**THURSDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2025**

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***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY***

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The House met at 14:00.

The House Chairperson C T Frolick took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

## CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON WATER AND SANITATION ON SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES INFRASTRUCTURE AGENCY SOC LIMITED AMENDMENT BILL

There was no debate.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINOTITY PARTY: House Chairperson, I move that the report be adopted.

Question put: That the motion be agreed to.

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Motion agreed to.

Report accordingly adopted.

## SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES INFRASTRUCTURE AGENCY SOC LIMITED AMENDMENT BILL

(Second reading debate)

Mr L J BASSON: House Chairperson, the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency Act, was passed last year, to consider key water infrastructure functions into a single entity. However, a technical flaw was identified, after promulgation. Section 3(2) provided that the Minister of Finance would amend Schedule 2 of the Public Finance Management Act, PFMA, to list this agency as a major public entity.

National Treasury, the Presidency and the chief state law advisor, all confirmed this was legally incorrect. The PFMA does not empower the Minister of Finance to amend Schedule 2. Leaving this unresolved would have created legal uncertainty and undermined the agency’s ability to operate effectively.

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This Amendment Bill corrects this flaw. It provides that the agency will automatically be listed as a Schedule 2 upon incorporation, and that the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority will be deleted from Schedule 2, once this is established.

South Africa faces a water infrastructure crisis. We need to build and maintain dams, pipelines and transfer schemes on a scale far greater than current capacity allows.

House Chairperson, the fiscus can no longer bear this responsibility alone. The agency model allows to unlock finances by using its asset base and revenue streams. The agency will be positioned to raise funds with greater speed and at more affordable rate, underpinned by the credibility of its own balance sheet. This reduces expenditure on state guarantees.

Unlike the old model of depending on state guarantees, the agency ensures financial sustainability. It also consolidates TCTA, the water trading entity and part of the department, into one entity, improving governance and accountability.

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The Amendment Bill was developed with full consultation, National Treasury, the Presidency, TCTA, and the state law advisors, all expressed support of this correction.

During the original legislative process, it was made clear that the agency would be listed as a Scheduled 2 public entity. That position has not changed. This Bill simply implements that intent correctly.

No objectives were received confirming that this amendment is corrective, uncontroversial and in national interest. Of the due consideration, the portfolio committee find that this Bill rectifies the legal error and ensures compliance with the PFMA, provides certainty for the agency's establishment, improves investor confidence and finance prospects, and support the agent's ... [Inaudible.] ... of infrastructure, to secure South Africa's water future.

The Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation recommends that the National Assembly adopts this Amendment Bill without further amendments.

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In conclusion, this Bill is corrected, lawful and forward-looking. It places the agency on a firm foundation ready to deliver dams, pipelines and transfer schemes. Our economy and South Africans urgently need. The committee supports this Amendment Bill. I thank you.

Mr K S RAMAILA: House Chair, hon Deputy Minister, hon members, in the year 2012, as the ruling party, we adopted the 2013 National Development Plan, which recognized the country's water infrastructure crisis and recommended the establishment of a national water resource infrastructure agency, which the ANC-led government is currently establishing through the measure of the water trading entity and the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority.

House Chair, as the ANC, we are determined to realize the goal of the National Development Plan to transform the state's capacity for water Infrastructure development to meet the growing demand for both domestic and commercial water use.

The steps taken so far to establish the agency, which we expect to complete by this time next year demonstrate our commitment. As the portfolio committee, we receive a

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presentation from ministry on their proposed Amendment Bill, which was a technical correction to the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency Act.

After deliberations, as a majority vote, duly adopted the motion to amend, with one record objection, declaring that the proposed amendment was desirable. We supported the Amendment Bill because it seeks to correct a legal anormally, concerning powers assigned to the Ministry of Finance, thereby ensuring that only Parliament may amend the Public Finance Management Act.

Hon members, public participation is the cornerstone of our democracy, and it brings into reality the *Freedom Charter's* injunction - the people shall govern. These Amendment Bill is a section 75 Bill. That is, it is an ordinary law that does not affect the provinces, but Parliament is required to issue a call for public comments by advertising in all the country's provincial and national newspapers and on its website.

The portfolio committee completed the legislative process and received two submissions, one supported amendment with the recommendations, while the other was irrelevant and not

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considered because it was an application for employment sent to an incorrect e-mail address.

Due to the nature of the Amendment Bill, the portfolio committee felt that there was no need to hold public hearings despite some initial considerations. As the portfolio committee, we did consider the single submission which among others proposed or recommended that the agency should uphold and promote public participation in the planning and development of water infrastructure.

We also proposed that the agency in its program to develop infrastructure should pay particular focus on rural communities.

House Chair, as the ANC, we commend the ministry and the department for their exceptional efforts in easing our concerns regarding the agency’s establishment as a state-owned entity. In the recent past, the country state-owned entities had been negatively impacted by the state capture, which destroyed the capacity of the state, and these entities to deliver on their developmental mandate.

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After receiving the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency, Act 34 of 2024, we are convinced that our predecessors have created legislative design to protect the entity from rogue elements within, and outside government who may seek to exploit it for their own selfish interest in capital accumulation at the expense of our people. Our predecessors have enacted progressive legislation that ensures that our government prioritizes the needs of people over profit accumulation by large corporations.

House Chairperson, our committee reviewed the received comments and discussed each clause of the Amendment Bill, concluding that no additional amendments needed to be made to the clauses as presented in the Bill.

The committee members said they would reserve their right to support the Amendment Bill in the National Assembly, so we would not be surprised if they do not support it today.

As the ANC, we have an electoral mandate to take steps towards realizing a better life for all. Therefore, we are responsible for supporting initiatives that contribute to this objective. We believe that ... [Inaudible.] ... the agency is one of the

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measures needed to enhance state capability, support water authorities, and improve access to equitable distribution of water infrastructure building on democratic gains.

House Chair, the seventh administration has prioritized the water and sanitation sector as a top priority, as shown by the establishment of the water task team, chaired by the Deputy President, its integration into *Operation Vulindlela* and the convening of the Water and Sanitation Indaba, earlier this year, which produced important recommendations and action plan.

As the ANC, we commend the steps that have also been taken to build the capacity and capabilities of both water boards and water sales authorities, which are the weakest links in the water and sanitation value chain. We are eagerly awaiting the completion of establishing the agency, which will be responsible for providing both technical and advisory support for developmental entities, including water boards and water service authorities.

It is of paramount important that the capabilities and capacity of the water entities be enhanced to ensure that they

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take the lead in water sector to reduce the dependence on service providers, as some of the current challenges we are facing are because of their shoddy work.

Hon members, our ANC-led government is establishing the agency as part of building the capacity and capabilities of the state to deliver on its constitutional mandate, which also involved the management of water, a scarce resource in our country, but also mitigates against impact of climate change and the failures of local government.

As a country, we are struggling to manage these important resources, as evidenced by the high levels of non-revenue water losses recorded.

As reported in the last not drop report of 2023, no revenue water losses have increased from the 35% recorded in 2015 to 46,4% in June 2022, well above the international average of the of record of below 30%, while water losses stood at 40,7%. Therefore, the need for the agency is time sensitive to address this poor management of scarce resource.

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House Chairperson, we as the ANC, proposed that the national department urgently provide necessary support for water sales authorities by seconding personnel critical skills, and also by invoking the secondary functions of the water boards to assist these authorities.

In addition, we as the ANC believe that the high-level declaration and resolution of the Water and Sanitation Indaba are important in realizing the goals of the National Development Plan. Among the resolutions that Indaba said among others:

The ANC-led government should take steps to increase investment through in financing options and ensure the financial viability of the sector, a responsibility conferred to the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency.

We, as the ANC believe that we are on course to realize some of the NDP's goals related to water sector and it is in particular fact that we support this Amendment Bill and report to the portfolio committee. I thank you. [Time expired.]

*IsiZulu*:

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Mnu V G REDDY: Gwaza!

*English*:

Hon House Chairperson, I rise on behalf of the MKP to reject this report as we speak for millions of South Africans who are tired of excuses and empty promises. You have just heard the hon member from the ANC talk about the National Development Plan, about Vision 2030, about endless frameworks and strategies. But the facts, hon members, are that our people cannot drink a plan. They cannot flush a toilet with a vision statement. Every year we hear of master plans, turnaround strategies and integrated development frameworks, yet every year service delivery in this country is getting from bad to worse.

This government has turned planning into an Olympic sport. They produce glossy documents while our dams run dry. They hold summits while children queue with buckets. This Bill, colleagues, is sold to us as progress. But do you know what it really is? It's just a bureaucratic shuffle. While taps run dry, dams collapse, and our people queue at broken standpipes, the Minister of Water, she said, and ANC members know about this, she said, my department is not responsible for bringing

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water to the taps. She said, go and blame the municipalities. And guess what? Your President is following the same narrative. You know what this is like? This is like a firefighter saying, I'm not responsible for putting out fires. Go and blame the matches.

You know what this is? This is passing the buck. You know, Mr Ramaphosa, he admitted under his watch that governance in this country has collapsed. And then his party chairman, Mr Gwede Mantashe, guess what he said? He said, ANC councillors, they only know how to dance and sing. That is all. And you know what? This would be funny if it were not so tragic. While they sing, the reality is that mothers in South Africa are walking kilometres to fetch water. Children miss school. Water boards are collapsing under billions in debt. And then Ramaphosa says, ANC councillors must learn from the DA on how to run municipalities. What a joke. You know what? This is not renewal. This can only be described as surrender. Ramaphosa is sounding like the best recruiter for the DA.

Mr N MADUNA: Point of order, Chair!

Mr V G REDDY: Mr Ramaphosa.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Reddy, please take your seat. Yes, hon member, why do you want to be recognised?

Mr N MADUNA: Chair, on a point of order: We do not have Ramaphosa, we have President Ramaphosa. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you. Hon Reddy, let's continue referring to each other in respectful terms.

Mr V G REDDY: Mr Ramaphosa. Mr Ramaphosa, this is not, you know, Mr Ramaphosa has become the DA's biggest imbongi [praise singer]. That is what he's become. He is ANC on the outside and he's DA on the inside. And he's yearning for the day when the DA will take over the government. Imagine the DA posters saying, go and vote for the DA because Mr Ramaphosa said so. Let us just remind you, ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Reddy, take your seat, please. Yes, hon member, why do you want to be recognised?

Mr V G REDDY: I am getting there. I am putting the context.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members. There is a member on the floor.

Mr G J SKOSANA: Hon House Chair, on a point of order: I'm rising on Rule 85. The hon member is casting aspersion on the President. He says the President is DA on the inside. That is casting aspersion. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, I will check the recording and I will come back with a considered ruling if necessary. Please continue, hon member.

Mr V G REDDY: Thank you, House Chairperson. So when you go to Khayelitsha, you see, because Mr Ramaphosa said that ANC members must start emulating DA members, right? Go to DA municipalities like Khayelitsha and Philippi, where families are living in squalor under DA rule, where sewage runs through the streets, and where the poor are treated as second-class citizens. And this is no longer about communities that never had water. Even those who have always had water now are suffering from water shedding. Water is off from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Go fill your buckets. You know what this is? It's load

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shedding's evil twin. But even today, what do you find? White South Africans are actually marching for water.

You know we have a full-blown crisis when even whites are now taking to the streets and saying, bring back our water. In Queensburgh, residents went over a year without water. They're relying on water tankers to survive. Statistics SA statistics show something very interesting, and I want to share that with you now. It says, ... [Interjections.] ... no, you must know this, but it's the truth. This is the truth. The truth will set you free. You know what? One-fifth of the country's population here is relying on water tankers today, and that's what they don't want to hear. ANC don't want to hear the truth. Well, we are here as MKP to tell you the truth because we represent millions of people on the ground. When we speak, we speak for our people. Now, you go to Phoenix, you go to Tongaat, you go to Johannesburg, water shedding is now a weekly reality. In Sol Plaatje Municipality, people have marched because their taps have become ornaments. Now, look at this Bill very carefully, right, colleagues? We are giving the agency more power to raise more money for infrastructure, but you know what we're doing? We're putting more money into a bucket that has got big leaks, and instead of fixing the

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leaks, what are we doing, we're adding more water. And who pays? Our people are paying, who can barely put food on the table.

South Africa loses more than 40% of its treated water. That's over R10 billion a year, literally going down the drain. What are we doing about non-revenue water? Executives are earning millions in salaries and bonuses while projects are failing because there is no plan to run them after construction. This Bill does absolutely nothing to stop waste, nothing to fix non-revenue water, nothing to make executives accountable. It simply throws good money after bad and leaves taxpayers holding the bill. As the MKP, we are not just an opposition party; we are a true liberation movement. Our leaders have taught us to remain humble, to stay with the people and speak the truth in this House. And that's what we will do.

Unlike these ANC leaders, who are so aloof that when they speak here, people at home do not even recognise what they are talking about. Even the Minister of Water, until recently, denied that there was a water crisis. Nowadays, panic, but panic is not a plan, and denial is not leadership. As the MKP, we are saying, reject this, Bill. You only heard that one

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person came to the public hearings. The other person who came made a mistake and thought it was a job application. But one person, only one person out of 63 million people, responded to this. We are saying to open this again.

We need this Bill to be put out back into the public for further engagement. You can't get one comment, one comment, and based on the one comment, you say we want to pass the Bill. That's ridiculous. Where's democracy? Where's engagement with communities? This is not happening. Where is participation? Correct, no participation. So we reject this Bill. We call as the MKP for a National Water Emergency Response Plan, Deputy Minister. We demand transparent audits of water boards. We want direct accountability because when taps run dry, the Minister must answer. We will fight for a water system that puts our people before profit.

Water is life. When the government fails to deliver water, it fails life itself. South Africa does not need another fancy agency with a fancy logo that's going to cost us more millions. It needs courage. It needs integrity. And it needs leaders who can get the basics right. In MKP, we can fix the crisis. We have got the plan. We've got the solution. And

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under an MKP government, we say to all those ANC councillors in the country and ANC leaders who were told that you are not good enough. You are just singers and dancers. We say the doors at MKP are open. Come over. We put the people first. So, we say to you today, reject this report, and reject this Bill.

