Port St Johns Arts Centre and the Peddie Arts Centre in the Eastern Cape. I can mention many that we are busy with. It's a very busy time. We are the Ministry of making things happen.

Construction on the new Polokwane Theatre is progressing well having now reached the midway point. In support of the preservation of the Khoi and San language, we have set aside R2 million for that.

Before I conclude, I want to answer the million-dollar question everybody keeps on asking me. Are we going to

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financially compensate the people who have been winning at everything? The answer is unfortunately no, because if we give our many stars those bonuses, they will bankrupt the state with the way that they are just winning at everything. We are winning everything.

Hon Chair, I want to share something with the House today. You know, I can't find no better way to say this, but we live in a great country. South Africa is a great country, and I am not just saying this. I have had the opportunity to be in business, I have had the opportunity to be in Parliament, and I have observed for a year. We are the lawmakers.

This country is a beautiful country. We should not make our differences make us destroy this country. The people have voted for all of us here and we should make sure that petty differences does not make us lose our country. I want to speak. Being in opposition doesn't always mean you have to disagree and being in government doesn't mean you should behave like an opposition. You have to choose a side. We can't be together in government sometimes and you are fighting us more than the opposition is fighting us, but you are with us in the government. It can't happen.

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We see nobody speaks about it, but somebody needs to say it. I was asked, why don't you attack President Ramaphosa more frequently? I said when he called me, he asked me do you want to be part of my government? I said yes, if you want me to attack him more frequently, I should have said no, I want to remain outside so I can attack you more.

Where we see mistakes, we are not quiet, we fix this thing as government, we are sitting in Cabinet, and we are fixing those things. Just because you don't hear us doesn't mean we agree with everything. But you can't be with us, and we don't know where you're going to vote for our budget. We know MK is not going to vote, we know the EFF is not going to vote, but some of us don't know if the DA is not going to vote. You guys need to really behave better as the DA.

This is a great country. You can't behave like that. It is wrong. You hold us ransom every time. I have come to the stage where I am really tired of this ransomness that we don't know where we stand. Lastly, that's what you think of coloured people that they get bought by R100, you'll never say that about a white person.

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Yes. I would like to leave you with a poem for all the people that laughed. Chairperson, can you protect me against this white man here?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Please give the speaker on the podium a chance.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Hon Chair, right on the back of our book, there's a phrase that is not allowed here. He cannot call me a white man because I can do the opposite and then I will not be allowed in this House.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): What can he not call you? I did not hear that part.

Mr F J BADENHORST: The Minister just said can this white man keep quiet here. I'm a Member of Parliament. He can say hon Badenhorst. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Alright, thank you for your point of order. Hon Ceza, hon Ceza, please keep your posture. Hon Badenhorst, hon Badenhorst, will you please keep your posture. I think saying someone is white is not an insult. It's not an insult, but what I would like the House to

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observe is that we must have some sort of a restraint when speaking with each other. So, the point of order is not sustained. You can continue.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ART AND CULTURE: I just want to add something, Chair. He has blatantly just accused me of bribing somebody and he is accusing me of a crime. Yes, the lady you're talking about, her son has died. That's why I just think you better lower your voice.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Badenhorst, hon Badenhorst, you cannot have a commentary with the Minister, please. If you have anything to say, raise your hand and have a point of order, please. I think that gesture is also unparliamentary. We know very well. Rule 61.8, we cannot be offensive in this House. Offences can come in the form of language or in the form of gesture. So, I think that we must have restraint here in this House. Over to you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ART AND CULTURE: For the people that love South Africa, I can see you are trying, so I want to leave you today with a poem, one of my favourite poems.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Badenhorst, I think you are overstepping now because I have made some sort of a ruling around that. You are overstepping hon Badenhorst. I think I am naming you now. If you will be having that ... [Inaudible.] ... further, then I will request the usher of the Black Rod to usher you out. Over to you Minister.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ART AND CULTURE: I would just like to leave the hon members with this poem when you feel you meet people that don't share your values and what you're trying to achieve. It's a poem called *The Victor* by C W Long Necker, which must reminds us what we do in this department in the Government of National Unity. It goes like this.

If you think you are beaten, you are. If you think you dare not, you don't. If you like to win but think you can't it's almost a clinch you won't. If you think you lose, you've lost. For out in the world, we find success begins with a fellows will Is all in the state of mind. If you think you are outclassed, you are. You've got to think high to rise. You've got to be sure of yourself before you can ever win the prize. Life's battles don't always go to a stronger or faster man, but sooner or later the man who wins is the man who thinks he can.

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Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Mr M FENI: Hon House Chair, let me take this opportunity to greet you, but first and foremost, let me extend my greetings to the only real Commander in Chief, CIC, not the fake chief commander, hon President of this country, with a clear mandate of being a chief in command.

Hon Minister, I think it is important to celebrate our victory as a nation. When we stand together and united, that was some of the fruits of our unity when we were behind our national team this weekend. You have done a very good job in leading the nation in that one, and that is why our team has managed to perform to that level.

Let me also greet the hon Chairperson of the NCOP, the Chief Whip of the NCOP, hon members of this august House, Premiers, MECs, the SA Local Government Association, Salga, delegation, Ministers in our midst, and the Deputy Minister that is always with us as a select committee, our rock. We cannot downplay your presence amongst us. We appreciate your guidance and presence. Patriots and fellow South Africans, I greet you all.

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It is important to do what all the other speakers have done because we have lost a son of the soil that has been in this Parliament and served the people of this country with distinction. After his send off, we continue to celebrate his life, our former Deputy President Mr D D Mabuza.

There is nothing that we can say less in supporting this Budget Vote. It is very important to note that there will be those who consistently bicker and always try to find something even if there is nothing. We must not bother ourselves. We must move forward, and they will realise at a later stage that they have wasted time and mandate given by the citizens to participate in a democratic process.

It is so unfortunate that we are making allegations to some of them to be on the left side even though they do not know where they are standing. Hon Chief Whip, I do not agree with you, the people's camp is always the progressive camp. Therefore, if you are not there, you are reactionary. There is nothing that we can say about you in understanding what is left.

*IsiXhosa:*

Mphathiswa ohloniphekileyo, akukhonto sinokuyenza ngabantu bakaBaba. Uyayazi ukuba ithetha ukuthini loo nto.

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*English:*

So, do not bother yourself ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... ngabantu bakaBaba.

*English:*

They will have to consult Baba and then they will be told what to do.

This debate takes place as we are celebrating the seventieth year of the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter is the culmination of the dialogue of the people of this country, regardless of race or class. It culminated to the very progressive document called the Freedom Charter with progressive clauses which were beginning to shape and determine how the future of this country will be.

One of those that I will be concentrating unto is the clause that talks about what we are dealing with today, the doors of learning and culture, more specifically culture. The culture that we have was forced to inculcate us and it does not belong to us. It was meant to destroy us, make us uncultured and not be the people we want to be.

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As correctly said, it identified crimes of whites that caused damage to the development of South Africa in the fields of both learning and culture but further mandated the democratic government of the ANC to discover. It then gave a mandate to the ANC to discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life. As a result, here in this country, that call was responded to by Inkosi Rolihlahla Mandela, uDalibhunga.

When he took the reigns as the President of this country, he also looked at ways to practicalise culture. He approached one of the designers and creative artist by the name of Mr Sonwabile Ndamase. That is why today we are wearing the Madiba shirt. I think the Minister must also be introduced to the Madiba shirt because it is the product of our local art. When we talk about talent and our culture as South Africans, we can see the President of this country wearing very beautiful shirts. Those are called Madiba shirts. Minister, you must continue with the legacy of Madiba, and I can see that you are eager to do that.

When Mr Sonwabile Ndamase sat with our former President, Mandela said that he wanted to wear something conservative enough for him to go to address the captains of the industry

and address the masses without having to change. It was his simplicity of acknowledging talent and how one can begin to practicalise the question of uniting cultures.

I think it is important for me to start from the beginning by highlighting that according to the first quarter report of 2025 Statistics SA, unemployment in this country is sitting at 32,9% and 43,1% by extended definition, which includes discouraged citizens who have given up on looking for work. This is an anomaly that should keep all of us awake at night and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

One of the areas that we have not deeply debated about as a country is the potential expansion of our creatives economy in producing large-scale employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. According to the United Nations Trade and Development Agency, in 2022 the global exports of the creatives industry services were sitting at 24,8 trillion, while creatives goods constituted 12,7 trillion.

In recognising the great potential of the arts and creatives in contributing to tourism and employment for small-scale entrepreneurs, the 55th ANC conference took a resolution that strategic funding for local artists and projects which

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transcends social national boundaries must be established by government. As a result, Mzansi Golden Economy job creation initiatives within the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture does exactly that.

This programme targets the creation of work opportunities through the creative sector stimulus. As the Select Committee on Education, Sciences and Creative Industries we support this initiative. We are satisfied that this initiative has the highest allocation in Programme 3, receiving R626 million, which is 36% of the total budget of the programme.

These funds will be channelled to create 10 000 job opportunities in the cultural and creative industry sector by March 2026 through its work stream and cultural development programmes. This will complement the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme, which created thousands of jobs in the sixth administration.

As the committee, it is our role to hold the department accountable in ensuring that there is transparency in the funding of creative projects and that every cent invested is accounted for - no manga manga business.

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I would like to further reflect on how the support for the creatives has enabled for export development as well as local and international market access. The research is speaking for itself in the South African Cultural Observatory area access. In 2020, total gross value added to the South African economy by the cultural and creative industry was R161 billion, representing just under 3% of South Africa's total economic production, making the sector the same size as agriculture.

In 2020, South Africa's agricultural goods exports were around \$360 million, which amounted to R5,6 billion, which made up of 0,3%. This tells us that if we can put more effort and more energies in following the monies that we are putting in the budget as we are currently doing, our concentration will not be narrowed. For the question of economic recovery, creative arts and culture have a stake to contribute unto. It is therefore a call, hon Minister, to ensure that our support is not a meaningless, but we see a vast contribution of the Department of Sport to different sectors of this economy.

The Black Industrialist Programme is an attempt by the state to resource and fast-track South Africa's industrialisation of black-owned and managed enterprises. We call on the Black Industrialist Programme to extend to the creative industry to

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increase ownership and control by black people, including women, youth and sponsorship.

I was not happy when I saw our women playing on the weekend. I must make this clarion call to women themselves. You must not leave struggles to men because once these men begin to take control, you are not going to have anyone to support you. The stadium was empty. They were not supported, and their performance was not expected because they saw that they were alone. However, look at what happened when the men were playing, the stadium was full.

Hon Minister and Deputy Minister, I challenge you once again, that must not happen again. Hon Minister, the people of Kariega and the people of Zwide Dan Qeqe Stadium were waiting for you as we asked them to go and see how we can ensure that we preserve what was left and what is left. Unfortunately, you couldn't keep that promise, but I know you will come back with your energy. Hon Minister, please do come back and ensure that we make these promises a reality.

The ANC, in a nutshell, is supporting this budget and further saying that we must not waste our time with people who do not know what they want to do. We cannot begin to do that ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): On that note, your time has expired.

Mr M FENI: But I'm still left with six seconds. Thank you very much, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Peters and hon Feni, you'll have your own toenadering after the meeting. The next speaker on the podium is hon Adriaanse from the North West. Over to you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): On that note, your time has expired.

Mr M FENI: I'm left with six seconds. Thank you very much, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, hon chairperson and the Minister. You will have a lot of ... [Inaudible.] ... outside of this meeting. Hon Peter and hon Feni, you'll have your own toenadering [approach] after the meeting. The next speaker at the podium is hon Adriaanse from the North West. Over to you.

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Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, the mission of this department should be the foundation of our rainbow nation. It is:

To provide an enabling environment for the sport, recreation, arts, culture and heritage sector to drive an active, creative, winning, socially cohesive and unified nation.

Nothing unites us like sport, music, film and art. From the Springboks' unforgettable victories to Tyla's Grammy win, Charlize Theron's Oscar and Trevor Noah's global influence, these moments don't just entertain us. They inspire us, they affirm our identity and they hold this fractured nation together.

And yet, I rise today not only in celebration, but in warning, because the very people who bring this sector to life – the artists, musicians, film-makers, sportswomen and men, writers – remain unprotected, exposed, exploited.

The creative industries have immense, untapped economic power, especially in rural and township communities, but their future

is under threat, not only from underfunding and a lack of resources, but artificial intelligence, AI.