And before the people reject you at the ballot box, that is what is going to happen. Now, this is very important, Statistics SA says that the percentage of households that experience water interruptions lasting more than two days at a time of 15 days in total over the past year increased from 24,3% in 2012 to 33,7% in 2024. You know what that tells us? It tells us that people who had water before don't have water anymore. And if you are sitting here and saying you don't know somebody who's experiencing this, then you are living in cuckoo land. You have betrayed your own voters. You are not here to represent them. You are just representing a party. You are representing Ramaphosa, and you're representing white monopoly capital. Put the people first. Reject this Bill. Thank you.

Ms F MBIKO: Chairperson, today we debate the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency ... [Interjections.] ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): ... hon members, there is a member on the podium and you are now infringing on her right to make an input in the debate. Hon member from the MK, please, it includes you as well.

Ms F MBIKO: Let me start from the beginning, Sir. Today we debate the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency Amendment Bill. Although the DA voted in opposition to the principal Act in the previous Parliament, this agreement if correctly implemented, will ensure legal certainty, good governance and the long term sustainability of South Africa's water infrastructure. This Bill is at its core a technical amendment. It corrects a legal flaw in the original 2024 Act that granted the Minister of Finance powers beyond what the Public Finance Management Act allows.

The National Treasury, the Office of the Chief State Law Advisor and the presidency, all confirmed that this wedding created an *ultra vires* situation. The amendment now ensures that in corporation, the agency is automatically listed under Schedule 2 of the Public Finance Management Act, PFMA, with the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority removed once it is

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disestablished. This restores compliance with the PFMA and give the agency a solid legal foundation.

For the DA, the rule of law is non-negotiable. A technical error may appear small but without correction it risks undermining investor confidence, delaying projects and creating uncertainty about the agency's authority. By fixing this anomaly, Parliament upholds constitutional governance and ensures that the water sector operates within a sound legal framework. South Africa faces a dire water crisis. We need an ongoing large scale programme to build and maintain dams, pipelines and transfer schemes, yet government fiscal constraints make it impossible to rely solely on the national budget.

The agency model allows us to leverage existing assets and revenues to raise funds on domestic and international markets and here is the key. The Bill improves on the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency Act, NWRIA, by creating an agency that will stand on its own balance sheet. That strength means that it can borrow more cheaply, more quickly and with greater confidence from investors. The stronger financial base will not only reduce dependency on the state but also enable

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the agency to pass these cost savings on infrastructure development.

By freeing itself from the state guarantees and leveraging a strong asset base, the agency will save taxpayers money while unlocking the finance needed to build dams, pipelines and water transfer schemes that our country desperately needs. This is critical for projects such as the Lesotho Highlands Phase 2, the Clanwilliam Dam and other regional transfer schemes that secure water for millions of South Africans and sustain economic growth.

The process leading to this Bill has been extensive and inclusive. All role players and both Houses of Parliament were consulted and supported the technical amendment. Importantly, during the original consultation process the stakeholders were clear that the agency should be a Schedule 2 entity. A position that remains unchanged and is now implemented correctly through this Bill. The fact that no objections were received during the stakeholder engagement, underscores that this amendment is not controversial but corrective and necessary. This amendment Bill reflects three core principles that guide the DA’s approach to governance, it is a respect

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for the rule of law, good governance and sustainable service delivery.

South Africa cannot afford legal uncertainty or governance gaps when it comes to water. Every community, from urban metros to rural villages depends on infrastructure that is well-funded, well-managed and transparent. This Bill is a step in the right direction. In conclusions, Chair, as part of the government of national unity, the DA will hold the government accountable to ensure that this agency delivers on its mandate because every South African has a constitutional right to clean and reliable water. The DA support this amendment. Thank you.

*IsiZulu*:

NK M S KHAWULA: Ngibonge Sihlalo, ngibingelele uMongameli wami uJulius Malema, uMongameli wakusasa. Ngiyabonga. Hhayi uRamaphosa, uMongameli we-DA. Ngowe-DA lowo awusiyeke ngaye. Bayangiphazamisa yazi.

*English:*

As the EFF, we support this Amendment Bill.

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*IsiZulu*:

Lalelani ningasho ukuthi yebo. Ukuphapha phansi. Yehlisani amaphaphu. Kungani siyesekela na? Yingoba siyazibona izinkinga phansi kubantu futhi sizoqinisekisa ukuthi siyobheka njengoba siyesekela nje niyazenza lezi zidingo zabantu njengoba umphakathi wakithi usenkingeni.

Ubaba wenu uRamaphosa usheshe wayincoma i-DA. Angazi noma bamupha isiteki. Uyazi ukuthi ngikushiso yini? La la eKapa, eKhayelitsha nase Phillipi kubolile. I-DA yenzela abantu bayo abamhlophe ayinandaba nomuntu omnyama.

*English:*

In English, it is filthy, filthy, filthy, filthy!

*IsiZulu:*

Kungcolile! Kungcolile! Khona lo Ramaphosa wenu kuyi manje abantu bagcwele la ngaphandle. Bona laba be-ANC yibona abavotele i-ANC kodwa futhi yibona abazoteleka la. Bazokhala. Kulungile, siyadlula lapha, asikho lapho, besininika nje umphako.

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E-Western Cape nase-Eastern Cape abantu bakhona bathathwa njengezingulube, hhayi njengabantu okufanele bathole izidingo zabo ngokufanele. Indle iyantanta emgwaqeni nasezindlini zabo. E-Northen Cape nibabona zinsuku zonke beshaya imashi bevala umgwaqo. Into enibahle kuyo nina ANC ukuthi oSodolobha benu anibabizi nizohlala nabo phansi bachaze ukuthi kwenzakalani. OSodolobha benu uCogta noSalga niyabuka nje.

Hhayi ke eGoli yihlazo. Sengilindele kusasa, angizukulala njengengane uma izoya esikoleni noma iya esikoleni sebanga eliphezulu, ubuthongo abufiki ifuna ukuya khona. Ngoba kusasa sibize uSodolobha waseGoli ake azositshela ukuthi kwenzakalani. Abantu balapha eGoli ezindlini zabo kuqhuma indle. Kubizwe labantu abasebenza ngamapayipi - oplamba. Yinto ebengiyenza ngenkathi ngiseGoli, kuzothi belungisa la kuqhume egcekeni la komunye umuzi. Yimpilo yabantu bakithi abahlupheka ngayo kodwa sibe sithi siphethe singabaholi. EMndeni abantu bakhona abawazi amanzi nhlobo.

KwaZulu-Natali yihlazo nakhona amanzi awekho. Uyabona thina siyi-EFF sasithe, futhi ngiyishilo nasekomidini lePhalamende. Le nto yamathenda iyona kanye eyinkinga. Iyona kanye ehluphekisa abantu bakithi ngoba ayikho ingqalasizinda.

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Amathenda azicabangela wona. Kanti ukube amanzi lawa kuvele umasipala azithathele yena amanzi azi ukuthi kulo mgwaqo nampa abantu abagadile. Naba abantu ababheke ukuqhuma kwezintamkoko, nabantu abangenawo amanzi. Manje ngoba nina niphakathi kuwona amathenda futhi. Ninguhulumeni ngapha nifaka imali phezulu niyoyikhongozela ngapha. Nisebenzisa abantu ukuthola imisebenzi noma amathenda. La masela lawa!

Ngicela ningangiphazamisi. Angiphazamizi mina, akukho umuntu ohlonipha njengami la ePhalamende. Lalelani ke, ngiyacela webafowethu. Amanzi ayimpilo yomuntu. Sekela Ngqongqoshe ngizokukhipha. Angakuphi ama-bouncer azokukhipha. Amanzi ayimpilo yomuntu. Niyazi yini ukuthi izinqola zamanzi azimsizi umuntu ogulayo. Azimsizi umuntu osebenzayo. Ubuya emsebenzini lo muntu akazi ukuthi amanzi uzowatholaphi kade zifike emini. Futhi lezi zinqola zamanzi zihlezi zizintsha njalo ngoba kuyakhombisa ukuthi ngenkathi siphasisa izimali la niyayithatha niyoyinikeza labantu benu.

Kunezindawo la ezinjengezindawo zezinkulisa kube nezindawo ezigcina abantu abadala abagulayo abadinga amanzi. Ezikoleni akusafundwa. Sekela Ngqongqoshe Mahlobo ngenxa yokuthi izikole aziphakelwa amanzi njengoba ngikhuluma ngawo, ngoba kuthiwa

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ziyakweleta. Izingane kufanele zithole amanzi. Zizohlamba kanjani uma amanzi engekho? Uma sikhuluma ngokuhlanzeka kuzokwenza kanjani. Ngakho ke i-EFF yesekela lo-Mthethosivivinywa wokuChitshiyelwa. Musani kube senizobe nimisa imisile ngoba cha sizonibheka ikhona nekhona futhi sizonibopha. [Isikhathi siphelile.]

Mr N M HADEBE: Thank you ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members, order.

Mr N M HADEBE: House Chairperson, as a point of departure, the IFP must stress that it is utterly unacceptable and morally indefensible that any society should have the word water mafia in its vocabulary. Water is not a privilege nor a commodity to be captured by criminal syndicates, it is a basic human rights enshrined in our Constitution. The very existence of such terminology reflects a betrayal of the most vulnerable, for it suggests that life itself has been placed in the hands of profiteers. In supporting the amendment Bill, the IFP considered that in its original form, the Bill sought to

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establish an entity responsible for developing and managing South Africa’s water infrastructure.

Importantly, this entity will not only be able to raise funds on its own balance sheet to boost investment in water infrastructure but will also mobilise financing for new projects through innovative models designed to attract private investment. Moreover, the IFP supports the amendment Bill as public entities listed in schedule to enjoy full managerial autonomy, with the government only able to intervene in its majority sole shareholder. An independent government water entity holds the potential to transform South Africa’s approach to water management by ensuring that the country’s most vital resources are managed efficiently, transparently and sustainably.

By focusing exclusively on the development, maintenance and expansion of water infrastructure, such an entity would be positioned to fast track projects, reduce bureaucratic delays, and mobilise funding through both public and private partnerships. Its independence allows it to operate with greater flexibility and technical expertise, free from the competing priorities that often hinder line departments.

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Crucially, an entity of this nature would also be tasked with addressing infrastructure backlogs, ensuring equitable water distribution, and safeguarding long-term water security in a context where climate change and population growth are existing and increasing pressure.

Independence must not translate into a lack of accountability. For the entity to deliver on its mandate, credibly, it must remain familiar answerable to Parliament, which acts as the custodian of the people’s interest. Regular reporting to Parliament ensures transparency, oversight and adherence to constitutional principles of accountability, preventing mismanagement or corruption. In this way, the entity can balance operational autonomy and democratic accountability, deliver tangible results while it maintains the trust of South Africans. Clean water is not a privilege, but a constitutional right and a basic necessity for life.

South Africa cannot afford further delays or missteps in delivering this most fundamental service. Failure to get to the right will deepen inequality, fuel unrest and compromise public health, leaving millions exposed to diseases and indignity. Without urgent action, our economy, food security

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and social stability will also suffer. The cost of inaction is far greater than the investment required. Delivering clean water for all is not just urgent, it is the foundation upon which a just, healthy and prosperous South Africa must be built. The IFP supports the amendment Bill. I thank you.

Ms S M PETERS: House Chair, hon Deputy Minister, fellow members, the PA rises in strong support of the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency Amendment Bill. For too long, the people of South Africa, from the errant Karoo to the bustling streets of the metros, have been failed by the catastrophic mismanagement of our most precious resourced water, leaking pipes, crumbling infrastructure and the spectacle of a raw sewage flowing into our rivers as a national disgrace and the directive result of poor governance and a lack of accountable, specialised focus.

This Bill is not merely an amendment, it is a critical intervention. It represents a decisive step towards taking water infrastructure out of the hands of those who have proven that they cannot manage it and placing it under a resolute, single purpose, state-owned entity. The creation of the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency, NWRIA, provides

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the focused, engineering driven and financially accountable leadership that this crisis demands. We support this Bill because it is fundamental about service delivery to our people. It is about ensuring that every South African, regardless of where they live, has access to clean running water.

It is about securing water for our farmers to grow food and create jobs, it is about being a resilient water future to power our economy and protect our communities from drought and the adverse effects of climate change. The PA has also stood for being practical in solutions in good governance. This Bill, while not a silver bullet as a necessary and powerful tool to fix what is broken, we urge all parties in this House to put the people of South Africa first and pass this Bill without delay. Thank you.

Mr W W WESSELS: Hon House Chairperson, the FF Plus is in support of this amendment Bill, a Bill that is a technical amendment of an Act that was passed by the previous Parliament. However, one cannot speak about the water infrastructure agency without, as other speakers did as well, reflect upon the water crisis facing South Africa, and that

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entails millions of South Africans who daily do not have access to reliable and clean water supply. This has to be acknowledged, and this agency's goal is to address the inefficiencies with regards to water infrastructure in our country.

However, hon House Chairperson, a state-owned entity, SOE, can sometimes, and it did in the past, in other circumstances, create more problems than provide solutions, and that is what we all have to guard against. If one looks at water boards at the moment, the Minister herself has also reflected and said that a lot of water boards in the country are actually bankrupt and are malfunctioning. However, when one goes and looks at the remuneration that the board members are receiving, it is a very big problem, and that is a red light with regards to this agency as well.

Examples are the ludicrous amounts of remuneration that these part-time board members receive, for instance, Rand Water, where the average renumeration is over R700 000 a year, that, besides all other benefits that those board members get. This being a board that is supplying water to an area which is water scarce and where people are currently not receiving

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water. Also, the Vall Central Water, where there's board members that receive well over R1 million a year. Go to KwaZulu-Natal, and you look at - my time will never be up – and look at R1,7 million remuneration annually. That is a shame.

Whilst people are suffering, whilst these water boards are financial woes that those type of stipends are paid to board members. If this agency goes the same way, it is not going to solve the water infrastructure problems, it is going to create more problems. We will have to put the South Africans first, and this agency must be there to not create more fraud and corruption and a place where people are employed and earn a lot of money, whilst poor South Africans and ordinary South Africans are suffering, but it should provide solutions to find funding to address our infrastructure shortcomings. I thank you.

Ms M P KOBE: Hon House Chair, the ActionSA will support this amending Bill, which seeks to list the newly established SA National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency, SANWRIA, under Schedule 2 of the Public Finance Management Act and to delist the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority as its responsibilities are

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now absorbed into this new agency. This Bill is ultimately about consolidation and clarity.

For too long, the management of our national water resource infrastructure has been fragmented across multiple entities. That fragmentation has bred inefficiency, duplication and very often poor accountability. Hon Speaker, we must also be sober in recognising the risks of this transition. The transfer of assets, liabilities, contracts and staff from the TCTA to the new agency is not a small administrative exercise, and the implementation there of must carefully be monitored.

Hon members, water is the lifeblood of our people, our economy and our environment. For ActionSA water governance sits at the heart of our climate and environment policy framework. We strongly believe in regulatory reform, institutional strengthening and ensuring that our infrastructure meet the demands of a growing and urbanising nation.

For decades, however, South Africa has seen chronic underinvestment and corruption when it comes to this critical water resource. Take the Giyani Water Project, for example: Billions wasted, yet villagers still sit without water; or the

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Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which for decades is left behind schedule. These failures are indicative of a government that has consistently promised but not delivered.

On the bulk supply side of this, there is a self-induced crisis. At municipal level, the picture is no better. Just last week in Johannesburg, water protests turned violent. The collapse of infrastructure is reaching our metros, but our rural communities have been suffering the longest. In Makhanda in the Eastern Cape, residents have endured the total collapse of water infrastructure for decades.

Forty-two percent of all water is lost through leaks and broken infrastructure. This amounts to R7 billion in lost revenue annually. On the reticulation side, too, we face a crisis, and all of this is happening on the back of changing climate. Droughts are longer and more intense; we cannot soon forget the threat of day-zero in Cape Town.

Floods are more frequent and more destructive than we have ever seen before, just like in Durban and surrounding areas, where lives and billions of rands in economic value have been lost. These compounding crises of bulk supply, reticulation

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and climate change make the urgency of this action more undeniable.

Hon Speaker, the ActionSA, as a rational opposition will support any initiative that moves us closer to fixing these crises, but we must stress, we must act swiftly and decisively to secure our water future and confront the multiple self-induced challenges facing this country. The ActionSA will support this Bill with our eyes open to the responsibility that comes with it, and the knowledge that much more still needs to be done. Thank you, House chair.

Rev K R J MESHOE: House chairperson, the ACDP welcomes the tabling of the SA National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency, which seeks to strengthen governance and financial accountability in South Africa’s water infrastructure sector. The Bill amends the 2024 Act, to formally list the agency as a major public entity under Schedule 2 of the Public Finance Management, and to delist the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority, thereby consolidating oversight and streamlining institutional mandates.

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This legislative refinement is timely. South Africa faces mounting water insecurity, aging infrastructure, climate volatility and poor maintenance that has left many communities vulnerable. The agency's establishment in February 2025 was a critical step towards centralising strategic water resource management. However, its effectiveness hinges on robust legal and financial architecture.

By aligning the agency with the Public Finance Management Act Schedule 2, Parliament ensures that it is subject to stricter reporting, audit and procurement standards essential for public trust and fiscal discipline. The ACDP supports this establishment of the TCTA, whose overlapping functions and opaque financial arrangements have long been criticised by civil society and the Auditor-General.

Research from the Water Research Commission underscores the need for integrated infrastructure planning and transparent funding models to unlock sustainable water delivery. Speaker, water is not merely a commodity; it is a constitutional right and a cornerstone of economic resilience.

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The ACDP calls for the agency to prioritise rural infrastructure, equitable access and climate adaptive technologies. We further urge the Minister to ensure. That both appointments reflect technical expertise and ethical leadership. This Bill is a step forward. Now the agency must deliver on its mandate with integrity, efficiency and urgency. Thank you.

Ms C T NONTENJA: Hon House Chair, the UDM is appalled that this amending Bill seems to have been shaped by just one meaningful submission, while another was dismissed as irrelevant according to the committee report. This is a glaring failure of public participation. It is not clear whether the department had received any submissions. We cannot claim to serve the people if their voices are ignored.

Hon House chair, while the UDM supports this amending Bill, we are of the view that this error or glitch should have been picked up before the Act went through in the first place. This reeks of incompetence. The unnecessary delay on the establishment of the agency has prolonged the suffering of our people. South Africans in rural and underserviced communities continue to suffer. In Buffalo City’s King William’s Town,

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nine villages are without clean running water, and there are countless more across the country.

The UDM highlighted this by writing to the MMC of Infrastructure in BCMM, copied the MEC for Cogta and the Minister of Water and Sanitation, and we received silence. This is unacceptable! In 2025, in a Democratic South Africa, our people are still forced to fetch water from unsafe sources, endure waterborne diseases and live with pit latrines and bucket toilets.

The department admitted that 105 of 144 municipalities are in crisis: Pipes are old; wastewater plants are broken; corruption is rampant; and communities are left dry and exposed to diseases. We cannot allow another generation to grow up denied safe water and sanitation. Parliament must enforce accountability.

The UDM calls for: Immediate deployment of expertise to failing municipalities; urgent repair and maintenance of infrastructure and a strict oversight; transparent use of public funds; and meaning full prosecution of those who steal from the people. I thank you.

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*Xitsonga*:

Ttn S M GANA: Mutshamaxitulu wa Yindlu, mati i vutomi ...

*English:*

... hon members and hon Deputy Minister. Access to water is an essential aspect of a dignified life. But we must accept that our actions and inactions have left South Africans out to dry. More than 30 years after the dawn of democracy, millions of South Africans are still forced to walk far distances to access clean water despite supposed government interventions, as you know, it has been spoken around the Giyani Water Project, we know money continues to be spent, but the taps remain dry.

We can make laws and establish new entities. However, if they do not result in every household having consistent access to clean water in their homes, what is the point? So, Deputy Minister, as you come and close this debate, don't go into the technical arguments. We know that the Amendment Bill, is going to pass, but what it should say is, how will this entity ensure that there's water? That's what South Africans want to hear.

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You, coming here and giving a story of where it started is not going to help South Africans. You must say, all right, now there's this entity, now there's going to be water. Because as we have this debate now, even those that have taps in their homes are starting to see their water being snatched out from beneath them.

In Johannesburg, there was a big march that turned violent in areas such as Melrose Ark, Parkhurst, Bryanston are also now starting to face hours and days of water outages. And that's what I will expect of you, when you come to close the debate, Deputy Minister.

Don't come and ask us to support the Amendment Bill, we support it. Come and tell South Africans how this entity will ensure that there's water because water is life. The only people who don't support this bill is the MK. Don't worry about them. The majority here, including the EFF and everyone support the Amendment Bill. So, don't come here and tell us to please support the Amendment Bill.

You must tell South Africans how this Amendment Bill will ensure that there's water in the taps. Depart from your

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speech, don't ask us to support it. We'll support it. No, don't even address them. We know where they come from. Don't even address them, address the people of South Africa.

*Xitsonga:*

Ndza khensile swinene, Mutshamaxitulu wa Yindlu.

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: House Chair, today, as we engage and as we debate, there are hospitals that are struggling to save lives because there's no running water. There are schools that are sending children home, as we speak today, because there's poor sanitation or there's no running water for the day or for the week or for months. There are homes across cities and towns where taps are running dry while there's leaks that are unaddressed. These are the realities in South Africa today.

We're discussing a Bill that could and could have enabled significant progress in fixing the water crisis in South Africa. Instead, when you look at that Bill, it's a technical arrangement in law for what really is a critical and systemic problem in the lived realities of South Africans. This Bill is meant to create a modern streamlined agency to better manage

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South Africa's ageing, insufficient and inefficient infrastructure.

That's something that we urgently need, but the Bill alone doesn't do that. Currently, it just changes legal names and categories, and this in a time when there is a crisis. What matters, ultimately, is implementation. It's what happens with that transfer. It's what happens with the resources that are allocated to that agency. It's what happens with leadership and leadership that is going to care about what is happening in South Africa.

Even today in Johannesburg, our economic hub, we know that that's a city that's been hit hard, and residents are enduring long outages caused by decaying infrastructure and mismanagement. We're reading that more than half of Johannesburg's water reservoirs are leaking. And so, these are the realities we live with, and what we need are not only immediate short-term reprieves like water tankers. We need long-term structural fixes.

As BOSA, we are pursuing measures to stabilise the situation, and we're calling on government to do this. The Water Services

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Act allows struggling municipalities to hand over distribution to non-profits or to other providers, and we have raised this time and time again, and this should happen where it's appropriate until there's a stabilisation of the system.

We're currently pursuing a water litigation initiative to hold governments accountable for failing to provide the basic human rights of water, specifically in metros like Johannesburg that are economic hubs and hospitals and schools. It is unconstitutional, and it's indefensible.

And lastly, we're taking to the streets today and joining communities and civil society organisations who are marching to the mayor's office in Johannesburg, demanding accountability and an end to this water crisis.

There are various measures which must be taken. Launch water conservation campaigns, invest in infrastructure, appoint skilled and qualified leadership. Let's make sure that we end this water crisis. We can't have the same thing that happened with electricity in this country. Thank you,

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Ms B M KEGAKILWE: Chairperson, hon Reddy, I've listened to your critics attentively, so kindly listen to my debate. Water is essential for life, and in our country, access to it is a constitutional right.

The democratic government has an obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure consistent access to safe, clean drinking water. As the ANC, we firmly believe that ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, please take your seat. Why do you want to be recognised hon member?

Mr V G REDDY: Is the hon member prepared to take a question?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Reddy? Hon Reddy? Hon Reddy? Hon member, are you prepared to take a question?

Ms B M KEGAKILWE: Not from the hon Reddy.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, the member is not prepared to take a question. Please proceed.

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Ms B M KEGAKILWE: Hon Chairperson, to avoid the accusation that we are saying things will improve once the agency is established, let me take this opportunity to highlight some of the key interventions undertaken by the national department to ensure constant access to safe, clean drinking water, and improved sanitation.

The national department has undertaken several key interventions guided by the outcome of the Three Drops Reports, including follow-ups with affected Water Service Authority to implement corrective actions, the introduction of operation licenses for water service providers, and an ongoing process to amend section 63 of the Water Service Act to enable enforcement and compliance with departmental directives.

In addition, the national department issued a directive to all water services authorities to outline their responsibilities to develop an action plan that addresses ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, will you take your seat, please.

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*Sesotho*:

Mof B M KEGAKILWE: Le a nsitisa!

*English:*

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Please take your seat, hon member. Why do you want to be recognised hon member?

Mr E MTHETWA: Chairperson. I've realised that she can't take a question from the hon Reddy, but I have a question. Is she willing to take a question from me?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, are you prepared to take a question?

Ms B M KEGAKILWE: I’m not taking any questions.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you. Please proceed.

Ms B M KEGAKILWE: In addition, the department ...

*Sesotho:*

... le a nsitisa!

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*English:*

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members.

Ms B M KEGAKILWE: In addition, the national department issued directives to all water services authorities outlining their responsibilities to develop an action plan that addresses the relevant drop results. These action plans must include implementing all necessary management tools to improve performance related drop reports.

Importantly, the national department has ensured that regular financial support is provided to municipalities through its two grants, the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant and the Water Service Infrastructure Grant to refurbish and develop new water and sanitation infrastructure to address backlogs.

Hon members, we urgently need to transform the water sector to benefit historically disadvantaged communities by developing infrastructure in remote rural areas of the country. There is no doubt that under the ANC-led government, the country has made significant progress since 1996 in expanding water services, especially within the disadvantaged and vulnerable communities and rural areas.

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The ANC is the first to accept and acknowledge that inequalities to access basic services are still a reality and progress to transform the water sector has been slow. Despite this, the national department, together with the various local municipalities, implementing several bulk water resources projects aimed at ensuring water security and access to safe water, clean drinking water, improved sanitation infrastructure. These projects include the construction of large dams, canals, pumps, pump stations, water treatment works, wastewater treatment works and bulk pipelines that are intended to guarantee constant supply to rural communities.

Additionally, Reddy, the department has already taken ...

[Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Reddy, may I draw your attention to Rule 66? I draw your attention to Rule 66 while heckling is allowed, you're correct, you cannot do it in a manner that interrupts the member from delivering a speech. I'm making a ruling, and I will act on that ruling if you persist doing this. Please proceed.

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Ms B M KEGAKILWE: Additionally, the department has also taken steps to address some of localised water resources deficits and ensure water security in the country. The Department ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, please take your seat. Hon Skosana and the hon Reddy, this is your final warning. Really. You cannot interrupt your own member that's on the platform by engaging in a conversation with the hon Reddy, after I just made a Ruling against the hon member. Please proceed, hon member.

Ms B M KEGAKILWE: Additionally, the department has also taken steps to address some of the localised water resource deficits and ensure water security in the country. The department is accelerating water mix initiatives, such as increasing the use of groundwater and the reuse and desalination of seawater.

Hon Chairperson, the ANC-led government is not sitting idle waiting for the establishment of the agency. There is important work that is being done, which this agency will take forward once established. One of the key interventions being implemented in a country-wide programme aimed at enhancing

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effective integrated planning in collaboration with municipalities, which includes developing five-year water and sanitation reliability plans that will also coordinate funding streams during the implementation.

The department is also in the process of developing provincial bulk master plan that will identify water resource shortages in critical areas and the development of pipelines of projects to extend water services provision to all affected areas. As ANC, we firmly believe that the agency will take the work of the department forward, leveraging the existing experience of Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority in executing mega water infrastructure projects.

As the ANC, we anticipate that the agency will take over the management and the execution of both Vaal River system, which supplies water to 46% of our country's economy and 33% of the population, and the overall system which will augment the water supply by 480 million cubic meter per year once completed.

Hon Chairperson, the agency will also need to take over the implementation of Mzimvubu Water Project in the Eastern Cape,

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which is essential for improving regional water supply, would include the building of the Ntabelanga and Laleni dams in the Eastern Cape. The Ntabelanga dam, which will store both 490 million cubic meters of water, would be used for domestic and agricultural supply requirements, while the Laleni dam would be used for hydropower generation.

The agency shall build local state technical capacity to guarantee a constant water supply to our communities, leaving no one behind. As the ANC, we acknowledge that there is a skill gap within the country's Water Service Authority, as reflected in the Three Drop Reports.

Therefore, as the ANC, we have prioritised building technical capacity to guarantee a constant water supply to our communities, leaving no one behind. This plan also aligns with the objective of creating an ethical capable developmental state, as building the state technical capacity is a critical component of achieving such a state.

We of the ANC are convinced that the principal act establishing the agency and this Amendment Bill empowers our government to develop necessary technical capacity of the

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state to guarantee a constant supply for our communities and ensure no one falls behind.