Let me paint you a picture. A South African TV show goes viral. It looks authentic, with flawless visuals, compelling characters. The lead actor? A digital ... [Inaudible.] ... of Riaan Cruywagen and Minister McKenzie's faces speaking with Trevor Noah's voice. It's believable, it's popular, but here's the catch. No contract, no permission, no payment and no specific law was broken. Why? It's because South Africa has no specific legislation regulating AI-generated content.

This is not science fiction. This is already happening. In the age of AI, your face, your voice, your body, in short your likeness, can be cloned, sold, manipulated. You don't own your likeness anymore and you have no sufficient legal recourse.

The Cybercrimes Act of 2021 criminalises deep fake pornography, but it says nothing about political impersonation, commercial mimicry or reputational sabotage.

While the rest of the world races to regulate AI, our artists are being cloned, replaced and erased from their own careers,

public figures are being misrepresented, and ordinary South Africans are next.

So, I have to ask, how truly serious are we about job creation and sustainable livelihoods in this sector? Where is the legal reform? Where is the funding to protect human creativity? Will this budget address these threats which are just as serious as data management, cyber- and copyright risks? Or will they be forgotten once again, despite being raised before?

Remember, this is not only about our artists. This is about all of us, every member sitting here. Without swift legal reform, a South African likeness could be used to spread disinformation, words you never said, messages you never endorsed. It is a threat to privacy, to livelihoods and to our democracy.

We therefore call for urgent reforms, including a statutory right of publicity to legally protect a person's image, voice and likeness, the criminalisation of deep fake identity theft, dedicated funding for AI detection and take-down tools.

A digital rights enforcement unit within the National Prosecuting Authority recognising image ownership in law will

not only protect artists, but it will attract investment, professionalise the creative sector and unlock new job markets, especially in underserved rural areas where talent and creativity are overflowing. I stand here today for those whose stories, bodies and voices shape our national identity, but who are gradually being silenced by technology and ignored by policy.

Creativity is not a luxury. It's a driver of economic growth, dignity and national unity. Digital culture is culture. If we fail to protect it now, we risk losing control of our narrative, our economy, our opportunities and our democracy.

So, yes, let us fund more infrastructure, let us promote inclusivity and access, but let us also show leadership. Let us act with the same boldness as Denmark, which now uses its copyright law to protect human likeness and dignity in the AI age.

South Africa doesn't need more slogans. We don't need more Facebook posts and TikTok performances. We need legislation, we need urgency and we need to get the job done now.

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Mr M KHAWULA (KwaZulu-Natal): Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, my colleagues, the MECs, and hon members, on behalf of the province of KwaZulu-Natal I stand before you today with renewed hope, driven by a common purpose to change lives, to uplift communities and to unlock the full potential of our people through sports, arts, culture and heritage. We in KwaZulu-Natal are not just dreaming of a better future, we are building it deliberately, systematically and strategically.

As the Government of Provincial Unity, GPU, we have embraced the bold task of transformation with both hands. In KwaZulu-Natal, change is not an event, it is a process anchored in a structured and strategic talent identification, development and progression model that starts at grassroots level and grows into the podium of glory. KwaZulu-Natal continues to cement itself as Africa's playground, and over the past few months we have shown one and all that we are the best hosts in impacting positively to the mood of the country.

To name but a few, we hosted the Soweto Derby in the Nedbank Knockout final. We are the home of the annual Comrades Marathon and the annual Durban July. Over the past weekend we hosted all provinces in the National School Sport Winter

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Championships, which ended in Durban yesterday, with the Western Cape scoring overall gold and KwaZulu-Natal the overall silver. During the upcoming weekend, we are looking forward to hosting an exciting Dundee July traditional horse racing event in uMzinyathi District on 19 July. At the end of the month, we will be hosting KwaZulu-Natal, KZN Premier's Cup, which features a six KwaZulu-Natal teams playing in the Betway Premiership and the National First Division, NFD. This is a preseason tournament that allows our teams to prepare for the start of the new season.

The Telcom Netball League, TNL, is currently taking place in Durban at the International Convention Centre, ICC, which started yesterday, concluding on Sunday. In that vein, I would like to congratulate Durban City for the promotion to the Betway Premiership and Midlands Wanderers for earning themselves a spot in the NFD from the ABC Motsepe Foundation Championship. Our strategy is grounded as it is ambitious. We have adopted the pyramid model of development where the base is mass participation, and the apex is elite excellence.

Through our district-focused operations, we are planting seeds of potential at ward level and nurturing them all the way to national and international stages. Our 12 departmental district units are the heartbeat of this machine, re-energised

with both human and financial muscle. To this end, we will deploy sport mentors and art mentors, working hand in glove with district officials and community stakeholders. The department in the province enjoys a good, fruitful and lively partnership with provincial federations, provincial sports confederation and the provincial cultural and creative industry in all these programmes. These mentors are not just guides they are the guardians of talent and architects of the future.

In March this year we launched our flagship campaign dubbed #Isukile KZN which seeks to ignite townships, cities and deep rural communities all as part of a relentless effort to get KwaZulu-Natal playing, singing, dancing and rhyming again. Isukile KZN is structured to target talented grassroots utilising our mentors and district officials to identify those raw skills and usher them into formal structures of progression. Isukile KZN is our province's flagship movement to mobilise communities into action physically, culturally and socially. For the 2025-26 financial year, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sport, Arts and Culture has an allocation of about R1,5 billion to ensure that our programmes are not just aspirational but operational.

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This is inclusive of grant funding and equitable share. R402 million has been ring-fenced for sports and recreation, R364 million for arts and cultural affairs, R496 million for library and archives services, and R186 million for critical infrastructure development. Of course, this is not enough but we make do with what is available to us at a time and ensure good use of it. At the heart of our approach as the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is a deliberate structured talent identification development progression strategy. Our pyramid model begins at our wards, moves through districts and culminates on national and global stages.

We are employing dedicated sport and arts mentors who, in partnership with our district teams, federations and the Cultural and Creative Industries, CCI, will drive this agenda from the ground up. These mentors are not just coaches and guides; they are talent shepherds walking with our youth from first contact to final achievement. With R447 000 per district across the 12 departmental districts, we are injecting capital directly into communities, supporting local artists, athletes and creative entrepreneurs. But more than the money. Isukile is a movement of hope. It promotes healthy lifestyles, reawakens cultural pride and restore social bonds fractured by

unemployment, crime and marginalisation. We are building platforms.

Our mission is not only to develop talent, but to ensure it feeds families, builds careers and fuels the economy. The buzzword is monetisation. No longer should our sports, arts, culture and heritage sectors be viewed as charitable pursuits. They are industries and we are building them as such. We are building platforms where artists and athletes compete for livelihoods and heritage sites generate tourism income. Our partnership with the Moses Kotane Institute is helping us to quantify the economic value of these sectors. For example, the Dundee July alone contributed over R96 million to the economy of uMzinyathi District in 2024-25. The potential of a fully formalised equine industry stands at R2 billion in GDP impact and over 40 000 thousand jobs.

These are the opportunities we seek to harness fully, and we will be looking for partnership with the national department and private sector, and Minister, we have invited the Minister and Deputy Minister on Saturday, and I hope you will be there. From kickstart fields and community art centres to minor sports facilities and libraries, our infrastructure programmes ensure that no child must travel far to dream big. Part of our

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infrastructure programmes includes the construction of five major sports complexes this year. Over time, we intend to have each of our rural districts having their own sports centres were also hard at work with the construction of community libraries, arts centres as well as 13 minor sports facilities, combo courts and outdoor gyms. Through our national Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, we have just completed a massive, beautiful art centre at the royal Palace in Enyokeni. We know that...

*IsiZulu:*

... inkunzi isematholeni.

*English:*

That is why we are reviving our school sports as talent hubs through the Dlala Thursday initiatives. Every Thursday across the province, schools will vibrate with activity, with young athletes on the field and emerging artists on the stage. The school leagues are returning, and teachers are being capacitated, and equipment is being distributed. This is structured, intentional grassroots development feeding our pyramid from the bottom.

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Our partnership with the Department of Economic Development in KwaZulu-Natal and the KwaZulu-Natal Amafa Heritage Resources Institute is focused on heritage-led tourism. The revitalisation of Zulu Kings gravesites projects at eMakhosini and Sibhudu Cave Interpretation Centre are more than just symbolic projects; they are a strategic economic anchor. The formal nomination of eMakhosini to UNESCO World Heritage tentative list would be submitted as a strategic win for tourism and cultural preservation alike. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sport, Arts and Culture enjoys a warm partnership with His Majesty the King of the Zulu nation, King Misuzulu KaZwelithini, with the royal family, with amakhosi [chiefs] of the kingdom and all cultural institutions and structures. We partnered with His Majesty in the custodianship of culture and heritage in the province.

We are changing gears. We are shifting from sporadic programming to systematic progression, from consumption to production and from passion to profit. We are not only closing the gap between grassroots and the global stage, but we are also building a bridge that carries our youth over that gap with dignity. As KwaZulu-Natal we have embraced the Government of Provincial Unity, as mandated by the citizens of our province on 29 May last year.

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My political mentor and late founder and President Emeritus of the IFP, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, ...

*IsiZulu:*

... uMntwana wakwaPhindangene ...

*English:*

... became the symbol of tolerance, unity and hope when he led the erstwhile KwaZulu government in later years. It was during the Prince's era where we witnessed the industrialisation of the province to unprecedented proportions. I'm comfortable to mention that under the leadership of the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal hon A T Ntuli, the Government of Provincial Unity is aggressively reigniting the economic flame through reindustrialisation and catalytic projects. We are committed to inspiring new hope, hope that it is structured, sustained and self-reliant. In KwaZulu-Natal ...

*IsiZulu:*

... siyadlala, kodwa asidlali.

*English:*

I thank you.

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*IsiZulu:*

Ngiyathokoza.

*Sepedi:*

Ke a leboga.

*English:*

We support the budget.

Mr L MAXEGWANA (KwaZulu-Natal): Chairperson, greetings to yourself, hon members, hon Ministers, MECs present, and our members in the gallery.

Now, hon Minister, if South African stories are so inspirational to you, why come here and quote an American poem? Could you not maybe find something that was South African and inspirational to you? You can just wait for me. Our government is not on its mark, set, or ready. Can we not expect anything to go forward? This is what this budget represents: words that cannot run a race or become lyrics to a bad song. The arts have long been abandoned by successive Ministers and administrations, and it would seem that this administration is no different.

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There are very few artists or athletes that could say they feel supported by this administration. No, hon Minister, I'm not referring to celebrity athletes.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Can we please give the member at the podium a chance to speak?

Mr L MAXEGWANA (KwaZulu-Natal): I'm referring to athletes in rural and peri-urban areas around South Africa. How many of them can you say you know? These are the results of having leaders who cannot empathise with the dreams and fears of others. This is a budget that is careless in its allocations because it is based on political patronage. For too long, appointments in critical roles have been based on political loyalty and not merit. This practice cultivates patronage networks, prioritising personal or political agendas at the expense of institutional integrity and, consequently, undermining public service delivery and potential economic growth.

I come to the crux of my engagement today. This budget will not improve service delivery within the sports and culture domain. To prove my point today, hon members, I will focus on three critical areas that expose the profound failures within

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the budget allocation of Sport, Arts, and Culture. The three areas are the lack of attention to South African rural places, the mismanagement of the creative industry, and the collapse in the leadership capacity.

Firstly, let us address the glaring lack of attention to rural South Africans. This budget, much like its predecessors, fails to genuinely uplift our rural communities. The department's own annual performance plan for 2025-26 explicitly identifies the lack of such facilities in rural areas and the lack of well-maintained facilities as significant threats. This is not a new problem. It is a persistent oversight. For provinces like KwaZulu-Natal, with our vast rural landscapes and vibrant communities, this neglect means talent goes undiscovered, dreams are deferred, and access to the transformative power of sport, arts, and culture remains a distant fantasy. When national budget cuts are imposed, as noted in the Estimates of National Expenditure, it is these already rural or peri-urban areas that are in the firing line.

The National Council of Provinces Select Committee on Education, Sciences and Creative Industries, in its report dated 8 July 2025, urged the department to address challenges related to infrastructure development and maintenance,

particularly in the rural areas. This is a clear indictment that the budget is not doing enough to support those who need it the most. We cannot foster a truly inclusive society when basic sporting facilities or cultural hubs are nonexistent or dilapidated in most parts of our country.

Secondly, we must confront the stark mismanagement of the creative industry. The arts and culture sector, a vital engine for economic development and job creation, is clearly struggling under the weight of poor governance and inefficient resource allocation. While arts and culture promotion and development receive a significant allocation within Budget Vote No 37, the impact on the ground is minimal or unsustainable. Various artists, institutions, and associations have cited that the current administration is not managing the economic potential of the creative industry. You see, hon Minister, a few celebrities succeeding does not make a creative industry. I know it can be a tempting desire.

Finally, and perhaps most critically, this budget reflects a collapse in leadership capacity. Recycling appointees who lack adequate qualifications or sector-specific expertise by the Minister directly weakens the oversight mechanisms, compromising effective governance and accountability within

public institutions. This then presents our issue as South Africans. Individuals have prioritised personal and political agendas instead of the institutions they serve. The systemic issues we observe – from neglected rural areas to the struggling creative sectors – are symptoms of a deeper misalignment and lack of decisive and effective leadership.

The department's annual performance plan states that the finalisation of standardised indicators for provincial institutions is still dependent on the finalisation of the Medium-Term Development Plan, which, as of February 2025, was still not finalised. How can we expect delivery when the very road map for strategic planning and implementation remains incomplete?

Furthermore, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture identifies insufficient co-operation, collaboration, and alignment between stakeholders as a major threat. This speaks volumes about leadership unable to foster the necessary synergy between national, provincial, and local entities. The National Council of Provinces select committee, in its 8 July 2025 report, explicitly recommended that the department strengthens its monitoring in the evaluation of mechanisms to ensure effective and efficient utilisation of resources to

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improve accountability and that it expedites the finalisation of the Medium-Term Development Plan to provide clear guidance and targets for provincial institutions. These are direct calls for leadership to get its house in order. Without a clear vision, robust oversight, and efficient co-ordination from the top, this budget will continue to be a document of aspirations rather than achievements.

In conclusion, hon members, Budget Vote No 37 is merely a financial statement. It is a reflection of a government that is failing its people. We, the people of South Africa, deserve a government that is truly on its mark and ready. It is time for real change – for a budget that genuinely serves the people of South Africa. I urge you to reject this budget or risk having corrupt gangs run our sport, arts, and culture institutions.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, hon delegate. Can the House be in order, please? Hon Matshobeni! Hon Matshobeni! Hon Maxegwana, thank you for your input. The next speaker at the podium is the hon Breedt from the Free State. Hon Mokae, take your seat, please.

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Ms T BREEDT: Chairperson, I might be a slight bit controversial with the person I'm about to quote, but I think he drives the point home quite eloquently. Vladimir Lenin once said that if you want to destroy a nation, first destroy its arts, its culture, and its history. When we reflect upon the current state of South Africa's sports stadiums, theatres, and the growing hardships of our once-treasured artists, it most certainly seems as though the government has thrown in the towel.

*Afrikaans:*

Kom ons skets 'n prentjie: Jy is 'n jong, belowende atleet van 'n kwesbare gemeenskap, dalk in die Vrystaat. Jou drome is groot, en jou entoesiasme ewenaar dit. Jy hoor van die plaaslike munisipaliteit wat R15 miljoen spandeer om 'n nuwe sportstadion daar te stel. Jy is opgewonde hieroor, want dit is 'n boublok in jou gemeenskap, 'n boublok vir jou toekoms. Hierdie einste stadions kan jou toekoms bepaal, maar nou, 'n jaar later, is hierdie sportstadion 'n verwaarloosde plek wat gevandaliseer word, en dis nie eens voltooi nie, want die kontrakteur is weg met die geld.

*English:*

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For young and desperate athletes in the Free State's Nketoana Local Municipality, this is their reality. By 2023, the stadium in Lindley had stood unused for over a year, while local athletes were forced to play on the open ground, losing out on not one but two SA Breweries league soccer franchises. Once again, government dropped the ball with the Charles Mopeli Stadium in the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, after spending over R14 million on upgrades, yet, to this day, the pitch is unusable. The toilets and furniture are in a state of disrepair, and the stadium remains in a deplorable state.

Similarly, in the Letsemeng Local Municipality, the Koffiefontein Sport Stadium had been upgraded many years ago but still hasn't had a pavilion since 2015 and is now in an unusable state. Instead of having completed this and kept it in a maintained state, now money is spent on another sports stadium in Letsemeng – the Bolokanang Sport Facility – that is still standing incomplete and is quite possibly being vandalised as we speak. More often than not, where sports centres are not vandalised or stripped to the bone, cattle graze on the fields while communities cry for decent sporting facilities.

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*Afrikaans:*

Dan het ons nog nie eers naby die toestand van ons kunste gekom nie. PACOFS, die Performing Arts Centre of the Free State, voorheen bekend as die Streeksraad vir die Uitvoerende Kunste van die Oranje-Vrystaat, wat eens op 'n tyd die juweel in die Vrystaat se kunste was, is nou 'n vervalte ou teater wat nie eens sy eie klavier kan stem nie. Produksies wat daar aangebied word, moet ten duurste betaal vir die venue, maar terselfdertyd of hulle eie toerusting inbring of nog addisioneel betaal om die toerusting wat daar is en moet werk weer in 'n werkende toestand te kry.

*English:*

Besides the rampant corruption and looting of state-funded programmes, many structural issues continue to threaten the success and livelihoods of South Africa's athletes and artists. If we want South Africa's arts and sports sectors to thrive, we must treat our artists like professionals. Just take COVID-19, for example. The majority of our artists received little meaningful government funding due to bias and exclusion. For example, 488 of the more than 5 000 artists were helped by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture. That means that over 90% of our artists were left to fend for themselves.

*Afrikaans:*

Agb Minister, jy het 'n droom. Jy droom groot, maar jy spandeer ook groot. Jy wil 350 atlete na die Olimpiese Spele in 2028 neem en jy wil Formule Een terugbring Suid-Afrika toe. Kyk, ek gaan nie kla daaroor nie. Beide die drome is waardig, maar, Minister, as jy 'n kiekie kan neem met 'n sportster en dit op die belastingbetaler se onkoste doen, dan doen jy dit nogal graag. Laat ek jou net die volgende vra: Is 'n kiekie die geld werd? Kan dit nie beter bestee word nie? Kan daar nie beter oorsig oor byvoorbeeld sportsfasiliteite in ons munisipaliteite of ons vervalte teaters wees nie? Onthou wat ek aan die begin gesê het oor ...

*English:*

... if you want to destroy a nation.

*Afrikaans:*

Laat dit nie met ons gebeur nie. Ek dank u.

Ms M BAINS: Hon House Chairperson, august members of the House, distinguished guests and all citizens observing this debate online. As we gather to deliberate on Vote 37, we are reminded of the profound role that sport, arts and culture play in shaping our national identity and fostering unity.

This policy not only celebrate our diversity but also serve as powerful tools for healing, reconciliation and progress in our society. At the time when our nation faces complex social and economic challenges, investing in this sectors is more vital than ever, for building resilient communities and nurturing the spirit of ubuntu.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Cultures mandate goes beyond infrastructure and programming. It is about empowering every South African to contribute to and benefit from our shared heritage. Through strategic investment and inclusive policies, we are laying the groundwork for a society where every individual, regardless of background, has the opportunity to participate and thrive. This budget reflects our collective determination to create a future defined by equity, creativity, and social cohesion.

House Chairperson, the government of national unity, GNU, only those who are not in denial prioritize promoting an actively recreation program that improves the health and well-being of our nation. Our mass participation strategy distributes 627 million across all nine provinces, in the 2025 and 2026 budget, ensuring equitable access to sport and recreation.

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House Chairperson, the Minister, touched on figures. I would love to tell the special delegate of MK, that there are figures that I'm getting in now, are the exact figures. You must listen carefully. Gauteng, 120,3 million for supporting our most populous province. KwaZulu-Natal, 140,3 million for fostering talent in the sports heartland. Eastern Cape, 75,1 million, developing rural sporting potential. Limpopo, 68,9 million, bringing sports to previously disadvantaged communities. Western Cape, they are gone, 63,1 million, maintaining competitive excellence. Mpumalanga, 53,7 million for rural sports development. Northwest, 49,2 million for grassroots participation. Free State, 48,6 million, for community sport promotion. Northern Cape, 34,1 million, addressing ... [Inaudible.] ... challenges. This distribution ensures that every South African ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): [Inaudible.] ... and Mphephethwa you will be thrown out. Do it again, you're out.

Ms M BAINS: This distribution ensures that every South African, regardless of location, has access to sport and recreation opportunities, aligning with the ANC's commitment to leaving no one behind.

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The government of national unity, again not for those who are blind, had strengthened our collaboration through the groundbreaking Memorandum of Understanding signed between this department and Basic Education. This partnership marks a significant step forward in transforming access to sports and cultural programs in schools. It ensures that the rural township and underprivileged schools can access facilities, coaching and equipment comparable to those available to more advantaged schools.

Furthermore, facilities are designed to serve multiple schools through shared access. We need to move beyond the over reliance on private schools as talent feeders. And 2500 school's hubs and clubs receive equipment and attire, annually. This partnership directly advances the government's priority, should be for equality of excess over mere equality of outcome.

House Chairperson, on social cohesion, advocacy and anti gender-based violence, GBV, and femicide initiatives, the government must continue to take a firm stance against gender-based violence and femicide. With initiatives that include: The ... [Inaudible.] ... campaign has achieved ...

increased awareness on GBV matters and community engagement, through collaborative efforts with various stakeholders.

This program has fostered community solidarity with more individuals actively engaging in discussions and initiatives to combat gender-based violence and femicide. These initiatives aligned with the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide of 2020 to 2030, demonstrating the ANC's commitment to creating safer communities for all South Africans.

House Chairperson, the budget has secured dedicated funding for heritage preservation. With an amount of 2,787 billion allocated to Heritage Promotion and Preservation in 2025-2026 Budget. The Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route Program recognizes communities, icons, places and sites that record epoch making stories of our liberation struggle.

Notably, the Nelson Mandela Legacy sites had been inscribed as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including 14 components across four provinces and encapsulate the legacy of South Africa and liberation through the three tenets of human rights, liberation and reconciliation.

On language diversity, and cultural preservation, there are four multiyear human language technology projects. Of the amount of 36,7 million annually, supports six human language technology projects, advancing digital preservation and development of our indigenous languages. Nineteen point nine million annually, funds 900 tertiary language bursary students, ensuring the development of qualified language practitioners and supporting linguistic diversity across our higher education institutions.

These investments demonstrate our commitment to the constitutional principle of multilingualism and preserving our rich cultural heritage. Community arts centres serve as nerve centres for community participation and development. We have received business plans from community arts centres, in all nine provinces. Focus on building capacity in arts administration, arts programming and financial management, encouraging young people to engage in positive activities.

The Community Arts Centre Strategy of 2021 to 2025 is being implemented through partnerships, ensuring these centres remain accessible spaces where diverse communities come together through shared cultural experiences.

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We are advocating for the strengthening of participation in the National Youth Service Program. Aligning with the GNU's commitment to expand and institutionalize the National Youth Service in partnership with the SA National Defence Force, SANDF.

The Young Creators Program mobilizes communities and engages youth in arts and culture, providing a structured one-year program that develops skills while fostering social cohesion.

Through sports, arts, culture and heritage, we are building bridges across the divisions of our past and creating a foundation for prosperous future. The 6,3 billion, invested in Vote 37 will definitely touch every community. From R627 million reaching each province through mass participation grants to the R1,4 billion, supporting community libraries. This is transformation in action, ensuring that every South African can participate fully in the cultural, sporting and creative life of our nation.

In closing, let us reaffirm our commitment to the vision of a united non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. The initiatives and investments outlined in Vote 37 are not merely line items

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in a budget. They are the building blocks of a nation where every citizen felt, seen, heard and valued.

And by supporting this budget, we are choosing to invest in the dreams and aspirations of our people. Ensuring that the legacy of our liberation struggle continues to inspire future generations.

Let us move forward, harnessing the transformative power of sport, arts, and culture to bridge divides and build lasting social cohesion. And with the support of this House, we can realize the promise of the Freedom Charter and greater South Africa that truly belongs to all who live in it. I thank you.

Ms L M MABUZA (Mpumalanga): Hon Chair, let me take this opportunity to greet your good self and good evening to all the hon members and a special greetings to the Chair of the NCOP, Ma'am Mtsweni-Tsepene and greetings to the hon Minister and Deputy Minister present in this august House, my colleagues, members of the executive council from various provinces, the Portfolio Committee on Sports, Arts and Culture and hon Members in Parliament, all political parties that are present in this august House as well as the representatives of the departmental agencies and councils seized with the

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responsibility of assisting the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture to fulfil its legislative mandate, the Director-General as well as line senior managers.