Hon Chairperson, the ANC supports the Amendment Bill as recommended by the portfolio committee. We firmly believe that the act of principle and this Amendment Bill will empower the democratic government to enhance state capacity and capability, therefore gradually improving water infrastructure development in our country. Thank you, Chairperson.

*Sesotho*:

O kae Reddy?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, before we proceed ... [Interjections.] ... Order! Order! I want to draw your attention to Rule 64, it deals with the conduct of members, especially subrule 9 that refers to, members are not allowed to take photographs or video footage during proceedings, speak on a cellphone, eat, read newspapers or any other way conduct themselves in a manner not befitting to the dignity and decorum of the House. There are a number of members who are bringing catering equipment into the Chamber. Please remove that from the Chamber. It does not send a

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positive message out to the public that is viewing these proceedings, that we conduct ourselves in this manner. There is a restaurant around the corner where you can at your own liberty go and enjoy your refreshments there, but not here in the House. If it persists, I will ask you to leave the Chamber.

May I also ask members that, to follow the speaker's list, so that if you know you are next on the speaker's list, or there's no other speakers ahead of you, that you make use of the waiting benches on the side, please.

Mr S J MOORE: Hon Chair, hon members, the DA is in support of the SA National Water Resources Agency SOC Limited Amendment Bill. This Bill is a technical amendment, but an essential one. It corrects the flaw in the 2024 Act by listing the agency properly as a Schedule 2 entity under the Public Finance Management Act, and in due course allows for the delisting of the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority. This gives the agency the lawful footing it needs to operate as intended. Although technical, the practical effects matter. Passing this amendment moves us from drafting to delivery. South Africans cannot drink legislation. They need projects built, pipes

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repaired, and bulk schemes completed. The law must enable that work, not delay it.

We consider this Bill in the middle of a national water crisis. South Africa is water-scarce, but today's shortages are driven less by rainfall and more by governance failure. Ageing infrastructure fails, reservoirs run low because pumps, valves, and telemetry are not maintained, and nearly half of the water we treat never reaches paying customers. That is water loss to leaks, bursts, theft, and non-billing. It is money lost, too, weakening the very utilities that must keep the system running. Johannesburg illustrates the danger. Communities on the ailing Commando System have endured prolonged outages.

Last week, Wednesday, I met with the protesting leadership in Westbury, complaining of no water, complaining of queuing for hours because tankers did not arrive, and sharing stories of pensioners who could no longer have the strength to carry 20 litres of water home. In Coronationville, Sophiatown, Bruma, and many other suburbs, taps have too often been dried for days at a time. The pattern is similar elsewhere.

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In eThekwini, non-revenue water has climbed to crisis levels, with billions of rands in treated water vanishing each year. That tragedy is measured twice. First, in families without reliable water at home, and then in the hole blown in municipal finances. No country can prosper while its lifeblood leaks away. Unreliable water also cripples the economy. A factory can install generators to ride out power cuts. It cannot manufacture without water in the pipes. We have seen mines cut output, and plants halt production during multi-day outages.

I'd like you colleagues to consider a company like Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa, employing more than 7 000 people across the country. Their product is water intensive. If municipal supply becomes unreliable, production stops. Contracts are missed, and livelihoods are put at risk. Water security is job security. That is why, while acknowledging that the current crisis is rooted in failing municipal systems, we also need to acknowledge that we need to grow the national supply envelope. South Africa is a growing country. To give our people and our economy a future, we must bring new water online and use what we have far more efficiently. That means investing in dams, inter-basin transfers, reuse and

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recycling, groundwater where sustainable, and pressure and leak management at scale. It also means building the financial muscle to deliver this pipeline without overwhelming the fiscus. The agency model helps to do exactly that. Listing the agency as a Schedule 2 entity enables it to own assets, raise finance on the strength of those assets and future revenues, and partner with development financiers and the private sector. Instead of relying only on the budget and sovereign guarantees, the agency can become a credible balance sheet and move critical projects to financial close more quickly. Done properly, this should translate into better risk allocation, lower costs of capital, and savings that can be passed on through resilient public infrastructure. But we must be frank. A new agency is not a silver bullet. The state has struggled to deliver large projects on time and on budget. Nowhere is this clearer than the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase 2, the next great catalyst for growth in Gauteng's bulk water supply. Our oversight visits there by the committee earlier this year found significant delays and massive cost escalations. Phase 2 remains essential to Gauteng's future, and the manner in which it is delivered is a test of our collective resolve in this House to do things better. So, even as we support this amendment, we recognize that passing a law

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does not fix a leak or clear a project bottleneck. It is the beginning, not the end, of our work.

Chairperson, the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation must be a fierce watchdog over the agency and over every project it undertakes. Borrowing must be prudent and matched to revenue. Procurement must be competitive, transparent, and clean. Delivery must be measured against clear milestones, reported to this House and to the public. National investments must connect to local capability. A dam or pipeline is only as useful as the municipality that can store, pressurize, meter, bill, and maintain the downstream network. We should also be honest about the moment we are in. Years ago, many warned that if water institutions were captured or allowed to decay, water shedding would follow. That warning has, in too many cases and too many communities, become daily life. We have missed the chance to prevent it. Now our responsibility is to catch up and restore reliability. It also requires cooperation across spheres, Deputy Minister. We need national and provincial water boards and municipalities. We need to line up plans and budgets, align operations, and share data so that the bulk supply and distribution work as one system. At a time when

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protests are flaring up in Johannesburg and in communities across the country, this is not a moment for complacency.

Yesterday, in Buffalo City, schools let their learners go because of the crisis happening in that area. It is a time, colleagues, for action, and yes, for taking calculated risks to fix what is broken. We cannot afford project paralysis, and we also cannot afford reckless borrowing. The path between those two errors is disciplined delivery, sound preparation, clean procurement, and capable project management and Chairperson, relentless oversight. In supporting this amendment, we seek to uphold the Rule of Law, enable an important institutional reform, and create opportunity to rebuild capacity in a sector which everything else depends. If managed well, this agency can be a catalyst for sustainable development, helping ensure that the next grandmother in Westbury opens her tap to a steady flow and that the next entrepreneur in eThekwini opens her doors with confidence that water will be there when the lights come on. I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Before I call the next speaker, hon members, earlier in the debate, the hon Skosana raised on a point of order in terms of the speech made by the

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hon Reddy. Given that the statement that the hon member referred to, was the President's statement that related to the performance of councillors, the procedural advice that I have received is that Mr Reddy's statement is his political interpretation of what the President said. The point of order is thus not sustained.

Mr S L DITHEBE: House Chairperson, if ... [Inaudible.] ... will be quiet then I can proceed.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members. Order, hon members.

Mr S L DITHEBE: Let me state it loud and clear from the outset that this is a narrow technical amendment of a principle legislation, the South African National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency SOC Limited Act Of 2024, whose purpose is to allow for the insertion of the soon to be established National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency, NWRIA, into Schedule 2 of the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999. The PFMA's Schedule 2 caters for major entities and consequently it will also be governed by provisions of the national Procurement Act as soon as it comes into operation, despite

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the DA's brazen challenge to it in the courts of law as part of its frontal assault against transformation in this country.

This particular amendment is therefore not an attempt at privatising our water resources, as alleged by hon Reddy. If anything, this technical amendment will pave the way for the disestablishment of the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority, TCTA, which has been in existence since the conclusion of the 1986 treaty between Lesotho and South Africa that provided for the transfer of raw water from Lesotho into South Africa.

In terms of our public finance management regime, which took effect five years after the advent of our democracy, the NWRIA will thus be properly scheduled under Schedule 2 of the PFMA, as I have already said, to enable it to borrow money from the markets, such as what its predecessor, the TCTA, has done before. This has been a great success over that whole period of time.

In this regard, the current phase 2 will cost R53 billion to build infrastructure in Lesotho, such as roads and bridges in the Highlands and the cost for tunnelling mountains through the tunnel boring machine which drills through the mountain to

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create a tunnel which maximises the capacity of the Katse Dam ecosystem, which at the moment, together with others, yields 780 billion litres of water every year to South Africa. There is an extra 490 billion litres of water expected at the conclusion of this project, which is phase 2, by 2029 through the Polihali Dam.

At the heart of this development are communities in Lesotho, some of which happen to be in the way of land that has been earmarked for the building of roads and bridges. By the way, it will benefit them too, as well as the government of Lesotho. This will enable access to the Highlands, where infrastructure was not in existence before, not only for the companies that work there, but for the people of Lesotho. May I add that these communities have since received compensation for the inconvenience that they have suffered. This means justness and equity in addressing the wellbeing of affected communities.

To ensure security of water for its citizens, South Africa continues to honour its obligation to pay royalties to the Kingdom of Lesotho to the tune of over R300 million per month,

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to ensure that Lesotho's white gold, which is water, mutually benefits South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Allow me to turn to slivers of truth that have so far been peddled by the DA in the media and on other platforms about the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. These slivers of truth are so carefully choreographed and curated as to manipulate public opinion ... that because of the long delays in this project the R53 billion is no longer safe and could possibly be at risk of being embezzled.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, please give me a moment. Hon members on the platform, please mute yourselves.

Mr S L DITHEBE: Ngiyabonga [Thank you], mam Khawula. These misleadingly attractive slivers of truth are paraded as if they were factually derived, thus allowing the DA to bow shamelessly at the feet of the golden calf of the post-truth citadel. Avoid facing the truth and skirt around it instead.

So what is the truth? Our truth as derived from facts is that this project has faced several delays, but no funds have been embezzled. If they were, the Auditor-General of SA, AGSA,

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would have said so as we took them with us on an oversight trip to Lesotho in February of this year.

The truth is that this is a complex project, whose sole success depends on water gushing out of the tunnel in 2029, as a sign of it having been delivered within its revised schedule. This project that the NWRIA will continue to drive, which is a clear demonstration of a mutual relationship between our two peoples, will cement shared prosperity, human solidarity and a better Southern African Development Community, SADC, region and Africa, between our two countries.

To this end, the AU's Agenda 2063's first aspiration emphasises the need for equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for socioeconomic development, regional co-operation and the environment, and not least *Sustainable Development Goal 6* targets, which aim to increase water efficiency and ensure freshwater supplies, as well as protect and restore water-related ecosystems.

The truth is that as it progresses, there will be external threats to this project, such as the feeble attempt by a San Francisco-based nongovernmental organisation, NGO, that

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litigates frivolously and vexatiously on behalf of alleged claimants in Lesotho over the resettlement costs. We believe that this case has no prospect of success and ... a nefarious attempt to arrest the development of Lesotho and the advancement of water security in South Africa ... will therefore fail.

... to the post-truth equation is an ideologically nondescript political entity called the MK Party, which only knows how to say no to everything, including the appropriation of a budget which ensures that its Members of Parliament have salaries and tools of trade. They do not stand for anything substantive, other than opposing anything and everything that moves. So they revel in politics of spectacle and performance theatrics, and ... no intent to advance transformation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Order!

Mr S L DITHEBE: A few minutes ago, this nondescript political entity lost its application to stop the Madlanga Commission of Inquiry from establishing the truth about ...

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Hon Dithebe, take your seat. There is a point of order. Hon Reddy, please raise the specific point of order.

Mr V G REDDY: Chairperson ... the relevance of the Madlanga Commission and this item on the agenda? It’s not relevant.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Reddy, that is not a point of order. That is also your opinion. Hon member, please proceed. Hon Skosana, we are not going to have a to and fro of points of order. Hon Skosana, what is your point of order?

Mr G J SKOSANA: Hon Deputy Speaker, it’s on a different point. The hon members of the MK Party are drowning out our speaker at the podium.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Skosana, I have already ... Hon members, you are now doing exactly what the hon Skosana is saying you are doing. So please don't drown out the speaker. Hon members. Hon Dithebe, please proceed.

Mr S L DITHEBE: Deputy Speaker, you've heard the forever extroverted attention-seeking and excitement-seeking hon Reddy, but as I proceed ... [Inaudible.] ...

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members.

Mr S L DITHEBE ... a few minutes ago ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, no. Hon members! Hon member, that is not a point of order. So, the hon Dithebe does not have to sit down. I will instruct him when and when not ... Please proceed.

Mr S L DITHEBE: Deputy Speaker, a few minutes ago they lost their application to stop the Madlanga Commission of Inquiry from establishing the truth about ... [Inaudible] ... by Gen Mkhwanazi ... [Inaudible.]

Mr S NOMVALO: On the point of order, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Dithebe, please take your seat. Hon member on the platform, what is your point of order? Please take your seat.

Mr S NOMVALO: This guy continues to be irrelevant. If he doesn't know what to say, he must simply sit down. He's off context. We're not talking about the Madlanga Commission yet.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, I'm also ruling you out of order for referring to ... this guy. That is not ... in terms of the Rules. So please proceed, hon Dithebe.

Mr S L DITHEBE: Deputy Speaker, we must ask this nondescript political entity what they are hiding. What are you afraid of? Why do you fear the light so much and love darkness instead? Take this House into your confidence ... [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Dithebe, please take your seat. Hon member, what is your point of order?

Mr L D SELEPE: Deputy Speaker, I just want to ask the hon member on the platform if it is parliamentary to wear a Soul Brothers T-shirt in Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, that is not a point of order and I am now cautioning members for making frivolous points of order. Hon Dithebe, please proceed.

Mr S L DITHEBE: ... [Inaudible.] ... it is called a presidential shirt, Madam Deputy Speaker. The ANC, for its

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part, sees this technical amendment as an important step towards confirming the legality of a state-owned company, which will bring together the TCTA, the water trading entity, I beg your pardon, and the infrastructure branch of the Department of Water and Sanitation, with the sole purpose of ensuring that our national water resource strategy sustains our industrial policy and our overall fundamental socioeconomic transformation.

On the contrary or contrary to what has been said about this particular amendment to privatise this important resource, British Members of Parliament visited our portfolio committee this year and asked us how we were able to protect our resources, through clear leadership of the state in this regard, while they themselves had privatised water and sanitation decades ago. They said that the private sector's balance sheet has grown quite large and therefore government was unable to buy them out.

So we could provide salutary and salient lessons to them, being all the way from Europe. As I said, we were generous in providing them with these lessons.

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Once again, the ANC supports this technical amendment for the purposes of it being inserted into Schedule 2 of the PFMA. A number of ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Dithebe, please take your seat. Hon Reddy?

Mr V G REDDY: Speaker, will the hon member be prepared to tell us, through a question, how this Bill is going to put water in the tap? Will he take a question?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, hon member, I will find out. Hon Dithebe, are you prepared to take a question?