Hon Chair of the House, we are pleased to confirm that the Policy and Budget Vote No. 37 as tabled by Minister Gayton Mackenzie has taken the people of South Africa into confidence when he outlined clear details on the following:

Firstly, What the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture intends to accomplish with the funding which is being availed for 2025-26 financial year in the context of Medium-Term Development Plan, MTDP, and Government of National Unity priorities.

Secondly, with time limiting, the department has taken the reasonable efforts to account for the Public Funds Appropriated in the 2024-25 financial year.

Thirdly, quite clearly, the department is not intending to maintain the status quo but has given us a high-level tenant of its turnaround strategy in taking the department to the next level guided by its constitutional mandate, not only

that. Hon Minister has eloquently articulated the shared vision of the department going into the future.

House Chair, the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture leading to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route is driving a noble course of healing the nation through repatriation and restitution work to give closure not only to the families but to the nation as well.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Mabuza, it looks like you have muted yourselves.

Ms L M MABUZA (Mpumalanga): My apology, hon Chair, I haven't. I was talking alone. My apologies. Supported by the constitutional injunction "Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land"

Sports, Arts and Culture and Heritage combined are the jet fuel propelling the country towards nation building and social cohesion. The department 2024-25 milestones already showed that we are making steady progress towards the realization of this objective.

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Over the years our national teams have conquered the African continent and have conquered the world because of the material support they have received from Vote 37 and the moral support from people of South Africa defined by traction on social cohesion, united in our diversity.

Both our athletes and cultural workers continue to put South Africa on the global map.

Our submission is that sports is the most cost-effective building block of a healthy and productive work force for any nation, and it facilitate building of a socially integrated and inclusive society.

A healthy mind dwells in a healthy body with increased life expectancy as one of the key national outcomes, a sick nation puts a stress on a health system.

Although we can still do more on sport infrastructure, the allocation on recreation development and sport promotion is responsive to the provision of mass participation opportunities, maintenance of facilities even to the deep rural communities to ensure that competitive athletes are developed across the length and breadth of the country.

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Under the constraints of limited resources, we are equally satisfied with resources allocated to Programme 3 and 4 to promote and develop arts and culture, language services including preservation and promotion of South African Heritage.

Chairperson of the House, as indicated earlier on the qualitative return on investment is clearly realized in the progress we are making towards nation building and social cohesion.

But also, the economic indicators confirm the quantitative return on investment when looking at the steady increase of sport and creative industries value chain contribution to the GDP.

In the sense that our economy is benefitting immensely from this sector as one the emerging job drivers and a key player of a revenue enhancement strategy in all three Spheres of government.

Chairperson of the House, the catalytic effect of sport and cultural tourism in job creation cannot be over-emphasized.

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It is clear that the department's adopted resources allocation strategy has a developmental approach, to invest across the entire arts, culture and sporting ecosystem with a strong focus on grassroots levels.

Surely, this budget as tabled is resolute in its commitment to transform sport and recreation, arts and cultural landscape, and more importantly it has clear intentions to enhance not only social cohesion but the socioeconomic prowess of the country as well as for the globe.

However, Chair, with this presentation we would like to submit the budget appropriation of Vote 37 which is the subject of the debate to be supported and approved by this august House. Thank you so much, hon Chair.

Ms S NGOGO (Eastern Cape): Hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, the Chief Whip, hon Minister in the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, Deputy Minister, hon Ms Mabe, imbokodo, hon members of the NCOP, comrades and fellow South Africans, on behalf of the people of the Eastern Cape, the Home of Legends ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... camagwini.

*English:*

Let us begin our input in this debate with the words of Marcus Garvey, who said, "A people without culture is a people without future". We participate in this debate, not only as a Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and culture in the Eastern Cape, but as revolutionary servants of our people who are entrusted with defending the soul of the people of this country. We understand perfectly well that, sport, arts, music and culture speak to the identity, resistance, memory and healing. These are not sidelines but frontline in the battle for dignity and justice. When our youth express themselves through dance in Mdantsane, when choirs echo in Lusikisiki, in Mthatha and when rural football teams gather in Flagstaff, that hon members, is a nation-building in motion.

Hon Chairperson and members, we are battling with youth unemployment and cry out for opportunities. And as such, the department has committed to capacitate 2 261 people in the arts and culture, sport, recreation and school sport programme. Our entity, Eastern Cape Provincial Arts and Culture Council, ECPACC is implementing its capacity building initiatives in film, visual arts, craft and design. About 202

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practitioners are to benefit from capacity building opportunities in the libraries and archives programme and 19 people are to be employed to deliver school sport programmes. One thousand four hundred and fifty people will be trained to support the sport and recreation programme.

Chairperson, Eastern Cape department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture continues to preserve heritage resources through support to Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority, Ecphra, and Eastern Cape Provincial Geographical Names Committee, ECPGNC. We are also forging ahead with the promotion of the legacy of our fallen heroes who were buried outside the country and to date, we have repatriated and reburied at least eight local heroes and heroines through the Exhumation, Repatriation and Reburial Programme.

Tata Nelson Mandela in his words said:

Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, to unite people in a way that little else does.

Chair, these words became a reality for us in Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium in the past weekend when our Springboks claimed their victory against Italy, when scores of our people from

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all walks of life filled the stadium in support of the match and when all facilities of accommodation were also fully booked in Gqeberha. The economic spin offs from this hosting of such an event are a welcome contribution to our fight against unemployment and poverty. It is with full knowledge that nothing can kick start an economy as well as sport does.

*IsiXhosa:*

Sihlalo, siliPhondo leeNgqwele ...

*English:*

... we are looking forward to hosting the Cricket World Cup, as recently announced that as part of hosting the ICC 2027 World Cup, the Eastern Cape province will have two host venues, one in Nelson Mandela and other at Buffalo City Metro. We are hoping for the same magnitude of support which was shown in last weekend's rugby match during the cricket tournament.

As a Home of Legends, we greatly welcome the Minister's commitment to revitalising and playing sports more accessible. This commitment will ensure that all children have access to physical activity.

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*IsiXhosa:*

Into ke ebesikade singayazi.

*English:*

Further, all children from all walks of life will have an opportunity to develop their sporting talent so that they may grow to represent our country on international stages as part of our goal of building a winning nation. Chairperson, over the years significant progress has been made in transforming sport, ensuring that access to sport is expanded and sporting opportunities are also enjoyed in previously marginalised communities. True transformation means more than changing the faces on the field, it means changing the systems that decide who gets to play, who gets to lead, and who gets to dream. It means ensuring that a talented child in Lusikisiki has the same chance to succeed as one in Sandton. It means investing in rural and township schools, developing coaches from underrepresented communities, and holding federations accountable to equity and access.

As province, we continue to position ourselves as a destination of choice for the various sport codes. Our rich history and efforts to unearth raw talents remains one of the best. We fully support the scouting, identification and

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development of talented athletes. Chairperson, we support the recommitment to the following as outlined in all the strategic documents of the department: The provision of leadership to the sport, recreation, arts, culture, and heritage sector to accelerate its transformation. The budget will surely help us to promote social cohesion and nation-building through social transformation and social interaction. On behalf of the people of the Eastern Cape, we commit ourselves to ensuring that we will be among those who will ensure the successful implementation of these plans in line with the presented budget.

*IsiXhosa:*

Sihlalo, ndiyabulela.

*IsiXhosa:*

Mnu. M M PETER: Sihlalo ohloniphekileyo weli Bhunga lamaPhondo leSizwe, malungu ahloniphekileyo eli Bhunga, ilizwe ngokubanzi, ndithi mandinquthume ndiqondele phantsi ndixele umtshakazi ehombele umyeni wakhe. Ngokuhlonipha okukhulu eli Bhunga lamaPhondo leSizwe, ndifuna ukubhekisa phaya kuwe Mphathiswa ohloniphekileyo ukuba, ayinakuze itsale engenawo amanqina, iyakurhuqa. Ndivakalisa inkxalabo noloyiko kolu Hlahlolwabiwomali lweSebe lezeMidlalo, ubuGcisa neNkcubeko.

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Ndime apha namhlanje ndimangalisiwe lolu hlahlolwabiwomali lutyebe liteketeke kangakanana, ndisithi nelenkawu isebe ngoku lisusiwe. Kuphethe uRhulumente woBumbano kaZwelonke.

Umbuzo umile, uphi na umsebenzi wakho woRhulumente woBumbano kaZwelonke, Mphathiswa wezeMidlalo, ubuGcisa neNkcubeko? Kubuza abemi beli lizwe bexhalabile kwaye bemangalisekile ukuba iziR631 billion ziza kusebenza kusini na. Kuyafuneka ukuba sigocagoce ezi zigidigidi zohlahlolwabiwomali ngokujonga kumaphandle ethu, ingakumbi kwiilali zethu. Asiboni zifumana nto iilali zethu kolu hlahlolwabiwomali. Umzekelo, phaya eDutywa uTata uNgumbela, esaphila, wanga umoya wakhe ungalala ngoxolo, wafaka isandla kwingxowa yakhe ezama ukuphuhlisa ezemidlalo kwezo lali ngenxa yokungabonakali kohlahlolwabiwomali lukarhulumente.

Xa singulo Rhulumente woBumbano kaZwelonke, ingaba sisekhona kusini na isizathu sokunyolana esweni okanye kuqatsele ubuhlanga? Umzekelo wesibini, phaya eBhofolo, iFort Beaufort United neThubalethu High School ziye ziyaphumelela ngokungena mathandabuzo kwezombhoxo kodwa awuyiboni inkxaso. Asiboni kuxhaswa ukutyalwa kwezakhono ngoomasipala abakhoyo. Ibala leqakamba phaya eBhofolo elalisakuba ngundabamlonyeni lijike

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laba lidlelo lokutyisa imfuyo. Andithethi ngeAlice, eDikeni ke ukutsho, umbhalo ubhaliwe.

Xa ugqithela usiya phaya eQonce usizi lumi lodwa. Iziseko zamabala zachithwa akukho nethemba lokuba kwakhe kwakhiwa ntoni na. Nanamhlanje amehlo asajonge enkalweni. Rhulumente woBumbano kaZwelonke uphi ngoku? Kuloo ntlungu injalo, ikwa yi-UDM ebamba imibhiyozo neminyhadala yezemidlalo ikhuthaza ulutsha ukuba luzilolonge, luzinxweme kwiziyobisi ukuze kwakheke ikamva elihle.

Mphathiswa, umbono wakho wokuzisa ukhuphiswano lomdyarho weemoto iFormula One, nokuphucula umdlalo webhola ekhatywayo ngobuchwephesha be-VAR Technology apha eMzantsi Afrika, siwuthakazelela kakhulu siyiUDM. Siluxhasa kakhulu eli phupha lakho Mphathiswa omhle. Ingaba olu hlahlolwabiwomali aluhlabani noYilo loPhuhliso lwesiThili (District Development Model) urhulumente athetha ngalo? Umzekelo, iphondo ngalinye lisekelezelwe kwisiseko ezithathu: izithili, ingingqi, iiwadi neengingqi zokuvota (voting districts). Ingaba olu hlahlolwabiwomali luyakufezekisa kusini na oko? Thina siyi-UDM sithi zine ezi ntlantlo zesithili ukuze olu hlahlolwabiwomali lumelane.

Mphathiswa omhle, xa ndigqibezela. Xa sikuteketisa sithi ngumfana waselokishini. Sicela ukuba uzibonakalise ke mfana waselokishini, kwaba bakwakhele umkhanya ukuba uyakwazi kusini na ukuzisa iinkonzo eluntwini. Kaloku lebhasi uyiqhubayo hleze nathi siwe nayo. Aba bangekho kuRhulumente woBumbano kaZwelonke baya kusihleka kuba kudala besakhele umkhanya. Sicela ke usikhulile, usihlangule. Enkosi.

*English:*

UDM supports this budget.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Hon House Chair, Minister, Deputy Minister, members and fellow South Africans, "you can't have unity without diversity." These words spoken in the 1960s by a Native American activist, Richard Twiss, still ring true, not only within his own society, but also within the South African slogan of Unity in Diversity or ...

*Khoisan:*

... !ke e: /xarra //ke ...

*English:*

... in the original /Xam.