Mr S L DITHEBE: No, except to lecture him. I'm not going to take a question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Mr S L DITHEBE: He must understand something called the water value chain. The water we are talking about here is raw water and as it gets transferred to the water boards they treat that water and ultimately sell that water to the water service

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authorities, at which point he must pay his rates, taxes, water and so forth, so that we can reduce nonrevenue water and ensure that the indigent get water as they should. He's trying to drown me out because ...

*IsiZulu*:

... usabani ngeKhomishana likaMadlanga? Sengiqedile ke Sekela Somlomo. Ngiyabonga.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION (Mr M D Mahlobo): Deputy Speaker, to my Deputy Chief Whip and other Whips of other parties and members, one of the things, let's convey our sincere gratitude to all the Members of Parliament, especially our portfolio committee led by Chairperson hon Basson for the diligent manner in which we have taken this work, and thank all the parties that have supported this technical amendment, including the party that had a different view. It is allowed in a constitutional democracy.

More importantly, this is about an error that has been made. A technical error. And to err is human. This error has fundamental aspects - that of constitutionality - of appropriating powers to the Minister of Finance that doesn't

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have, around the question of amendment of the Public Finance Management Act, PFMA. Now that we have dealt with these issues, it's going to be important for Members of Parliament that you give clarity of your appreciation of the water value chain and the constitutionality and the responsibility. This particular agency is not a creation of a new agency. It's a combination of existing organisation, the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority, TCTA, which is special purpose vehicles, SPV, with our own water trading entity, responsible for water security in terms of water supply development, bulk water, in the main, the dams and canals.

You know that our country is a water-stressed country. In the world, we are living in a space where 2,4 billion people are living in water-stressed catchment, and we are one of those. Two point two billion people don't have access to clean drinking water, and 3,6 don't have access to safe sanitation. How does this one respond? Our country has a water balance of 17 billion cubic meters per annum, but the yield is currently at 15 billion cubic metres per annum. You can think that it is a deficit and the deficit is localised. Therefore, building more dams is the way to go, especially in the shared water system, when our rainfall pattern and the runoff is below 600

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millimetres per annum, while the global average is hovering close to 900. It's an important aspect. Therefore, the major dams that we must be able to build, remember the world to meet its Sustainable Development Goals, SDG, we need 7 trillion dollars, then Africa needs 30 billion US dollars per annum, we know that we have actually fundraised a commitment of more than 12 billion for this year until 2030.

South Africa needs a trillion rand. That money is not there. For us to be able to build all the dams, your Clanwilliam dam, Lesotho, uMkhomazi, Umzimvubu, Oliphant, and many, many others around the country to ensure water security, more dams must be built. And this agency will be at the cutting edge. Getting the money off the budget, using the balance sheet in terms of the fleet that we have, that is above R100 billion. That is the essence.

The other matters you are raising are important matters. But time and space don't allow you to do so. But water is an emotional issue. There is a turnaround. The President has made an undertaking. It is priority number one. Many South Africans in terms of the mischief, 90% there's access to water, but the

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reliability is very low - 67%. When it comes down to issues of non-revenue water, more than 47%.

Members, you're absolutely correct. What are we doing? How are we working together to resolve the problem? Therefore, the issues of implementation modalities and funding modalities, are at the centre of resolving some of those issues. Why we are doing the issues of SPV like the TCTA that we are bringing together is an important component. The issues of doing concession, like other municipalities like Mbombela and others are doing, is because the traditional funding is not sufficient to be in a position to do so. That's why we work with the mines around Vaal-Gamagara in the Northern Cape so that we can be able to bring water of more than 100 kilometres pipeline. The very same thing with the people of Sekhukhune, taking the water from the well Nebo Plateau, Polokwane until Mogalakwena. That's how we needed to harness the resources, both in terms of the fiscus, but also the money that is available in the trading rating agencies.

The matters of Johannesburg, tomorrow we will discuss it. I will not discuss it here. We know there is an intervention in Durban. There is a turnaround. We have not arrived at the

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point we want. Johannesburg has a plan. But there are many communities that are struggling because of issues of under-investment. Even here in Cape Town, they have done well in a number of areas, but there are areas of weakness. Yesterday I was in Khayelitsha in an area called Taiwan. There is no municipality in South Africa that does not have an infrastructure fail or an infrastructure overload. Sewer runs in the street. If sewer run in the street, we have a duty to respond timeously to deal with the issues of sewer in the street, like that community of Khayelitsha. But more importantly, we must also be able to deal with issues of non-revenue water. When water is gushing in the streets, denying people the opportunity to have access to water, that is a crisis. But more importantly, the matters that will ensure that municipalities have the money they need.

I am not having contradictions with the President. You know, to listen, we have an ... listening is a skill. It's a very important skill. Comparative analysis is important. If we were able to know and not being selective, indeed, an example of some municipalities that are doing much better, that are rival municipalities, but equally, there were examples of municipalities where other organisations like the ANC where

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its running. Other municipalities we are running them in a form of coalition and one thing that we will never do ... Chair, they are drowning me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, everyone was quiet when your speakers were on the podium. So please afford the same respect. Deputy Minister, please proceed.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION (Mr M D Mahlobo): For this one, I want to assure South Africans that when it comes to water security in our country, assurance level, we remain at 98%. That's the assurance level. But when it comes to water services reliability and sanitation reliability, we are down to 67. And our duty is to be able to push the numbers to around 80% by the end of the term. But in terms of access, we must be able to meet our developmental goals.

We want also to discuss the issues that for local government to work, we all live in one municipality or the other, we must pay for services. But we must also demand quality services. We must also demand issues of credible bills that must be put on the table. Our efforts supported by the portfolio committee to ensure that our water boards don't fail is an important

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aspect. And we want to thank them because water boards are not being funded by the state. They are self-sustainable. But more importantly, various communities - 105 municipalities that are struggling - that are water services authorities - we have plans. A 146 plan that we presented to our portfolio committee. What are we doing to turn the situation around? For all those municipalities, our Ministry, we are going to be spending more than R12 billion just on the year under review with 501 projects that are going to be able to try to stabilize the water grid.

I am the first to admit that in other municipalities it's going to take time to stabilize the water system. Therefore the deployment of our technical expertise from Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent, Misa, from the water boards, our construction unit, and also the experts that are there, working with our water partnership office and working with communities, because they too, how we actually behave with respect to the relationship we have between us and water, it has to change.

Criminality must be stopped. We can't be doing illegal connection. Those who are actually doing tinkering that are

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private, they can't vandalize infrastructure, including other parties that are branding water tankers in their name in Ethekwini. It must fall. We must be able to build the capacity of the state to respond to the issues that affect our people. Water is a human rights issue. It has an economic aspect, environmental aspect, issues of biodiversity, issues of security. How we handle it, we must handle it with care. Equally, sanitation is dignity. And all South Africans must live in an environment that is not polluted. I thank you.

Debate concluded

Question put.

Agreed to.

Bill read a second time (uMkhonto weSizwe Party dissenting).

## DEBATE ON HERITAGE DAY: CELEBRATING THE LIVES OF OUR HEROES AND HEROINES WHO LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES FOR OUR FREEDOM

Ms M L MMOLOTSANE: Deputy Speaker, hon members and the people of South Africa, today we rise in this august House to honour,

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reflect and commit ourselves to the sacred duty of remembering the cost of our freedom.

Heritage Day is not merely a day of cultural celebration, but a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made by countless men and women, both sung and unsung, who laid down their lives so that we may stand in a democratic South Africa today. Our theme is, "Celebrating the lives of our heroes and heroines who laid down their lives for our freedom".

We call upon ... to reflect deeply on the journey that brought us here, to honour those who fought against oppression and to commit ourselves to building a South Africa that truly embodies the ideals for which they struggled. The freedom we enjoy today was not given freely. It was won at a great cost.

For centuries, colonial and apartheid regimes subjected our people to political exclusion, economic exploitation and cultural erasure. Our ancestors were stripped of their land, their dignity and their humanity. But in the face of this oppression, they rose. From the Bambatha Rebellion of 1906, where ordinary men and women took up arms against colonial taxation, to the formation of the African National Congress in

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1912, which provided an organised and principled response to racial oppression, our history is marked by courageous acts of resistance.

The Defiance Campaign of 1952, the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 and the Soweto Uprising of 1976 all remind us of the rivers of blood that watered the tree of freedom. Our heroes and heroines paid the ultimate price so that South Africa could be free.

Hon members, the sacrifices of our forebearers are not abstract. They live with us in the institutions, rights and freedoms we enjoy today. The Bill of Rights enshrined in our Constitution is the living testament to their courage. It is because of their sacrifices that, today, we enjoy freedom of speech, association, religion and the right to vote – freedom denied to generations before 1994.

Institutions such as Office of the Auditor General, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Public Protector are direct legacies of the struggle. They safeguard democracy, promote accountability and protect the rights of the vulnerable.

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As a democratic government, we have taken deliberate strides to honour our struggle icons. Through national orders, we celebrate the contribution of leaders who fought selflessly for freedom. Through national days, we remind our people of the significance of our shared history. Through the renaming of public spaces, the building of monuments and memorials, and initiatives such as Freedom Park and the Wall of Names, we ensure that future generations know the stories of those who came before them.

It is equally important to honour the unsung heroes, those whose names may not be in the textbooks, but whose sacrifices are etched in the soil of our land. The work of the Missing Persons Task Team, MPTT, under the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, continues to search for and restore the dignity of those who disappeared under apartheid brutality. Since 1994, South Africa has embarked on a journey of healing by repatriating the remains of our leaders who died in exile.

The remains of Moses Kotane, Moses Mabhida, J B Marks, Kgoti Molotsane and many others have been returned to their homeland where they rest among their people. Recently, the remains of 49 liberation fighters who passed away in Zimbabwe and Zambia

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were brought home. We continue to work on the repatriation of Khoi and San ancestral remains, ensuring that the dignity of the first people of our land is respected and restored. This is an act of justice, reconciliation and healing.

Hon Deputy Speaker, our liberation was not achieved in isolation. The struggle of South Africa was intertwined with the broader struggle of self-determination within the African continent. Countries such as Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia and Angola gave refuge to our exiles, hosted our training camps and provided platforms for the liberation movement to thrive. Our victory in 1994 was not only a South African triumph, but also a continental and global victory against oppression. As the African National Congress, we remain committed to the Pan-African ideal of unity, solidarity and collective liberation.

We cannot speak of heritage without reflecting on the importance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC. This instrument gave our nation the chance to confront the brutalities of the past, to foster forgiveness and to chart a path towards unity. Yet, our work is not done.

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We must continue to pursue justice by reopening inquests into unresolved cases, such as the deaths of Steve Biko and Albert Lithuli, and by engaging with reports like from the Khampepe Commission. These steps are necessary to complete the journey of truth, justice and reconciliation.

Hon members, even as we celebrate our heritage, we confront the uncomfortable reality of symbols of colonial and apartheid rule which still dominate our public spaces. Statues such as Louis Botha at the entrance of Parliament remind us of unresolved questions about whose heritage is truly celebrated in our country.

The theory of the national question teaches us that true liberation is incomplete until the cultural, social and economic dimensions of oppression are fully dismantled. To this end, we must continue to debate, transform and re-image our public spaces so that they reflect the heritage of the majority and affirm the dignity of all South Africans.

Hon Deputy Speaker, Heritage Day is not just a commemoration of the past, it is a call to action for the present and the future. We must teach our children the stories of Bambatha,

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Charlotte Maxeke, Nelson Mandela, Albertina Sisulu, Chris Hani and countless others.

We must honour the foot soldiers, the mothers and the communities who kept the flame of resistance alive. Their sacrifices compel us to build a South Africa that is just, inclusive and united; a South Africa where no child goes to bed hungry, where women work free from fear and where economic opportunities are accessible to all.

Let us, on this Heritage Day, recommit ourselves to the struggle for social justice, nation building and unity. Let us ensure that the legacies of our heroes and heroines are not reduced to statues and ceremonies, rather, we should live to transform our society by the actions we take daily.

Hon members, our heritage is one of struggle, resilience and triumph. Let us celebrate it by deepening our democracy, protecting our freedom and advancing the vision of South Africa, which truly belongs to all who live in it. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Mkhize, before you start, I have been informed that this is your maiden speech, and the usual convention will be applicable in that he's... hon members when it is a maiden speech the convention is that there are no frivolous interruptions or heckling but that is dependent on whether the speech is controversial or not. Please proceed.

*Xitsonga:*

Ttn S W MKHIZE: Muchaviseki Xandla xa Xipikara, ndzi khensa nkarhi lowu mi nga ndzi nyika wona leswaku ndzi vulavula eka pulatifomo leyi, eka siku leri ra nkoka swinene ra ku tlangela ka ndhavuko wa hina tanihi Maafrika.

*IsiZulu*:

Lapha phambi kwenu kumi isosha loMkhonto. Ngithunyiwe, ngithunywe nguNxamalala. Ngiyiduna laseMbo uMkhize uKhabazela kaMavovo, uZihlandla kaGcwabe, ilala Nguni. Ngiyakhuleka esimahleni. Ngingumzukulu kaNdukuzamphamba ngoba zamshaya esiphundu unakonjankonjane okhonjwa ngeminwe emide nemfushane ePhumlandoda. Ngiyinzalo kwamnyama kwabakubo ozalwa yintombi kaSikulupadi sikaNonkohlwane okahasi kaNombobo, umagona amabili elinye liyadla elinye liyacimela lithi: uyadela weMcombokazi.

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Ngilokhu engiyikho ngilapho engikhona ngabo. Yingakho ngithi ngiyimi. Ngivela kwelikaSkik uyadela wena obona okubonwa ebusuku. Yinkosi esiyakhothama leyo uWiseman Khayelihle Mathaba kwelamaCambi KwaZulu, Ndabezitha!. Ngidabuka lapho iNkosi uShaka eyaveza khona ubuqhawe bayo ngokubumba isizwe namhlanje esibizwa ngaMazulu ekhaya likaMkabayi kaJama lapho ihlalankosi uZwide kaLanga nenkosi uSoshangane bedabuka khona. Namhlanje sinesizwe esiziqhenyayo ngaso samaTsonga. Umsuka waso nawo obuya khona le KwaZulu endaweni yaKwaNongoma eyayiduma ngeNdlovukazi yakwaNdwandwe uNtombazi. Ndlovukazi! Lapho ubukhosi kwaSoyengeni kwavela khona futhi babamba iqhaza elikhulu ukubumba ezinye izizwe. Ikhaya lamaqhawe njengabakwaSibiya ababusiswa izizwe ngeNdlovukazi uMthaniya nabaseLangeni abasinika uNdlovukazi uNandi kaBhebhe.