This department is central to this. It addresses the spirit, soul and body of a nation. Culture is the very essence of who we are and what we do. Through culture, we find ourselves and then we find each other in calm confidence, respecting and enjoying our differences. Art is the expression of our souls, our spirits, our identities, and it moves and shapes paradigms. Art has changed the way entire nations think.

Sport is the great equaliser. It opens worlds and gives opportunities based only on physical ability. Based on scientific studies, it also heals post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, in traumatised people.

However, before I speak to the technical aspects of this budget, allow me a moment to share personal experiences. I've lived a privileged life, but not in wealth. It has been ... in being exposed to the richness of South Africa's peoples and cultures.

Born two years before the brutal and racially driven state of emergency, I was fortunate to attend one of the first mixed-race schools in Pretoria on a bursary. The real privilege wasn't just access to education, but the friendships I formed

across racial and cultural lines, friendships forged on sports fields, in art rooms and on the stage.

However, on looking back, our experiences to and from school were vastly different, and very unfairly so. In the 1980s and 1990s, my nonpolitical parents had academics from all ethnicities visiting our home, breaking bread while sharing knowledge and experience. This incredible privilege, made possible by my parents passion for the arts, opened a world of knowledge and understanding, and brought home the principle of unity in diversity.

Visiting my mother's work in the 1990s ...

*Afrikaans:*

... Goeiemôre Suid-Afrika ...

*English:*

... a fellow broadcaster, Alice Chavunduka, took time and made an effort to engage with me as a preteen. This stayed with me.

At my father's job, I watched him direct performance pieces in the streets of Hillbrow, where art brought people together, regardless of background.

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Later in the 1990s, we moved to Hermanus, where I again attended a diverse school, luckily enough through a bursary. I spent my afternoons in Hawston with my childhood best friend, whose family worked to keep the youth out of the Numbers Gang through arts and sport. Her mother's heritage of being a Griqua princess contrasted with the stark realities of her youth in Elsies ... opened my eyes to a very different world than my own. These experiences, repeated many times over, showed me the true meaning of privilege.

Being invited into the lives of others taught me that sport, arts and culture are not just activities. They are bridges. They help us see past our differences and connect as people.

Why then has the department seemingly dropped the ball with scandals in Boxing SA, Swimming SA, dilapidation of the previously world-renowned Sand du Plessis Theatre heritage site in Johannesburg, unfinished projects like the exit houses, the Sarah Baartman monument and the Women's Living ... Monument in Tshwane to name a few? Even high-profile sports like soccer under Danny Jordaan, rugby and cricket have not escaped controversy.

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The Auditor-General's report shows improvement, but reports that it is not enough, with an increase in irregular expenditure over the past year. It also reports that weak accountability, reporting and weak systems have strengthened the networks of nonprofit organisations, NPOs, that get paid even if they do not perform their mandate.

This lack of transparency and accountability sadly makes sense when reading the Minister's executive authority statement in the annual performance plan, APP, report. It states: "the concerns they raise tell us that there is a need for transparency and accountability. To this effect, it is clear that we cannot ... "

This relates to a parliamentary request regarding the athletes and artists still owed COVID relief monies. He further explains that the current beneficiaries should not be on the list. Yet, artists like Shaleen Surtie Williams would have really benefitted with lifesaving health care from this assistance.

Will the remaining R126 ... apologies ... R177 million overdue then not be paid to the beneficiaries listed or could one speculate, will the money be used to buy support?

On analysing the budget, it shows various other inconsistencies. One example is the alleged cost of job creation in the Mzansi Golden Economy versus ... in cultural and creative industries. The Mzansi Golden Economy is asking for R1,2 billion to create 10 000 jobs. This is a R120 000 per opportunity. However, the cultural and creative industries are requesting R54,8 million for 3 000 jobs. This is only R18 266 per opportunity. Why is there such a marked discrepancy?

If the Minister states in the same executive statement that artists must be financially responsible, surely the department should lead by example. Additionally, policy cohesion, reworked resource allocation, improved intergovernmental implementation, addressing infrastructure decay and alignment with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, is paramount.

There is a difficult hypocrisy that needs to be addressed, especially within the context of nation-building. Why does the Minister drive a divisive and racialised narrative on the ground, in committee and in the House?

*Afrikaans:*

Onse mense ...

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*English:*

... reminds me of various National Party slogans. The personal attacks on members in committee based on ethnicity, using racially charged words in response to oral questions and flouting standing parliamentary rules show a philosophy of division.

Our words as public representatives carry weight, and using words to intentionally divide a nation, seemingly for power and influence, has been used throughout history and is unacceptable. Divide and conquer is a trick often used to cover a multitude of irregularities, maybe the R55 million in irregular expenditure that has disappeared or the R175 million that is meant for athletes and artists.

We took an oath to protect the principles of the Constitution and this includes nonracialism.

*Khoisan:*

!ke e: /xarra //ke.

The DEPUTY MINISTER: SPORT, ARTS & CULTURE (Ms B P Mabe):

House Chair, greetings to hon members, and to the Minister. We join millions of South Africans in paying tribute to the

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recently departed former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, hon David Mabuza, a freedom fighter, and an outstanding patriot. Long live the spirit of David Mabuza! Long live!

This Budget Vote debate takes place shortly before we celebrate the birthday of the founding father of our democracy, our revered icon, Tata Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela, who declared that:

Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does.

This is a famous quote. More than three members have used it. Tata Mandela was relevant.

The department's primary objective is to develop, transform, preserve, protect, and promote sports, arts, and culture at all levels of participation, fostering an active, creative, winning, socially cohesive, and unified nation. Our goals align with the objectives outlined in the South African National Development Plan, NDP. By aligning our efforts with these overarching frameworks, we strengthen our commitment to

national priorities and ensure that our work has a lasting and sustainable impact on the lives of our fellow citizens.

The African proverb that says, "Once you carry your water, you learn the value of every drop," mirrors prudent and meticulous budget allocations that meet increasing demands within limited resources. The budget allocation of R6,31 billion for the year 2025-26 is aimed at the following: to develop and promote sports, arts and culture at all levels; to promote social cohesion and facilitate national building; to transform and build capacity in the sports, arts and culture levels; to transform and build capacity in the sports, arts and culture sector; and to build and maintain the heritage assets. Sport is a powerful tool to unite diverse groups and foster a socially cohesive society with a shared national identity. Investing in sports, arts, and culture is essential for building a well-rounded society.

The Recreation, Development and Sports Promotion Programme receives R4,1 billion of the department's budget over the medium term. This allocation demonstrates our commitment to enhancing mass participation, talent development, and infrastructure support to strengthen sports and recreation across South Africa.

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On 16 July 2024, we committed in this House to promote a healthy lifestyle and physical activity in line with the National Development Plan through the Active Nation programme. We support the provision of mass participation, opportunities in sports, and recreation.

I am pleased to announce that this financial year, 2025-26, the department has budgeted R24 million for the construction of 30 community outdoor gyms and children's play parks in municipal open spaces. We are fostering a winning nation by continually creating an enabling environment for top athletes to excel on the international stage. Our teams and athletes have set the sporting scene ablaze with their performances and achievements. We are proud of the achievements of team South Africa, which proudly hoisted our flag at the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We also committed to reviving school sports. The Department of Arts and Culture and Basic Education signed the memorandum of understanding, which, in the main, addresses the challenges that prevent the establishment of well-co-ordinated and seamless sports, arts, and culture programmes as a critical factor in the development of young people of our country. We are ensuring that every learner has access to good quality

arts and culture, education, and training in the public schooling system.

The promotion and development of arts and culture are crucial for heritage preservation, promoting diversity, and social cohesion. For the 2025-26 financial year, the Cultural and Creative Industries development is allocated R32 million to facilitate access to local and international markets.

The Mzansi Golden Economy strategy fosters job creation, economic transformation, and inclusivity. We aim to create 10 000 job opportunities through financially supporting 27 projects that facilitate local and international market access, empowering artists, and creative practitioners to expand their reach. We are creating opportunities and breaking into new international markets. Our artists' footprint is expanding exponentially. Amapiano is taking the right by storm. Before, when we used to travel, when you say South Africa, they would say, oh, the people of Mandela, but recently, when you say South Africa, they say amapiano. So, no doubt that amapiano has taken the world by storm. We have seen that through the historic triumph of South Africa's dynamic DJ duo TxC at the 2025 BET Awards in Los Angeles. This marks not

only a personal achievement but a momentous step for the South African amapiano music scene.

As we chart the way forward, one of the key focus areas in the development and elevation of the design industry in South Africa, this dynamic sector encompassing fashion, industrial design, digital innovation, architecture and more, plays a critical role in entrepreneurship, job creation, innovation, and the shaping of our cultural identity. The portfolio committee chairperson also spoke on this issue that it is cool to wear locally made clothes. Let us promote our designers because if we do not buy their products, nobody will support them. So, members, you encourage that you support local designers like I am wearing a locally made garment and hon Jane as well. I want to see if the Minister is wearing a locally made print as well. This initiative forms part of a broader vision to position the creative industries at the centre of South Africa's economic recovery, youth employment strategies, and global cultural competitiveness, promoting social cohesion and facilitating nation-building.

In closing, I wanted to talk about the Van Toeka Af, a programme that we hosted on 5 July 2025 as the department in honouring the 68-year career of service in the arts sector of

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Mama Abigail Kubeka that it has opened more opportunities ... We intend to host the legendary tour. Through this, we will honour other cultural icons across our provinces, fostering pride, preserving legacy, and importantly, creating income generation opportunities for veteran artists. Having said that, I table the budget before the House for the hon members to approve.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Hon members, during an earlier debate today, one of the participants indicated and confirmed the role of the South African local government in this House. As members of this House, they now take the podium, the SA Local Government Association, Salga.

Cllr L MAHLANGU (Salga): House Chairperson, hon Chairperson of the NCOP, Refilwe Maria Mtshweni-Tsipane, hon Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture, hon Deputy Minister, hon Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Chief Whip of the NCOP, hon House Chairpersons, hon members and special delegates, ladies and gentlemen, ...

*IsiZulu:*

... sanibonani.

*English:*

This budget presents a critical opportunity to advance inclusive development through the pillars of sports, arts, culture, libraries, and heritage. Municipalities are the face of government on the ground. We are the closest to the people and must ensure that this budget translates into tangible change in communities through, amongst others, centres and vibrant public spaces that foster participation, unity, and pride.

We commend the department's continued focus on school sports, mass participation and class-free initiatives. They must reach our informal settlements, rural villages and townships where children are hungry for opportunities and where the playing field must literally and figuratively be levelled.

We further commend the construction of 100 community outdoor gyms that the department has planned. Outdoor gyms are not merely for fitness. Moreover, they have a positive contribution towards the building of healthy communities, which are needed by a country whose health system is under a lot of pressure.

We also welcome the department's commitment to the arts, heritage and library services. However, we must speak about the need for improvement, particularly in the funding and functionality of library services. While we welcome the 2,3% increase in the public library services allocation, which is used for constructing and upgrading libraries, hiring personnel and purchasing library materials, we wish to emphasise that libraries are more than the repository of books.

They are the community's anchor of knowledge, digital access, youth support and lifelong learning. Yet, many libraries operate with outdated materials, inadequate Internet connectivity, and insufficient staffing. Some rural libraries are barely functional.

While the community library conditional grant remains a key instrument of support, it is imperative that, one, funding allocations are increased over the medium term to enable sustained staffing, procurement of materials and the maintenance of library facilities.

Two, the grant criteria must be reviewed to better accommodate rural and underresourced municipalities that often struggle to

co-fund a function that should be adequately funded by the department.

Three, capacity-building and digital innovation programmes must be expanded to help municipalities modernise library services, including mobile libraries and access to e-books and online learning tools.

Our libraries must become 21st century acknowledged hubs, connected, inclusive, and actively contributing to youth development and digital literacy. For this to happen, local government must be treated not just as an implementer, but as a core strategist in the revitalisation of our nation's library infrastructure.

In conclusion, this Budget Vote is more than a financial plan. It reflects the values we place on culture, identity, social well-being and human potential. Let us ensure that the investment we make in sports, arts, and culture truly reach the people, especially at the grassroots where the most vulnerable are anxiously looking for the opportunity that could improve their quality of life through the talent that they possess.

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We therefore commit ourselves, as local government, to working with the department and all stakeholders to turn this budget into real change that is visible, sustainable and transformative. Let us invest, not only, in infrastructure, but in imagination.