*English:*

Hon members, we do not celebrate Heritage Day to admire cultural attire and cuisine alone. We mark it because our freedom was purchased as a prize, with blood spilled, lives let down and future sacrifice so that we attain our freedom. Across our land, from the green hills of KwaZulu-Natal to the Karoo of the Northern Cape, the soil is soaked with the memory of those who refused to surrender. Their courage compels us

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not to reduce Heritage Day to ritual but to live its meaning in practise.

Hon Deputy Speaker, hon members and fellow South Africans, we do not stand today as people without history but as proud descendants of the kingdoms of the nations that refused to bow. We are the heirs of the Gaza Kingdom, the royal blood of Kgosi Sechele, Kgosi Khama and Kgosi Leruo Tshekedi Molotlegi, of the Royal Bafokeng flows through us. We are Bakwena, Bangwato, Bakgatla, Bapedi - Bapedi genes of Kgosi Sekoati, Kgosi Sekhukhune I, Kgosi Mampuru II, Kgosi Sekhukhune II, and Kgosi Victor Thulare run in our veins.

We are the children of Morena Moshoeshoe I of the Basotho Kingdom. We are Amanxamalala, AmaNdebele, AbaThembu of Malandela and Nelson Mandela, AmaMpondo Sekazangwa, AmaMpondo kaKondwana, AmaGcaleka kaGcaleka, Amahlubi, Amazizi, SingabaMbo. We are clothed in the colours of many nations, just like the trees and the flowers of our land. We are the Khoi and the San, the aboriginal people. We are the coloured people, the Indian people, all part of the oppressed majority. We are the living testimony of heroes and heroines who fought gallantly, who resisted dispossession, who gave their lives so

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that this motherland might not be stolen by settlers. Settlers who, even today, demand our souls for our soil. Across our provinces, their spirits speak.

In KwaZulu-Natal, we remember King Shaka kaSenzangakhona and Inkosi Bhambatha, warriors whose defence of sovereignty still instructs us in courage. In the Eastern Cape, the cradle of liberation, we honour Oliver Tambo, Steve Biko and Charlotte Maxeke, whose vision placed nations above self. In the Western Cape, we recall the martyrs of the Trojan Horse Massacre and the voices that rose from Gugulethu and Langa demanding equality. In the Northern Cape, we salute the miners and the workers who struggled against exploitation, still anchored in Postmasburg, Kuruman and Kimberley. In Mpumalanga, we recall the fervent spirit of youth of Mbombela and the rural masses who resisted dispossession under apartheid. In Mpumalanga, we remember warriors like Makhado and the enduring strength of rural women who carried both families and the liberation struggle on their shoulders.

In the North West, the battlegrounds of Taung and the fearless spirit of Solomon Mahlangu remind us that it was the youth who carried the struggle forward. In the Free State, we honour the

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sacrifices of communities uprooted by forced removals and the unyielding women who led resistance in their wake. In Gauteng, the beating heart of the struggle, we remember the Sharpeville Massacre, June 16 in Soweto, and the workers' strikes that broke the backbone of apartheid.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the truest celebration of heroes' sacrifice is to complete the mission they started. Here lies our shame. The struggle remains unfinished, their dream deterred, because this government has chosen comfort over courage. They fought for freedom, yet over 11 South Africans sit without jobs, while billions made for industrialisation and youth empowerment are underspent or stolen. They gave their lives for equality, yet land remains in the hands of the privileged few, while the poor are still camped in informal settlements, waiting for a title deed that will never arrive. They dreamt of dignity, yet millions of households still queue for water trucks, still relieve themselves in pit latrines, still live under leaking roofs and collapsing bridges.

We are not ... [Inaudible.] ... our towns, clinics and schools into darkness for hours each day, disrupting business and costing the economy billions. Government tells us to be

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patient, while it signs corrupt contracts, and appoints unqualified cadres to Eskom. Is this the freedom which our heroes died for? When township traders in Gauteng, Limpopo and North West are strangled by foreign monopolies and unfair competition, government refuses to legislate protections, dragging its feet while small businesses close daily. Is this the economic liberation in the Freedom Charter? When public hospitals in the Northern Cape and Free State stand half-built, looted of equipment before their doors open, and when schools in rural Mpumalanga still have children learning under trees, can we dare to say we are free?

Hon Deputy Speaker, the truth is harsh. This government has betrayed the very vision it claims to celebrate. It has taken the blood of our martyrs and converted it into tenders for friends, contracts for cronies and comforts for elites. Until we confront these failures with honesty and courage, we cannot say we are honouring our heroes. We are mocking them. The MK Party maintains that Heritage Day must not be a museum. It must be a weapon of conscience. It must hold the government accountable for billions unspent while clinics in the Northern Cape and schools in the Eastern Cape remain unfinished. It should demand jobs for youth in Mpumalanga and North West

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instead of empty promises. It must ensure protection for women in Limpopo and Free State against gender-based violence.

Hon members, our heroes and are not asking for flowers. They are asking for fidelity to their vision, as Solomon Mahlangu declared before the hangman's noose: "Tell my people that I love them and that they must continue to fight." On this Heritage Day, we must pledge in every province, in every community, to continue to fight. Fight against corruption. Fight against hunger. Fight against inequality. The fight against forgetting. Only then shall we be worthy to say that we have celebrated the lives of our heroes and heroines.

*IsiZulu*:

Gwaza Mkhonto, gwaza! Sihole Msholozi, sihole!

*English:*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. The next speaker is the hon Potgieter. Could I please ask the members on the platform to mute yourselves.

Ms L R POTGIETER: Hon Deputy Speaker, Heritage Day is a celebration of our diverse cultures and traditions, a chance

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to honour the struggles of those who fought to ensure that we remember who we are and where we came from, and to reflect on the work that is still needed to preserve for future generations. For some of us, the fight to protect our identity and heritage was waged when we were children and for our children even before they were ... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: My apologies hon Potgieter. Hon members, hon member ... could the Whip ... hon Khawula, I would not like to ask you to leave before your speech. Hon Whips, please control your members. Hon Potgieter, please proceed.

Ms L R POTGIETER: We do not feel the weight of apartheid police knocking at our doors, the fear of exile or the daily humiliation of being denied our culture, language and humanity. All we know are the challenges of today, employment, poverty and crime. For those too young to understand the sacrifice it almost feels ...

Ms T J MOKWELE: Deputy Chair, on a point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Potgieter, please take your seat. Yes, hon member, what is your point of order?

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Ms T J MOKWELE: I think the speaker on the podium is misleading. There are no police during apartheid who knocked on a white man's house. That is not true.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, that is not a point of order. You are now trying to interrupt the speaker. Please proceed hon Potgieter.

Ms L R POTGIETER: For those too young to understand the sacrifice, it almost seems as if there was no struggle, or worse, that it was in vain. This is the deepest danger that we face, a generation growing up, disconnected from the sacrifices of our heroes, especially with so many of our institutions meant to preserve our culture and heritage, to educate and inspire the next generations, being closed, left in disrepair or neglected.

Hon Deputy Speaker, when we speak of heritage, let's remember that sport is part of our cultural identity. Yet, Swimming South Africa this week warned that crumbling pools and budget cuts threaten one of our most successful Olympic sports. This year alone, the department has cut sports funding by R40 million, with athletics and swimming losing up to 60% of

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their prior funding. The Minister proudly handed Olympic Champion Tatjana Smith an award, while at the same time stripping the support needed to nurture future champions.

Instead of investing in athletics, funds have been diverted to costly projects such as Video Assistant Referee, VAR at the expense of grassroots developments. Athletes are left without facilities, coaching, preparation programmes and financial backing to compete internationally. Just as libraries, museums and cultural centres decay, so does our living heritage in sport. True heritage is preserved not through headlines, but by building opportunities, nurturing talent, ensuring reliable funding and honouring legacies that inspire future generations.

Across South Africa, many of our cultural and heritage institutions which celebrate the diversity of our nation, are in disrepair or facing prolonged neglect. The Johannesburg Art Gallery, home to one of Africa’s largest public art collections has remained closed for years and is allegedly undergoing renovations to the tune of R40 million, driven by pressure from the DA and civic organisations. Noting absurdly,

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that public representatives and Members of Parliament have been repeatedly denied access to monitor progress.

The Johannesburg Central Library, a historic building housing over 1,5 million books, remained closed for five years due to fire hazards and structural concerns, and was only reopened in August 2025, again from sustained pressure from the DA and civic organisations. Robben Island, one of our most iconic heritage sites saw a R150 million being spent in preparation for the G20 Summit, rather than ongoing preservation for the purpose of preserving our history.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, together with various government bodies, continue to allow our cultural and heritage facilities to fall into disrepair. Instead of regular maintenance and proper partnerships with the private sector, hundreds of millions are only spent once facilities reach crisis point. Many of these institutions already generate or could generate enough revenue to sustain themselves. but misallocation of budgets and poor oversights prevents this. It is a costly and unsustainable way to preserve the history, culture and opportunities that these sites are meant to provide.

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Perhaps, it’s also time for some serious reflection by Minister Mackenzie on how the defunding of iconic cultural events, which generate billions for the economy between them and taking away sports development funding, undermines the heritage and potential of South Africa. Do not be mistaken, we are quite well aware that the Minister is currently trying to find justification from five years back, in order to present a rationale for his decision of defunding these historic cultural events. We are not fooled.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture must be properly led and held accountable to ensure that project failures like the R250 million wasted on the noncompletion of the Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance are not repeated, and that the legacies they are meant to honour are fully realised. The people of Hankey can finally breathe a sigh of relief as the DA Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure has confirmed that funding for the Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance will resume, and that all systems are in place. This is a story of heritage that can finally be told when the right people are at the helm.

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True leadership in support of our heritage is measured by the care we take in preserving it and making it accessible to everyone. Heritage is not merely symbols, statues or annual events, it is the programmes, spaces and opportunities that allow every citizen to engage with, learn from, and take pride in our culture. Hon Deputy Speaker, to celebrate the lives of our heroes and heroines, it is not to look back with nostalgia, but to look forward with determination. It is to take up the unfinished work of those who fought for Freedom and justice and to carry it into every community, every school, every cultural space, and every single child's life. As Nelson Mandela reminded us:

> It is not our diversity which divides us, it is not our ethnicity, or religion or culture that divides us. Since we have achieved our freedom, there can only be one division amongst us: between those who cherish democracy and those who do not.

Heritage Day calls on all of us to cherish our diversity through meaningful action, not divisive policies, actions or words. I thank you.

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*IsiXhosa*:

Mnu E MTHETHWA: Mandibulise kumongameli wombutho onamandla iEFF ...

*English*:

... and the awaiting president of the United States of Africa, president Julius Malema, commissars, fighters, and fellow South Africans. House Chair ...

*Afrikaans*:

... ek was ’n kaffer.

*English*:

Some were Europeans and non-Europeans in Africa. My mother was a kitchen girl, and my father was a garden boy. Others were *bass* boys, *jy* was madam, *makhulu baases* and your children were *klein basses*.

*IsiZulu*:

... bese niyamangala ukuthi kungani abantu abansundu beziphindisela ngodlame ...

*English*:

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... against racism, white supremacy, manmade poverty, closed doors of learning and culture, and any other form of discrimination in this supposedly Freedom Day. Can we generally stand tall and celebrate the heritage that shaped us? Or is our heritage the tapestry of cherished traditions, beliefs, landscapes, landmarks we have inherited and deem precious enough to safeguard for those who come after us?

*Sesotho*:
Ha ho se jwalo, ke eng eo le re sietseng yona, lona ba re etelletseng pele?

*English*:
As members of this House, what legacy will we leave for future generations? Will it be the statues of Louis Botha and Paul Kruger or the looming presence of H R Verwoerd in Orania where apartheid's shadow lingers? Will it be the subtle grip of cultural colonisation as foreign voices flood our screens and shape our stories? Will our legacy be tainted by the spread of antiblack propaganda, baseless cries of white genocide, and the divisive chants of ...

*IsiZulu*:

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... mabahambe ...

*English*:

... put South Africans, when in actual fact it is put coloureds and whites first.

A populist and demagogic antidemocratic revolutionary myth disguised as a new struggle for liberation to liberate coloureds and whites. But from who and from what? The very segregatory tendency that was hidden in the Tricameral Parliament, that allowed coloureds and Asian South Africans nominal representation in exclusion of black people who were still not allowed to participate in the government?

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Deputy Speaker, can I please raise a point of order?

The DEPPUTY SPEAKER: May I just see who it is. Yes, hon Mthethwa, please take your seat. Hon Van Wyk.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Deputy Speaker, in 1985, with a great ... [Inaudible.]

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The DEPPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, that’s not a point of order.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: I am still on the floor; I'm calling a point of order here. The coloured people were never part of that government.

The DEPPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Van Wyk!

Mr S H M VAN WYK: They refused to be in that government.

The DEPPUTY SPEAKER: Hon ... hon member.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: The hon member must not come and talk nonsense here and he is not ... [Interjections.]

The DEPPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Van Wyk, take your seat. That is not a point of order. Hon members! Hon members, if you raise a point of order, refer me to the specific point of order. If you don’t have the actual number of ... Hon member, you are absolutely out of order. So, your action is not assisting. So, hon Van Wyk, if you do raise a point of order, point to the specific Rule or give me a description. But I have now

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listened to what you are saying. That is not a point of order, that is a point of debate. Hon members, hon Dugmore.

Mr C M DUGMORE: Deputy speaker, just on a point of order. I'd like to refer to the Rules as well as the final list of speakers. I note that hon Van Wyk is on the speakers' list. So, why doesn't he just say what he wants to say when he speaks?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Dugmore, that is also not a point of order, and you don't have to preside on my behalf. Hon Mthethwa, please proceed.

Mr E MTHETHWA: The very segregatory tendencies that were hidden in the Tricameral Parliament, that allowed coloureds and Asian South Africans nominal representation, in exclusion of black people who were still not allowed to participate in the government, when racial propaganda is echoed by the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture, it erodes the fragile progress towards unity and deepens the wounds left by colonialism and apartheid against the very need for social cohesion.

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The surfacing of racial slurs and open hostility displayed by Minister Gayton McKenzie towards black people on social media fans the flame of division and betrayal of the progress we claim and dishonouring the legacy of leaders like Rev Allan Boesak, Mama Albertina Sisulu and Rev Chikane amongst others. The founders of United Democratic Front, UDF, whose goal was to establish a non-racial, united South Africa, in which segregation is abolished and in which society is freed from institutional and systemic racism. Its slogan was: "UDF Unites, Apartheid Divides." That's your education, Sir. It is a direct attack on the words of our founding father of this democracy Tata Nelson Mandela who once said, I quote:

> Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another.

If we embrace this vision of heritage, we must weigh our words and deeds with care, for they become the foundation upon which our children and their children will build. Let us move beyond ritual speeches and curated histories. This heritage month let us seek deeper understanding, embrace our responsibilities, and turn our painful past into a legacy worthy of celebration. In this way, we ensure that those who follow will remember us

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with pride. Let us draw lessons from the story of Charlie Kirk and choose unity over divisions, working together to heal and strengthen our nation.

*IsiZulu*:

Kusho mina uJobe, uDingiswayo, Mfolozi emnyama inkhetha baweli nabawuwelayo bayayiqokelela, Thulisa kuyozwakala, Nkonyane yenkosi, Hlangalezwe. Uma ungazi la uphuma khona uthule mfowethu.

Mr N M HADEBE: Madam Deputy Speaker, as early as 1976 and the late IFP founder emphasised his vision of a South Africa with a single destiny. It is encouraging that this vision continues to shape our democratic dispensation ... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Hon Van Wyk! Hon members of the EFF in the back row! Hon Khawula! I have to say something before you proceed, hon Radebe, please take your seat. We are busy with the Heritage Day debate, celebrating the lives of heroes and heroines who laid down their lives for our freedom. This debate is now deteriorating in a shouting, and that is not a celebration of the people whose lives we are

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supposed to be celebrating. So, please respect the decorum of this debate. Hon Hadebe, please proceed. Hon Mkaliphi!

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: I am the Whip of EFF here. My members were provoked by the PA member. [Interjections.] Instead of being fair, you are accusing my members in front of me, as the leader here. Take me serious, chief!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, you also just came in. You were not here for the first part of the debate. So, hon members, again, let us not let this debate deteriorate. It is doing a disservice to this topic. Hon Hadebe, please proceed.

Mr N M HADEBE: Hon Deputy Speaker, as early as 1976 ...

*IsiZulu*:

... Umntwana wa kwaPhindangene ...

*English*:

... the late IFP founder, emphasised his vision of a South Africa with a single destiny. It is encouraging that this vision continues to shape our democratic dispensation even three decades after the fall of apartheid.

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Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi remains one of our nation's greatest luminaries in advancing democratic discourse and affirming the value of heritage in nation building. He once said, and I quote:

> We have our own history, our own language, our own culture, but our destiny is also tied up with the destinies of other people. History has made us all South Africans.

Today, these words remain as powerful as the day when he said them. They remind us that heritage is not only about remembering the past, but also about embracing our shared responsibility to shape the nation we live in for future generations.

For decades, the IFP has championed the recognition of traditional leadership in law and practice. We have consistently placed traditional leadership at the heart of our struggle and heritage, understanding that they embody both cultural continuity and community stability. Traditional leaders are more than custodians of culture. They are pivotal in guiding local development, resolving disputes and

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maintaining the cohesion of communities that form the backbone of our society.

Heritage Day, itself, has deep connections to the Zulu nation. It originated as a proposed Shaka Day, honouring King Shaka ka Senzangakhona, officially recognised in 1995 by President Nelson Mandela as a national holiday. The day serves to celebrate South Africa's diverse traditions while fostering unity in our post-apartheid democracy.

Today, the legacy of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi continues through leaders, such as the hon Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, hon VF Hlabisa ...

*IsiZulu:*

... ozalwa ebukhosini bakwaHlabisa la kuzalwa khona iNdlovukazi uSongiya, ongumama weSilo, uSongiya kaNgotsha, umama weSilo uMpande kaSenzangakhona.

*English*:

Under his leadership, Cogta has provided essential institutional support, resources and capacity building

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initiatives that empower traditional leaders to serve their communities effectively and responsibly.

Hon Madam Speaker, our collective goal should be to ensure that the vision of those who came before us is translated into practical action and enduring values by bridging the past and present. We need to ensure that future generations inherit not only our stories, but also the spirit of unity, resilience, and ubuntu, which has shaped our nation.

Our political forebears made sacrifices in the face of operation, which reminds us that freedom and progress are not guaranteed. They are and through unwavering commitment and courage. Let us allow these examples to guide us in our communities, encouraging each South African to act boldly, uphold human dignity and contribute to the ongoing project of nation building.

It would be remiss of me not to point out how disheartening it is that that our vibrant cultural legacy achieved through immense sacrifice has at times been undermined by mismanagement and neglected. Therefore, as we celebrate this important day, let us remember that South Africa’s greatest

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strength lies in her heritage, a living testament to unity in diversity and a source of identity, inspiration and hope for generations to come. I thank you.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Deputy Speaker, greetings to the House. In five in five minutes, I just have to come and tell a history of 500 years because the way we are being undermined here in this country, as the so-called coloured people, even the history, even the struggle and the way we partake in it, still, we are being undermined here.

*Afrikaans*:

Jy kry ’n agb lid hier wat die Huis nou net mislei het met wat hy gesê het, dat kleurlinge in die Parlement was in 1995. Nog nooit nie! Ons was nog nooit daar nie. Ons het nee gesê. Ons het gesê as almal nie daar kan wees nie dan wil ons dit nie hê nie. Dit is wat gebeur het.

Hier in hierdie Parlement, elke keer kom die EFF en kom praat hier van kleurlinge. Chief [Hoofman], ek is nie ’n “coloured” of kleurling nie. Ek is ’n nasaat van die Khoi en San.

*English:*

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Van Wyk, please take your seat. Hon members, you know full well that you cannot make gestures in this House, so please stop doing that. Hon Van Wyk! Hon Mkhaliphi and hon Dugmore, I cautioned earlier that we have to have the necessary respect for this debate, so you are making it an absolute frivolous irrelevant affair. Hon Van Wyk, please proceed.

*Afrikaans*:

Mnr S H M VAN WYK: Dis hoe ons ondermyn word hier as kleurlinge. Die kleurlingmense in hierdie land moet kyk na dit.

Kom ons gaan sommer nou reguit na daai punt toe. In 1951 het die apartheidregering die nasate van die Khoi en San — Afrikane — herdoop as kleurlinge met die Wet op Bevolkingsregistrasie. In 1990 is daardie wet geskrap. In 1996 kom daardie wet weer in met die 1996 Grondwet. Vandag kom agb lede hier en ondermyn ons asof daar nooit ’n Basil February was tydens die struggle nie, asof daar nooit ’n Ashley Kriel was nie, asof ons nêrens was nie.

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So, ek gaan nie hier kom sit en Erfenismaand vier en ons erfenis vier as ons so ondermyn word hier dat ons kleurlinge genoem word nie. Ons is nie kleurlinge nie. Ons is nasate van die Khoi en San, en daai is ’n apartheidwet.

*English:*

Mr S M MAECO: What is the official language of coloureds?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member on the platform, hon Maeco, please mute yourself. Proceed, hon Van Wyk.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Speaker! Speaker, I have left my whole speech just to come and repeatedly say one thing. The fact of the matter is that the descendants of the Khoisan in South Africa were here first. They are the true owners of this land.

*Afrikaans*:

Enigeen kan maar net maak wat hy wil. Ons is met ’n apartheidwet in 1951 kleurlinge gemaak in hierdie land. Jy kan maar van my ’n grap kom maak hier. Jy kan my maar uitlag. Ek gee nie ’n hel om nie, maar ons is hier om herhaaldelik te sê dat ons Afrikane is net soos julle Afrikane is. Ons is nie die “product of rape” [produk van verkragting] soos julle altyd sê

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nie. Daar word mos altyd gesê ons is die produk van verkragting hier. Ons jongmense gaan dood in hierdie land.

*English:*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Van Wyk, please take your seat. Here is hon member.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISSABILITIES: Hon Deputy Speaker, with all due respect, I am requesting the hon member to withdraw the statement that he is making. We are not products of rape. That is undermining survivors and that is undermining people who are born from those incidents.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Van Wyk, I still have to rule before you take to the podium. Hon member, I will have to look at the exact phrasing of what was said, and I will come back to the House with a ruling. Hon Van Wyk, could I also ask you to please not be so controversial and please stick to your speech. Proceed!

Mr S H M VAN WYK: I am going to repeat: In South Africa, in many speeches, in articles, many people have said it.

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Political parties have said it that coloured people are products of rape, and I'm sticking to it. I will never back down from it, and we have to debate that thing here in Parliament.

We have to bring it to Parliament. We have to challenge the 1951 Race Classification Act. We are not coloured. [Interjections.] We are descendants of the Khoi and San, and the reason why you don’t want us to take our identity, is because we are the true owners of this land.

*Afrikaans*:

Dis hoekom selfs die DA in die Wes-Kaap kom kla oor alles hier — oor stadions en so aan — maar wat van ons mense wat doodgaan hier? Ons mense gaan dood. Hulle laat dit toe met al die dwelms en die skietery, want hulle weet wie die eienaars van hierdie land is. So, jy kan maar net maak wat jy wil. Ek herhaal dit weer: Kleurlingmense is nie die produk van verkragting nie. Salut. [Tyd verstreke.]

*Afrikaans*:

Dr C P MULDER: Agb Adjunkspeaker, ek wil graag myself bepaal by die onderwerp waaroor ons vandag veronderstel is om oor te

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praat tydens Erfenisdag, en dit is om die lewens van die helde en die heldinne te herdenk ...

*English:*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

*Afrikaans*:

Dr C P MULDER: ... om die lewens van die helde en die heldinne, wat hul lewens vir ons vryheid afgelê het, te herdenk. As ons van vryheid praat, kan ek u verseker dat die party waaraan ek behoort se naam na vryheid verwys - die Vryheidsfront. Ons verstaan vryheid baie goed en dalk moet ons eendag ’n debat hou oor wat ons in hierdie Huis van die term vryheid verstaan.

Die stryd vir vryheid het nie in 1900 of 1912 begin of wanneer ook al nie; my voorouers was die eerste mense wat in die antikoloniale stryd teen die wêreldmag, the British Empire [Britse Ryk] geveg het. Later was dit op ’n stadium die Anglo-Boereoorlog genoem. Later is daar van die Suid-Afrikaanse Oorlog gepraat. My mense het van die Eerste en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog gepraat.

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*English*:

The First and Second Freedom Wars against the British Empire.

*Afrikaans*:

Ons moet oor helde en heldinne praat. Ek gaan net oor twee praat. Ek gaan begin om te praat van Lizzie van Zyl. Sy is gebore in April 1894 en sy is dood 9 Mei 1901. Sy was net sewe jaar oud. Sy is dood aan wanvoeding en ingewandekoors, waar sy ’n gevangene in ’n Britse konsentrasiekamp in Bloemfontein was. Op bevel van die Britse owerhede van die tyd, het sy en haar familie net halwe rantsoen gekry.

*English*:

Only half of the food.

*Afrikaans*:

Haar pa was ’n bittereinder wat teen die Britse Empire [Ryk] geveg het en nie wou oorgee nie.

Die ander held waarna ek wil verwys is die bekende Kaptein Daniël Theron. Hy is gebore 9 Mei 1875 in Tulbagh en hy is op 5 September 1900 op die ouderdom van 25 dood. Hy was ’n formidabele vegter wat ’n verkenningskorps – vandag sal ons

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praat van ’n “reconnaissance command” – op die been gebring het teen die British Empire [Britse Ryk]. In daardie tyd het hy die een na die ander geveg geveg en hy is naby Gatsrand dood toe hy’n kanon van die Britse weermag gestuit het, en manalleen 48 skote geskiet het, voordat hulle met kanonne geskiet het en op daardie geleentheid dood is.

*English*:
The overall command of the British forces, General Lord Roberts referred to Danie Theron as the hardest thorn in the flesh of the British Empire in the time.

*Afrikaans*:
Dit is die mense wat ook helde was wat ek vandag graag wil herdenk. Maar nou in die jaar 2025, wie is die helde wat ons herdenk. Wie herdenk ons nou? Wie lê nou hul lewens af vir ons vryheid? Ek dink die meer as 70 mense wat elke dag in hierdie land vermoor word is die helde van vandag wie hulle lewens aflê vir vryheid. Gaan maak die somme. Sewentig mense per dag word vermoor. ’n Totaal van meer as 25 000 Suid-Afrikaners word elke jaar in hierdie land vermoor.

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Wat beteken vryheid vir hulle? Het vryheid enige betekenis? Is daar enige vryheid wat na hulle gekom het? Is dit die land van wetteloosheid, van ordeloosheid waarin ons tans woon? Wat help dit om te sê, in die Grondwet is ...

*English*:

... everyone has the right to life?

*Afrikaans*:

Dit beteken niks vir 70 Suid-Afrikaners wat elkedag vermoor word nie.

Ons verstaan vryheid baie goed. Die party waarvan ek ’n lid is was nie net bittereinders aan die einde van die vorige bedeling nie, maar ons was nuwe beginners, om van Suid-Afrika ’n nuwe suksesvolle land te maak, waarin daar werklike vryheid vir almal sal wees wat herdenk sal word deur almal op ’n dag soos vandag, Erfenisdag. Miskien moet ons ’n slag in diepte debat voer oor wat presies vryheid beteken. Ek dank u.

Ms M P KOBE: Deputy Speaker, today we gather to debate Heritage Day - a day dedicated to honour the heroes and

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heroines who laid down their lives, so that we may stand free, equal and dignified under our democratic Constitution.

Their sacrifice was not merely for political freedom but for the right to live in a society where justice and equality reign above oppression and discrimination. Yet, as we celebrate, we must also confront a difficult truth. Our culture and heritage, rich and diverse as they are, do not always sit comfortably with the constitutional order our heroes fought for.

Culture is not static. It is shaped by centuries of tradition, identity and belonging, but heritage can sometimes perpetuate practices that clash with constitutional values of equality, dignity and knowledge on discrimination. Take, for instance, the recent constitutional court ruling, which confirmed that a man may take the surname of his wife. Legally, this is a matter of equality, ensuring that men and women enjoy the same rights, but culturally, this strikes against the deeply rooted traditions in many communities, where the passing of a family lineage is always followed by the man’s line. To many, this feels like an erosion of heritage. This example illustrates a larger tension.