With that said, Salga supports the Budget Vote and believes that it demonstrates commitment by the Minister and the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture to addressing social cohesion challenges in the country. Thank you.

Mr V GERICKE: Chairperson, Minister, officials and colleagues, good evening. I am perturbed by what has transpired here this afternoon. Thousands of athletes and artists are watching on television to see what is in this budget for them and some of our colleagues from the ANC came here to do personal attacks on parties and people that speak for the marginalised, the vulnerable and the poor. This is low, this is scandalous and it doesn't belong to politics and it cannot be called politics. Let me tell you, I have seen in my 58 years of living a lot of arrogance from people that were in powerful positions in municipalities and private sector. Because of their arrogance they refused to listen to people. You can come with me I will show you how they walk besides their shoes

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today. They became forgotten and rejected people in their communities. This is what is happening with the ANC today. The masses are rejecting you. Yes, you protected us, you protected us. It's our turn. The masses are rejecting you because you never delivered to the people of South Africa. You have become forgotten people, a forgotten party.

Let me draw your attention. Yes, the gloves are off. I don't stand back. In 2022 when some of the senior officials that are seated here today were in the very same department, a young athlete from Port Elizabeth by the name of Michael Whiteboy, a judoka expert, had to go and participate and Pakistan in a judo competition, he had to withdraw because of lack of funding. His dreams were shattered. We can go on and on. There was a total denial of people that are struggling to fund themselves, a total rejection and a total arrogance from people in high positions.

But we have news for you. The EFF is here to restore our country. Yes, the EFF is here. The EFF is here to restore the integrity and the dignity. You can laugh at us. We are an organisation that will stand for our people.

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Mr K CEZA: Hon Chair, I rise in terms of Rule 68. Rule 68 affords the right of delegates to speak and not be disturbed. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you very much, hon Ceza. Yes, indeed, delegates may speak, and delegates may heckle. There is a ruling to that effect as well at the back of the Rules Book. Hon members, I do urge you to, please, allow the speaker on the podium to put forward his arguments. Let us listen to one another in accordance with the decorum as far as possible. You are welcome to heckle but let us not make it to be a conversation. Let us not drown out the debater. Thank you, hon members. Please, proceed, hon Gericke.

Ms V GERICKE: The EEF rejects this Budget Vote on Sports Arts and Culture. Today, I rise to debate a matter that speaks to the soul of our nation, the budget allocation of the Department of Sport Arts and Culture. This department is not merely about recreation or entertainment, it is a cornerstone of the nation's identity, youth development, social cohesion and economic opportunity. Yet, it remains chronically mismanaged and undervalued. Worse we debate today a budget that was not even tabled in the select committee.

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The large portion of the budget still goes to administrative costs and maintaining national institutions, while community-level development programmes remain grossly underfunded. This result in art centres being without equipment, community choirs without support and youth sports development programmes struggling to survive. Sport, arts and culture are powerful tools for nation building. They unite us, give young people a purpose, preserve our diverse heritage and stimulate the creative economy.

Community sports fields, local theatres, museums and libraries are not luxuries, they are lifelines. They promote healthy lifestyles, create jobs, fight crime and give our people dignity and identity, and yet this department failed our communities decimally.

Across South Africa artists die poor, cultural institutions are neglected and township sports facilities lie in ruin. This is the result of corruption and fraud in this department.

The EFF also notes with concern the lack of leadership shown by this department regarding the growing frustration and anxiety within the music industry, regarding the Southern Music Rights Organisation, Samro. The Southern Music Rights

Organisation, Samro, is a structure which gives disproportionate power to music publishers. The EFF is particularly concerned about the board's ongoing failure to act on the damning findings of the Fundudzi Forensic Investigation which exposed widespread corruption and fraudulent claims of royalties by individuals and publishers, some of whom still occupy positions of power within the organisation. This has led to South Africa's creative industry, artists, musicians and cultural workers staging an uprising at Samro's extraordinary annual general meeting, EAGM, last week, resulting in the immediate removal of three board members.

The EFF, once again reiterates its unwavering support for the rights of artists and the principle that their intellectual and economic contributions must be respected, protected and governed with integrity. All over the country sport upgrade facilities lay abandoned, the money is gone.

The EFF is deeply disturbed by the persistent corruption and mismanagement plaguing the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. This department, which should be at the forefront of nurturing talent, preserving our heritage and promoting unity through sport and culture, has become a symbol of incompetence

and looting. Abandoned infrastructure projects, unaccounted expenditure, inflated tenders and fruitless and wasteful spending have become synonymous to this department. Billions are pumped into the department, yet communities remain without functioning sports grounds, libraries, museums or support for emerging artists. This is not a failure of funding, it is a failure of governance. The continued corruption has robbed young athletes, struggling artists and cultural workers of opportunities.

Sport is not just a pastime, it is a proven tool in the fight against crime, substance abuse and social alienation. For many young people in townships and rural areas, local sports grounds are the only spaces where talent can be discovered, displayed and cultivated. Their abandonment reflects a government that has turned its back on the aspirations and potential of the youth.

Sports programmes in rural schools are nonexistent. Local artists go without support while the department hosts extravagant and unproductive events.

Corrupt officials and connected contractors enrich themselves at the expense of the people. Despite repeated promises from

the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, communities continue to witness multimillion rand sport infrastructure projects left incomplete or uncared for. Funds are allocated, contractors are paid and yet the end result is dilapidation and despair. This is not just incompetence it is theft from the poor.

Projects like the National Academy of Africa's Performing Arts in Soweto ask for completion. Construction has stalled due to funding shortfalls. The project initiated in 2018 remains unfinished with incomplete recording studios and missing essential equipment.

The Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance in Hankey, in the Eastern Cape, the project has faced prolonged delays with R247 million later. The delay impedes the preservation and celebration of significant cultural heritage. The delay hampers efforts to nurture local talent and provide educational opportunities in the performing arts.

The Kagiso Memorial and Recreation Centre in Mogale City, in Gauteng, R14 million was allocated for heritage components, the centre remains largely nonoperational with reports of malfunctioning facilities and unauthorised usage.

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The Boipatong Monument and Youth Centre in Gauteng, over R12 million in operational costs. Since its inception in 2015, the centre has failed to deliver on its promises lacking functional educational and recreational programs. The youth in Boipatong are deprived of the intended educational and empowerment opportunities.

School for Live Events Technology South African Roadies Association, R4,35 million allocated for the 2024-25 financial year, there are delays in fund disbursement, but the department has stalled the establishment of the school. Complaints have been lodged with the Public Protector regarding the delays. The delay affects youth empowerment and skills development in the live events sector.

Netball South Africa is currently facing significant scrutiny over allegations of financial mismanagement, governance failures and mishandling of serious misconduct cases. These issues have prompted investigations by both domestic and international bodies.

The EFF is also deeply concerned about the Netball South Africa's, NSA, financial practices, particularly regarding the R90 million allocated by the government for the 2023 Netball

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World Cup in Cape Town. Nearly two years after the event, the audited financial statements have yet to be finalised.

Expenditures, including the R119 000 paid to a social media influencer, over R2 million in consulting fees and R41 000 categorised under condolences. This is the thrilling stories of this department.

The unfolding situation within Netball South Africa underscores the need for robust governance and accountability mechanisms within sports organisations and the failure of the Department Sport Art and Culture.

In the SA Football Association, Sifa, saga, the EFF was in the lead to request for an independent investigation into Sifa's finances, alleging that Jordaan's leadership has led to stagnation in football development and unequal pay between men's and women's teams. In March 2025, the association reportedly failed to pay staff salaries on time citing cash flow problems. Additionally, a 2023 investigation revealed that Sifa spent R65 million on a water park intended to become a centre of excellence, which remains incomplete and is projected to cost the taxpayers R600 million.

Just in the North West province alone, projects like the

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Goudkoppie Heritage Hill in Klerksdorp, this Grade II provincial heritage site featuring Khoisan rock art and historical mining remnants suffers from vandalism and neglect due to insufficient security and maintenance. In China we are not worried about the budget, we educate the public through television. That's what we are doing.

The deteriorating condition deters tourists, undermining its potential as a cultural attraction.

Mmabana Arts, Culture and Sport Foundation, once a beacon for arts development in the province, the Mmabana Centres have faced significant challenges. Established in the late 1980s, they benefited from substantial funding until 2007. However, post-2007, these centres have struggled with reduced financial support, leading to operational difficulties and diminished program offerings.

The North West Cultural Calabash Taung, initiated in 1994 to celebrate diverse cultures and nurture young talent, this festival thrived with support from entities like the Transnet Foundation. However, the withdrawal of key sponsors has led to its discontinuation, depriving the community of a vital cultural platform, while this department didn't support the

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centres.

In rural areas and townships, children with immense potential are denied opportunities because there are no coaches, no instruments, no art supplies and no spaces to perform or play. Cultural events that could build unity and pride are scrapped due to a lack of support. We want you to take notes, Mr Minister.

We have seen how young people, when engaged in sport and art, stay away from drugs and crime. The continuous corruption in this department is cutting hope from the people. It is an insult to communities who use sport and art to heal, grow and organise.

As the EFF we will request an urgent forensic investigation into all tenders and infrastructure projects under the department in the past five years. For these given reasons, the EFF does not support the budget. Thank you very much.

Mr F J MASEKO (Limpopo): Chairperson of the session, allow me to acknowledge the presence of the Minister and the Deputy Minister, members of the NCOP, fellow South Africans, good evening. Chair, on behalf of the people of Limpopo, all

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athletes, Limpopo wants to support the Budget Vote, and we are committed to its full implementation with excellence and accountability.

Hon Chair, allow me to commend the hon Minister for presenting a budget that resonates with our shared vision of building an active and creative nation, promoting social cohesion and nation-building as stipulated in the National Development Plan.

The National Development Plan recognises that sports, arts and culture sectors for social understanding inspire creativity and promote a sense of shared identity. It further leverages the potential of a creative industry to create jobs and stimulate economic growth through initiatives like the Mzansi Golden Economy, MGE.

Hon Chairperson, the plan also promotes equitable access to sport, arts and cultural activities for all South Africans, ensuring that these resources are accessible to everyone regardless of their background or the location which aligns with the National Sports, Arts and Culture vote speech.

In the province, our rural cricketers are able to witness availability of cricket sets, combination courts are being built in peripheral areas, hockey and rugby are being introduced in those previously disadvantaged areas because of this important budget.

Hon Chair, this budget is about investing in the spirit of our nation, a spirit that lives through our athletes, artists, languages, stories, heritage sites and libraries. In Limpopo in Northern Sotho, we say ...

*Sepedi:*

... setšhaba seo se sa šomego mmogo ga se na bokamoso.

*English:*

A community that does not work together does not have a future. This department is entrusted with holding that community together to ensure that we promote unity, oneness, social cohesion and nation-building. Hon Chair, it should be noted that the budget speaks to the provincial priorities of which the allocation which goes a long way in supporting the rural sport development and competitive school sports, infrastructure renewal for libraries, museums and community arts centres, grassroots talent identification and nurturing

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promotion of indigenous languages, traditions and oral history the preservation of cultural heritage and archives whilst supporting the township and village based creative industry.

Hon Chair, a few days ago I had an honour of addressing a team before their departure to the Winter National Schools Sport Championships that took place in Durban this weekend. The passion I witnessed reaffirmed that with the right support, the next Banyana Banyana, the next Siya Kolisi, the next, Caster Semenya may very well emerge from rural Limpopo.

As a province, we have witnessed the significance of the budget that has been allocated that for the first time, the budget will assist us in constructing a provincial theatre where talent will be exposed, where young people will be given an opportunity to come and expose their talents.

Through this budget, we are going to conclude or complete two libraries and construct two new libraries in the province. Together with Limpopo Academy of Sports and the private sector, we are mobilising resources, hon Chair, to build a high-performance sport centre for the majority of our talented athletes, which to us is a very fundamental priority.

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In the arts and culture sector, our artists are not only creative, but they are catalysts of economic activity and cultural identity. They tell our stories, reflect our struggles and inspire our dreams. This budget is crucial in supporting the development and funding of the emerging artists, especially in the province.

The expansion of community arts centres, theatres and the hosting of local and national cultural festivals like Mapungubwe. The former President, Nelson Mandela once said.

“If you talk to a man in his language that goes to his heart.”

That wisdom guides our approach to the heritage languages, thus safeguarding our heritage and identity. South Africa's story is incomplete without its indigenous languages. As Limpopo, we are proud custodians of the rich heritage from the ringing of Mapungubwe, the royal legacies of Bapedi, Vha Vhembe, Vha Venda and Tsonga people. We are using this funding to honour the historical of the past. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Ms V TLHAPI (North West): Thank you very much, Chairperson, let me greet you, hon Chairperson of NCOP, Mme Refilwe Mtshweni,

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the Deputy Chairperson, my Minister, Ntate McKenzie, Mme, Deputy Minister, Peace Mabe and all members that are on the platform and that are in the House. Let me be safe and say all protocol observed, Chairperson.

I intend not to delve much into the 24-25 department's achievement but rather to make it a brief presentation on the recent milestones reached by the department. The department has made considerable strides in accelerating the development, the growth, and the transformation of arts, culture sports, recreation, and heritage in the North West province.

Allow me, hon members, to reflect just a bit on one or two significant milestones that the department has reached in the 2024-25 financial year. Otherwise, a fully detailed presentation, on our successes will form part of the budget speech that will be delivered next week.

In giving effect to the strategic priorities of the medium-term development plan, especially with respect to the evolving global economy, it is important that government responds to the growing need of intrusive growth by promoting economic growth and job creation initiatives in our rural areas.

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The Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation in giving effect to the latter, strategic priority has in the previous financial year created more than 1 000 job opportunities through EPWP leadership and internship.

Women Capital Development is a key enabler of our department's success. In the previous year, the department awarded bursaries to its employees and by so doing, the department is upskilling employees to be competitive so that they sufficiently contribute to the service delivery.

The department remains committed to executing the National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide. Our fight as the department against GBV and femicide is evidently visible through our series of campaigns that demonstrate our relentless efforts in combating the pandemic of GBV and femicide. Our mission is to forge a society where a girl child and a woman live together with men in harmony, without any possible threat or prey on them.

Three of our libraries, the one in Migdal and another one in Matau as well as Uitkyk in the previous financial year were successfully completed and provided with the necessary books,

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furniture, and material for operation. As we speak, our communities have access to those libraries.

Allow me to briefly speak to our mandate vis-à-vis the recent milestone we have acquired. In executing the arts, culture, sports and recreation departmental mandate of fostering social cohesion and national identity, as well as increasing the economic impact of sports. The North West province through its partnership with Netball, South Africa and other key strategic partners hosted the 2025 First Power Week edition of the Africa's largest franchise competition, which is the Telkom Netball League in Sun City Super Bowl.

The African Premier Franchise Netball Tournament has brought together people of diverse cultural backgrounds and has had a serious boost of the economy, transport, tourism sector as well as the employment of the local rural people. The Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation like all other departments has the responsibility of community engagement as a way of bridging the gap between government and its people.

Government service is striving to build strong and lasting relationship between the department and the Northwest

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University community. The department has on the 3rd of April held a public lecture under the theme: *The place of literacy works and media in the sustenance of our indigenous language and culture in in South Africa*. The lecture was delivered by the political head of the North West Department of Arts and Culture, who is me, on behalf of the Minister, Mackenzie. The Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation, as a provincial custodian of a national commemorative day, in collaboration with the provincial government led by the North West Premier held a successful Freedom Day celebration on 30th of April in Ledig Sports ground under the theme: *United in Resilience for the defence of our Freedom and Democracy*. The official provincial Freedom Day commemorative event was preceded by the various activities organised and led by the MEC of that department.

Hon Chair, in recognising the athletic teamwork strategy and commitment involved in cheerleading despite it being widely classified as a simple activity of cheering on athletics. The Department of Arts and Culture is striving to give recognition to cheerleading as an equal, traditional sport that requires high-energy activity, consisting of stunts, jumps, tumbling, etc. Held a welcoming ceremony with athletes who participated

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in the year's competitive cheerleading in Orlando in the United States of America.

In developing and promoting sports with the aim of bringing together diverse groups and creating a socially cohesive society with a common national identity. The department has provided athletes who participated in the 2025 Comrades Marathon with all the necessary support to uphold and advance the legacy of the North West province in the Ultimate Human Race, beyond the latter support. The department has also warmly welcomed back the North West Comrades Marathon runners in our Tambo International Airport, and the department held a Comrades Marathon welcome ceremony, where Ntate Tete Dijana was honoured for his third Comrades Marathon as well as other champions from the North West, who dominated the 2025 Comrades Marathon among the top 10 achievers.

The North West provincial government through the Department of Agriculture held a successful June 16 Youth Day commemoration in the North West University's Rec Farm Stadium, Potchefstroom in the J B Marks Local Municipality under the theme: *Skills for the Changing World - Empowering Youth for the Meaningful Economic Participation*. The June 16 Youth Commemoration event was preceded by the Cultural and creative industries use

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Career Expo on June 15, as a build up to the main event on the June 16 Youth Day.

Hon Chair, in supporting and promoting the legacy of the North West athletes in the global sporting arena, the department has also, on 20th of June, led the launch of the Project 350, which was pronounced by the Minister Mackenzie. The MEC has held this event successfully and the athletes have attended it. We are going to make sure that this department will support this project as we were the first to launch the 350 that was pronounced by the Minister.

In supporting and transforming the sport fraternity in the North West province, as part of the apex priorities of the Seventh administration in driving an inclusive growth, building a capable and ethical development state. The Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation has long established relationship with the Orbit college, a football club that dates from some time back.

The department has been providing the club with the necessary support that was needed by the football club. Through the Department of Arts and Culture, commitment in a creating platform for cultural and local artistic creatives, in driving

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the competitiveness on the national and global stages, the lowest children as one of the unique talented theatre productions with some of its works supported by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture and Mmabana in preserving the Botswana culture heritage. In pursuit of this provincial government investment ... [Time expired.]

Mr B J FARMER: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour - the God without whom we will not succeed.

Hon Matigwana, how can you complain of being neglected as a province when you once had the country's president for two terms, who, by the way, is now your party's president? If you look for poor leadership, start at home.

Chairperson, the day when the Freedom Front Plus quote Lenin, "we might be getting somewhere as a country". Hon Du Plessis, the apartheid beneficiation difference is still felt by *onse mense* [our people]. You can wish it away as much as you can, however, it remained a reality.

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Honourable Gericke, I have it under good authority that both you and me will not be alive anymore by the time the EFF governs this country. [Laughter.]

Chairperson, today I stand not only as a member of this house but as a proud patriot because this budget vote speaks directly to the heartbeat and soul of our nation - our sport, our arts, our heritage and our pride. Chairperson, when our young people run onto the field, when our artists step onto the stage and when our heritage is celebrated in our communities, we see hope, unity and economic potential come alive. And that is why the Patriotic Alliance stands firmly in support of this budget vote, led by none other than our party president, the hon Minister Gayton McKenzie, born as a gifted athlete in running. That's why this portfolio suits him like a glove.

This vote is not just about funding events or building stadiums. It's about building a nation that knows who it is, where it comes from and where it can still become. Hon members, far too often sport, arts and culture are treated like an afterthought, nice-to-have when there's money left over. But, for the Patriotic Alliance, the sector is a frontline, too, for nation building, job creation and social

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cohesion. Our sporting heroes inspire our townships and rural villages. Our magicians and artists put food on the table with their talents. Our cultural workers safeguard our identity, languages and stories. If we invest here, we invest in community pride and economic opportunity.

Chairperson, this budget vote translates into real change on the ground: more community sport facilities that are safe, accessible and maintained; genuine support for local artists - not just big stars, but young hungry talent in our towns and villages; strong investment in township and rural arts projects so that our young people see culture as a career, not just a hobby; and proper heritage site protection because our identity and history must be preserved for the next generation.

Hon members, the Patriotic Alliance believes in accountability. That is why we will stand behind our Minister and ensure that every rand spent here empowers a child to dream, an artist to create and a community to come together under one flag. We know that under the leadership of hon Minister, this department can become a model of delivery and pride. It is not enough to clap when an athlete wins gold; we must invest before they run, train and compete.

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Chairperson, in every township street soccer game, in every rural choir practice and in every cultural festival, there is a raw power waiting to be unlocked. Our task as Parliament is to unleash that power and give our people the stage, the field and the funding to thrive. We do not just support this budget vote because the Minister is our President, we support it because our communities need it and our youth deserve it. This budget must not fail them and we as the PA will stand shoulder to shoulder with our Minister to make sure it does not. Let us build a South Africa that is proud, united and inspired by its own talent and heritage. The Patriotic Alliance says, "Let's play, let's create and let's celebrate, together." Hon Minister, ...

*Afrikaans:*

*...moenie baiza nie.* [Laughter.] Salute.

Mr M BILLY: The hon House Chair, the hon Minister, the Deputy Minister, hon Members of this House and fellow South Africans.

Chairperson, allow me to begin with a personal reflection.

After his release from prison, the hon Gayton McKenzie embarked on a motivational tour across the country. He shared harrowing stories of his criminal past, prison life and the

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possibility of redemption. I was one of the learners in Chatsworth who heard him speak and that moment left a lasting mark on many of us coming from crime-ridden communities like Umlazi and Lamontville. I shared this because I believe in the power of second chances. But Minister, redemption in private life must now translate into public accountability and responsible leadership, especially within a department as powerful and as symbolic as this one.

Chairperson, the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture is not a luxury portfolio. It is a powerful engine for unity - from the Rugby World Cup to the Minstrel Carnival in Cape Town, from the African Cup of Nations to *Umkhosi woMhlanga* in KwaZulu-Natal. These moments of celebration remind us that we are indeed one nation. However, hon Chairperson, our unity is sometimes fragile.

It is deeply concerning that just last week a member of the Minister's own party, the PA, used a racial slur calling another Member of this House a "coconut". Such language undermines the constitutional values of dignity, equality and respect that this department is meant to champion. This might not be your fault, hon Minister, but this requires you to publicly reject such divisive rhetoric if your commitment to

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social cohesion is truly sincere. Maybe, let me pause there and take this moment to also just reflect briefly on the comment you made at the beginning of your presentation, Minister, where you referred to one of the Members of this House as "this white man". Now we differ quite a lot with hon Farmer in this House, hon Minister, but at no point do we call each other "this coloured man" or "this white man". I think you must self-reflect on that, and perhaps do the right thing and apologise for that, hon Minister.

Chairperson, the department's 2025-26 annual performance plan sets out admirable goals, which is to increase participation, inclusive growth, empowerment of marginalised communities and nation building. But these aspirations ring hollow if the department shields waste mismanagement or corruption. Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, weeks ago, a former DA MP, Liam Jacobs, raised red flags about Vincent Blennies' resignation as CEO of the National Film and Video Foundation following allegations of wasteful expenditure at the Cannes Film Festival.

Hon Chairperson, Jacob stated that resignation does not equal to accountability and when further calling for Blennies' removal from the Board of Boxing SA, Jacob said his continued

presence raises serious questions about the Minister's commitment to clean governance. On a separate occasion, Jacob also accused the Minister of shielding Netball SA from serious allegations of mismanagement and evading parliamentary oversight. In his words and I quote, he said,

South Africans deserve a Minister who respects Parliament, enforces accountability and protects the integrity of sport, not one who plays referee and a player at the same time.

I am not going to explain what that means. Chairperson, if the Minister wishes to be remembered as a reformer rather than a protector of patronage, he must be bold and take bold action. The same people cannot always be funded while emerging voices and deserving communities are ignored. Transformation without fairness is merely favouritism.

Chairperson, we urge the Minister to prioritise the following urgent interventions:

- Equitably support cultural heritage and sporting events, not only those that benefit from political allies, but all that celebrate our diverse identity.

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- The Minister is to invest in infrastructure and undeserved communities because talent does not reside only in Sandton or Stellenbosch. It flourishes in Khayelitsha, Thembisa, Nongoma and beyond.

We welcome the MOU signed between the Department of Basic Education and the Minister's department. This must produce clear results. The department's own strategic plan commits to youth, women and persons with disability, while creating safe and inclusive public spaces. We will hold the Minister accountable to that promise.

Hon Chairperson, finally, Minister McKenzie, your life story reminds us that people can rise from the ashes, as you've correctly said that the President trusted you. But South Africans now look to you to rise to the demands of ethical leadership. Let this department become a launchpad for the talented, the creative and the courageous, not a platform for the politically connected. Let's stop using our artists as props at rallies, as the ANC did previously. Let's build a sustainable, transparent and empowering cultural economy, one that does not throw money at performers for photo ops but builds real careers and dignity. I thank you.

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Mr M F MOKWELE: Chairperson, greetings to the Chairperson of the NCOP, House Chairs, the Chief Whip of the Council, hon members, fellow citizens, before I share with fellow South Africans as to why the African National Congress supports Budget Vote 37, I firstly want to praise the Minister, if you can allow me. I heard you Minister when you were at the podium, telling us about your past life. You even indicated that the real Commander-in-Chief, the President of the Republic, Cyril Ramaphosa, took a risk to appoint you as the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture.

I just want to assure you that the President knew what he was doing. Because your experience on the street is the experience that gives you understanding of what the real needs of our people is. You are one of the few Ministers who understands the transformation agenda of the African National Congress. That is why the President appointed you, it was not a mistake.

Before I even further share with the fellow South Africans what I have, I just want to conscientise the speaker who was here. I will start with the uMkhonto weSizwe Party member, which I am not going to be long on him. Minister, I heard that you would respond to him. Just to educate him so that when he goes back to KwaZulu-Natal, where he is on the opposition

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bench, he must understand that indeed, like you said ... I heard you, hon Maxegwane when you were saying that a budget is not a financial statement, let me just correct you.

Hon Maxegwane, a budget is a financial statement. Let me give you a free lecture so that you must not lie to the public and say that budget is not a financial statement. Everywhere in the country, we never heard that a budget is sufficient, a budget is never sufficient. That is why when we are preparing a budget, we will always look at priorities. Hence, as the ANC, we are saying that this budget is a pro-poor budget. So, that is the only message. The Minister will deal with the other members. He will respond to them.

To the EFF, hon Gericke, I heard you when you were at this podium saying that the African National Congress has been rejected by the masses. But the real truth is that if there is a party that has been rejected by the masses it is the EFF. We all know that even previously, you are the only party that lost majority. And even currently, while we are speaking, in Limpopo you are losing elections.

But let me get to the subject. Hon House Chair, we rise today to support Budget Vote 37 with an unwavering conviction,

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focussing on transformative potential of infrastructure development and access in creating a truly inclusive participation in sports, arts, and culture. This debate occurs at a pivotal moment when the ANC-led Government of National Unity, GNU, has committed to accelerating infrastructure investment with over R940 billion allocated for infrastructure development over the next three years.

House Chair, the foundation of our support, as an African National Congress, rests on the constitutional mandate to redress historical imbalances and ensure equitable access to cultural, sporting, and heritage resources. As emphasised in the ANC transformation agenda, Minister, as I said, our principal task remains to mobilise all strata and classes, including the new social forces born out of democracy around the national programme of transformation, to build a national democratic society.

The allocation of R6,81 billion for the 2025/26 financial year to the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is a concrete expression of this commitment. The modernisation of the library system is a cornerstone of our infrastructure transformation strategy. The community library service grant demonstrates the government's commitment with an increase in

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current funding from R1,39 billion in the 2025/26 financial year to R1,80 billion in the 2027/28 financial year, an increase of R29,5 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, period. This investment will implement the traditional library concept for this facility as a digital hub and community development centre. This approach to library modernisation aligns with the 2025 state of nation address commitment to invest in digital public infrastructure to give South African access to government services anytime, anywhere through relaunched platforms.

Libraries serve as a critical access point for digital inclusion, particularly in under-served communities where internet connectivity remains limited. By offering free Wi-Fi, digital literacy programme, and access to e-government services, libraries are becoming anchors in the drive towards a more equitable digital society. This transformation is vital for empowering citizens to access educational opportunity, job market, essential services, fostering culture and lifelong learning.

Hon members, we must emphasise that implementation of accessible infrastructure for persons living with disabilities in sports, arts, and culture represent both imperative and

practical necessity. As highlighted in a recent government commitment, persons with disability are not special category, but equal citizen, right holders, and co-architect of our democracy.

There is even a universal design implementation that states that all new developments must conform to the principle of universal design from conception to completion. This includes barrier-free entrances, paths, seating areas and aids in stadiums, theatres, museums, and cultural centres. The modernisation of cultural heritage infrastructure is one component of our transformation agenda. An amount of R2,79 billion has been allocated for the promotion and preservation of cultural heritage, representing 44,2% of the total budget. The investment reflects our commitment to preserving South African diverse cultural heritage while making it accessible through modern technology.

We emphasise the importance of digital platform and information communication technology, ICT, infrastructure as a strategic intervention to address historical imbalances in access to cultural and sporting resources. This initiative directly responds to infrastructure challenges identified in rural areas where poor road infrastructure, district access to

essential services including health care, education, and economic opportunities.

Hon members, there is a need for us to address historical imbalances. The prioritisation of infrastructure development in rural areas and township directly addresses the spatial inequality entrenched by policies. As documented, the 1913 Land Act that dispossessed black community of land and prevented them from owning property was the watershed moment in the country's history and the primary reason South Africa is presently one of the most unequal countries in the world. That is why the redistribution of land must happen now, not later.

We want to emphasise on the importance of provincial and municipal co-ordination. The integration of service delivery should mean effective infrastructure development that requires seamless co-ordination between national, provincial, and municipal government. The implementation of District Development Model, DDM, must enable all key players in government, business, labour, and community-based organisations to work together. It is Important to highlight is that intergovernmental co-ordination by the budget implementation includes joint planning committee across

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government's sphere. Shares funding mechanism can leverage resources from multiple sources. Co-ordinated service delivery that maximises community impact, knowledge sharing that ensures best practise are replicated.

Transforming infrastructure and access across South African provinces is central to achieving through inclusive participation in the sports, arts, and culture. Each province faces unique challenges ranging from rural isolation in Limpopo and Eastern Cape to urban congestion in Gauteng and Western Cape.

By tailoring infrastructure investment to provincial needs, government ensures that the resources reach historical undeserved community, bridging spatial divide created by the apartheid era policies. For example, targeting upgrade to rural libraries, community centres, and sporting facilities in provinces like Mpumalanga and Northern Cape provide vital platform for the youth.

Hon members, collaboration between provincial government, municipalities and private sector is vital for maximising the impact of infrastructure investment. By leveraging shared funding and mechanism and knowledge of exchange in province

can implement large-scale projects such as integrated public transport and system or regional sports academic that will be accountable in isolation. This partnership ensures that infrastructure upgrade aligns with the local development plans and community priorities resulting in more responsive and sustainable outcome for inclusive participation.

We support Budget Vote 87, as it provides tools to transform this vision into reality for millions of South Africans who have been waiting too long for meaningful access of culture and sporting. The journey towards inclusive participation requires sustained commitment, strategy, investment, and collaboration across all sectors in society. Budget Vote 37 provides the foundation for the transformation, and we must ensure its full implementation with urgency. By fostering culture for accountability and shared responsibility, we can create legacy and inclusive growth and opportunity for generation to come.

Hon Minister, before I conclude, you have indicated that we are currently in the GNU, which is led by the ANC and in which you are also a Minister. But I am a bit concerned about the behaviour of the DA, which is also part of the GNU. At some point the DA will decide which Budget Vote it will support

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while being part of the GNU. Minister, you are more than right because when we are in government, all political parties in this House are there to serve the community. Just like the EFF and the MK Party who say they are against the budget, but why are they in this House? We are here to serve our people. So, if you oppose the budget like the EFF, the community will always oppose you.

As the African National Congress, we will continue supporting the ANC-led government ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Mokwele, can I ask you to take your seat please? Yes, hon Gericke, what is your point of order?

Mr V GERICKE: I want to ask whether the hon member will take a question.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Let us hear him out. Are you prepared to take a question, hon Mokwele?

Mr M F MOKWELE: No, I do not have time for that. Minister, I want to assure you that you must never be deterred. Do not let

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anyone destabilise you. The ANC-led GNU will always support you. Amandla! Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ART AND CULTURE: Hon Chairperson, let me start by thanking all the parties that supported and would support this budget, going forward. Your words are too great to mention. I am profoundly grateful for the words and the support that has been lent to this pro-poor budget. I also hope the parties that did not support this budget will be as brave to tell the communities that they had not support this budget, and they don't want to change the lives of the communities.

It brings me to hon Breedts, AI manipulation is a serious concern for us. We are hard at work to counter this and welcome the enemy in our space at the moment. There is an African proverb that says, until the lion learns how to write their own story, every story will glorify the hunter. So, I want to deal with our story.

Hon Virgill Gericke has gone on here and said that he is telling the people how bad and how corrupt the department is, how we are doing nothing. We have, two weeks ago, fixed the stadium in your constituency. We spent R40 million. When you

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were there, you did not do anything for the people. That is why they rejected you and they voted for me when I was going up against you in your own ward. Thank you. The voters rejected you and they chose me, who is not from there.

So, hon Peter, I just want to say, you came here and you spoke your language. Hon Maxegwana, you come here and you ask why I did not use African things, but you come here and you speak English, with an accent like you are from Europe. First, get your accent before you come to ... First, go and get your accent.

Hon Billy, I am very happy that I have managed to play a role in your life. You say I must apologise, but you got selective outrage. You said nothing when this coloured man was saying that I bribe people. It is a bribe. He is accusing me of a crime. Your inability to confront white wrong has stopped you from standing up here and from telling a person.

Secondly, you come here and you say, you quote Liam Jacobs extensively, but you don't quote him fully, where he said that he left the DA because it is a racist party. Black people have no place in the DA. So, when you want to quote, don't quote selectively, quote everything.

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And lastly, and most importantly, I kept this for last, hon Du Plessis, you come here and you want to teach me about race and racism, something you know nothing about. It is something that I have experienced my whole life. You say that you have privileged life.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Du Plessis, what is your point of order?

Ms N S Du PLESSIS: I rise on Rule 66(1), in addition to Rule 4, which is that Cabinet Ministers also need to comply with the Rules of the NCOP. The Rule says, during a debate in the Council, a delegate may be allowed to explain a previous speech, but only when and to the extent that the speech has been misquoted or misunderstood in a material respect.

I would like to move that there was a misunderstanding or a misquotation of the spirit and the terms of the speech that I gave.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Du Plessis, I am not sure if you are asking me to rule on that.

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Ms N S Du PLESSIS: Hon House Chair, would you like more explanation? And I am very happy to give more explanation.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): I think, you have made it clear. You have made your point.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ART AND CULTURE: Afrikaans is my first language. When you say, ...

*Afrikaans:*

... ek praat van ons mense, ...

*English:*

... and that I only speak about our people, that for me is an affront. So, hon member, you talk about Hawston, where you grew up and you talk about how you grew up. You don't know what we went through in the very same Hawston, when we were growing up. We were killed; we were marginalised. You talk about racism.

Ms N S Du PLESSIS: Hon House Chair, I would like to rise again. I rise again on Rule 66(1). There is a deliberate misunderstanding and misquotation of my speech by the hon Minister. Again, I would like to remind the hon Minister of

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Rule 4 that says Cabinet Ministers have to comply with the Rules of the NCOP.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Perhaps, you can just detail what the Minister is misunderstanding, hon Du Plessis.

Ms N S Du PLESSIS: Hon House Chair, I would like to say that I never said I understood the experience. What I said is I was open enough to listen to the experience of others and to show empathy for what people have gone through. Additionally, I would like to add, hon Minister, I had to actually walk through a protest in Hawston when I was 13 years old. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, hon Du Plessis. I think, it is not a chance to reopen your debate, but you have clarified your point adequately.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ART AND CULTURE: I am glad that you now no longer say that I am racist, but I want to tell you that there are white people that did not just walk through protests. They were imprisoned. They were with us in the trenches. They were fighting. Your closest experience to the

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struggle we fought was to walk past a struggle, and the apartheid police would have done nothing.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Du Plessis, please, let us not turn this into a dialogue, but what is your point of order?

Ms N S Du PLESSIS: Hon House Chair, this is not a dialogue. However, the Minister is continuing to misquote with intent and misunderstand in a material respect.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Du Plessis, I think that whilst, you have made your point clear, it is a matter for debate. The Minister is debating. I think the Minister should continue, but, please, confine yourself to the content of the speech.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ART AND CULTURE: I have 15 seconds left. I just want to say to the hon Peace Mabe, the Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, you are one of the most progressive people I have ever met in politics. Working with you was an honour. We are working in the GNU. Thank you very much.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): I would like to thank the Minister and the Deputy Minister. Hon members, be seated until I have concluded. Hon member! I would like to thank the permanent delegates, MECs that participated, all special delegates and Salga representatives for availing themselves for the sitting.

Debate concluded.

The Council adjourned at 20:11.