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The Constitution often demands change where culture insists on continuity. Whether in inheritance laws, gender roles, or family responsibilities and practices, we see repeated clashes with the constitutional rights and cultural norms. And here, let us be clear, the supreme law of our land is the Constitution.

It is not culture that bans the Constitution, but culture that must adapt within the framework of constitutional democracy. Some may ask, does this not mean abandoning our heritage? Absolutely not. It means recognising that heritage must evolve in line with the values of human rights, dignity and equality.

Our heroes and heroines did not sacrifice their lives, so that we could live bound by customs that deny others' dignity. They died so that every South African, male, female, regardless of gender, background, or belief, can stand equal before our law. Let us therefore celebrate not only our traditions, but also our ability to question them, refine them, and bring them into harmony with our Constitution.

True heritage was not fossilised in the past; it grows with us. And if we honor those who came before us, we must commit

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ourselves to ensuring that culture is never used to oppress, but rather to enrich a society firmly grounded in freedom and equality.

That is how we pay tribute to our heroes and heroines - by protecting our Constitution, they gave their very lives for, and guiding our heritage to serve the cause of human dignity in a democratic and free South Africa.

**RULING**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do have a ruling on the matter that was raised by Deputy Minister Letsike. I have reflected on the comments, and hon Van Wyk said: “We are not products of rape.”

While I can understand the concern of the Deputy Minister and the devastating impact of rape on persons in our country, in this instance, hon Van Wyk was raising this matter in the context of the heritage of the Khoi and San, and comments that are, in general, made about it. So, the remarks are therefore in order in the context in which they were used, and members can bring a different view during the course of the debate.

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Rev K R J MESHOE: Deputy Speaker, we begin our contribution today by mourning the assassination of Charlie Kirk, a courageous Christian voice silenced, while preaching the truth on a university campus. Even in death, his witness has brought the gospel to millions across the world, including us in South Africa.

As we commemorate Heritage Day with Kirk's memory on our minds, the ACDP urges South Africans to reflect on that moral heritage that once defined us as a nation of kind, caring and hospitable people. Today, that legacy is unfortunately under threat. Many South Africans are sadly becoming cruel and hard.

In a recent incident in Gauteng, a pregnant foreign woman was denied medical care. She collapsed on the pavement, bleeding while bystanders took photos and laughed. This is not the South Africa envisioned by our Constitution. It is a heartbreaking snapshot of callousness that we must stand against.

The ACDP calls on all our people today to let this Heritage Day be a turning point. Let us claim our moral heritage. Let us all choose kindness over cruelty and hospitality over

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hostility. Our nation’s healing and prosperous future depends on it. During his Heritage Day address, President Ramaphosa reminded our nation that xenophobia is inconsistent without values, and that Ubuntu must extend even to those from other countries.

Yet, the reality on our streets tells a different story. For many years now, many tourists have been speaking of South Africa’s friendliness, but often it is not South Africans who offer that welcome.

Before cell phones, children were raised to help strangers. If someone had a flat tire, neighbors would rush to assist. That was the culture of soft hearts, our true heritage. If 70-plus percent of South Africans profess Christianity, as they say, then pastors must stir the conscience of people around them with the truth, as Charlie Kirk did.

The scripture is clear. Deuteronomy calls us to care for those far from home. Leviticus commands us to love the foreigner as ourselves and treat them with dignity, respect, and fairness.

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We are blessed by many Zimbabweans, Congolese, Mozambicans, Malawians, etc. These are people who enrich our economy, our churches, our communities, yet, the media headlines ... [Time expired.] Thank you.

Ms C T NONTENJA: Hon Deputy Speaker, the UDM joins the nation in celebrating our heroes and heroines who sacrificed their lives and families to ensure that we attain democracy and preserve our identity and heritage under very difficult circumstances. We applaud their relentless fight against oppression. The UDM wonders what is the reaction of our heroes and heroines on the Constitutional Court’s ruling which permits men to assume the surnames of their wives. This judgement, hailed by some as progressive, is in fact another reminder of how our highest courts remain entrapped by the colonial scaffolding of Roman Dutch law.

*IsiXhosa:*

Sizibuza umbuzo ukuba iNkundla yoMgaqosiseko, eyona nkundla iphezulu kweli lizwe, ifikelele njani kwisigwebo sokuba silahle amasiko, izithethe nobuthina bethu. Sekela Somlomo, yiba naloo mbono unoonyana abathathu bonke besebenzisa iifani zabafazi babo. Ingaba eloo khaya liya kwaziwa ngeyiphi ifani?

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*English:*

In African society surnames are the living archive of our respective lineages, the thread that binds us to our forebears, our clans and our identity. It is not custom nor tradition nor heritage for a man to abandon his ancestral line and assume the surname of his wife. Hon Deputy Speaker, we cannot keep legislating as though Europe is still our point of reference. Through transformation, we demand laws that reflect our people's culture, their values and their aspirations, anything less is betrayal of the African soul.

We must ask ourselves what is the value of our constitutional democracy if time and again African traditions are dismissed as secondary or worse, irrelevant. What heritage are we celebrating? I think this House would agree with me in saying that the greatest way to kill a society is to disconnect it from its roots and this is what this ruling will do. Our democracy repeatedly elevates western ideals above African values under the guise of choice. The UDM will not be silent while our society is pushed further away from its roots. I thank you.

*Afrikaans*:

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Mnr S M GANA: Voorsitter, ...

*Xitsonga:*

Eka ndzhenga wa namuntlha ndzi tlakukela ku tlangela tindzimi ta 12 ta tiko ra Afrika-Dzonga eka swifundza swa kaye. Ndzi tlangela nakambe vunanga na xintu xa vanhu va Afrika-Dzonga.

*English:*

Hon members, I rise to celebrate the diversity of South Africa’s musical, culinary and cultural heritage which has taken the world by storm. For instance, Amapiano plays on the dance floors of Berlin, our wine is paired with food in restaurants in France and our art, like that of gogo [grandmother] Dr Esther Mahlangu, hangs on the walls of art galleries in London.

We must be proud of who we are and work even harder to ensure that we jealously protect our heritage. However, to make it commercially attractive means that the Ministers, Tau, De Lille and McKenzie must work together. That is my appeal on this Heritage Day. My appeal is also that we do not reduce and undermine our rich heritage and cultures by calling this

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important day a national braai day, such is an assault on the heritage and culture we wish to promote and uphold.

Our South African culture and heritage is born out of blood, struggle and tears. It must not be whitewashed and sanitised. It was the late great President Nelson Mandela, who said, and I quote:

> When our first democratically-elected government decided to make Heritage Day one of our national days, we did so because we knew that our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our new nation.

Our history is one of division but our future has to be one of diversity. We must celebrate South Africa in all its beauty and diversity every day. Workplaces and schools, including Parliament, must encourage the use of all languages and wearing of traditional clothing, not just on one day of the year. It is through this expression that we will come to better understand who we are as South Africans because the story of South Africa is told through each one of us.

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However, hon members, patriotism also means building a safe, prosperous, equal and united South Africa, which means we must be deliberate about fighting crime, gender-based violence, GBV, and corruption. When you travel across the continent and the world, people are proud of who they are and where they come from. We must become those people or else with the influence to become who we are not. We are worthy of celebration both here and across the globe. Lastly, ...

*Afrikaans*:

Voorsitter, ...

*English:*

... if we are not careful we will lose our country and it will start with our culture and our heritage.

*Afrikaans*:

Dankie.

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: Madam Deputy Speaker, today in this House we have been asked as we debate Heritage Day, to consider and celebrate the lives of our heroes and heroines who laid down their lives for freedom. To those who paid the

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ultimate price for the greater good we are forever grateful and we owe it to them to keep their courage and sacrifice alive as embers of hope.

However, I want us to consider today that the essence of heritage is not confined to loss. It must also be about what was given to us, what values were instilled and what we are responsible to carry forward in a society and in a world that is so divided. What can we offer of value to improve the discourse? We say, ...

*IsiZulu:*

... umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu.

*English:*

That we are because others are. That is the gift of our ancestors of those who came before us. It is the lens through which we see one another. The knowledge that, I am because you are, and that's our greatest heritage.

*IsiZulu:*

Ubuntu.

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*English:*

When we look at the lives of our heroes, we have to see more than warriors of the past. We have to see teachers of the values of today. We have to look at ...

*IsiZulu:*

... aboMzilikazi kaMashobani ...

*English:*

... and remember that hero not only as a conqueror, but also as a nation builder, as somebody who forged unity, trade routes across diverse clans into the Matabele nation. His legacy teaches us that in today's fractured politics and divided economy, we must revive the spirit of building across difference because it is shared belonging that heals division.

We must look at King Shaka, ...

*IsiZulu:*

... uSigidi.

Beyond the battlefield he showed us discipline, he showed us innovation, he showed us how to organise. His legacy teaches

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us that in education and governance, for example, we need that same spirit of disciplined innovation. That we must not repeat broken models but we need to imagine what is possible.

Then there are the women of 1956. They remind us that true change is born from collective courage. They stood not just for themselves but for their community. Their legacy teaches us that progress requires solidarity over isolation and we need that more than ever in our nation today. So, then, Ubuntu is not just a slogan, it is something that we must use in our economy against inequality and exclusion. I can't prosper while others are locked out.

We must use it in education and remembering that every child requires and carries a spark of potential. That our heritage demands a system that nurtures excellence for every single child. In the fight against crime and violence, we must remember the sanctity of life and the dignity of each person. So, let's honor our heroes by living out the values that left us and let's become a beacon in the model for the world. Thank you very much.

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Ms T L MARAWU: Hon House Chair, Heritage Day is not about song and dance alone, it is about confronting the scars of our past and asking whether we, as a nation, have done justice to the memory of those who resisted colonial conquest. One such towering figure is King Hintsa kaKhawuta, the great Xhosa King who was killed and brutally decapitated by British colonial forces in 1835. To this day, his head remains withheld in foreign possession, denied to his people, denied to his descendants and denied to Africa. This is not heritage preserved, this is heritage desecrated. Hon members, the continued withholding of King Hintsa's head is not just an undissolved historical matter, it is a direct insult to African dignity. It is a colonial wound kept open by silence and inaction. How can we celebrate Heritage Day while the remains of our heroes are still treated as trophies of conquest? This speaks to a large problem, the systematic eraser and disrespect of African monarchies and traditional leadership.

Colonial powers did not only dispossess our people of land and resources but they also sought to serve the very symbols of our identity, authority and pride. To this day, traditional leaders are undermined and their heritage is sidelined in the

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national discourse. Heritage Day must therefore not be reduced to colourful attire and cultural festivals. It must be a day of truth-telling, a day when this House confronts Britain's moral responsibility to return the remains of King Hintsa and others who were stripped of their dignity, a day when we commit ourselves to restoring respect for African monarchies and traditional leadership, not as ceremonial relics but as living institutions that carry out history and identity.

This commitment must also include the amaHlubi, whose kingdom was destroyed by colonial conquest and whose rightful place among African monarchies must be restored. The land of African monarchs taken through dispossession and conquest remains central for any genuine conversation about heritage and redress. Without land, without restored kingdoms, heritage becomes hollow. ATM stands firm. Heritage without justice is empty. Heritage without redress is hypocrisy. Let us in this House declare boldly that the dignity of African leaders must be restored, that the kingdoms of the amaHlubi and all dispossessed monarchs must be recognised and restored, that colonial wounds must be healed and that true reconciliation cannot exist until our heroes rest with their people and African monarchs regain their rightful land.

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*IsiXhosa*:

Asinakuze sonwabe kude kube iinkosi neekumkani zibuyiselwe izidima zazo kuquka nomhlaba wazo. Enkosi.

Mr N T TSHOTETSI: Hon House Chair, the ANC rises in appreciation of this critical debate which speaks not only of the history of our country but of our ongoing responsibility to honour the architects of freedom, both recognised and unrecognised, both celebrated and those that have been silenced. We are called today to reaffirm the ANC's long-standing commitment to a nonracial, nonsexist, democratic, prosperous and united South Africa, as articulated in the Freedom Charter as a guiding document of the National Democratic Revolution, NDR.

The Freedom Charter boldly declares that "The people shall share in the country's wealth" and that "All shall enjoy equal rights". Yet, for too long, the wealth of our liberation memory has remained unequally shared, limited to a narrow definition of heroism that is centred only around the most visible.

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Hon House Chair, the struggle is not always waged through bullets or ballot. Sometimes it is waged through music, through poetry, through photography and the written words. It was the songs of the legendary Brenda Fassie, it was the drums of the legendary Mariam Makeba and it was the trumpet of the legendary Bra Hugh Masekela that stabbed at our people's consciousness. The lens of the legendary Sam Nzima, who captured Hector Peterson in that moment of martyrdom, did more to galvanise the world against apartheid than many speeches that were ever heard.

As the ANC's 55th National Conference reminds us that, cultural production is a site of struggle. It must be decolonised and harnessed in the service of national liberation and social justice. These artists were not only entertainers but they were also revolutionaries. They used their platform as weapons of defiance and they then paid heavily for it. Let us not relegate their contribution to the mere nostalgia. Let us institutionalise their work into the school's curricula and public broadcasting and our national monument.

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In the spirit of the Strategy and Tactics document of the ANC, we must understand culture as a battleground for the battle of ideas and ensure that revolutionaries' content in our heritage lives on. Hon Chairperson, our national memory must be inclusive or it will be incomplete. The Freedom Charter reminds us that there shall be peace and friendship, and yet our historical narrative has failed to reflect the full diversity of those who fought for that peace and friendship.

Where is the sustained recognition of the Bantu Women's League which in 1913 led to one of the earliest mass actions against the past laws? Where in our national curriculum are the stories of the 1954 Women's Charter, a revolutionary document that predates even our democratic Constitution in its articulation of gender justice? We have not given adequate recognition to the roles played by the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more LGBTQIA+, community and persons with disability, many of whom were actively involved in the underground structures whose names never make it to the walls of heritage institutions.

Let us be clear, heroism is not exclusively a property of those who were males. It is not a property of those who were

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armed or politically senior. As the NDR teaches us, the struggle for national liberation is simultaneously a struggle for gender and class emancipation. Hon Chair, the youth of this country are not only the future leaders, but they are the current leaders. The fires lit by generations past, continues to burn through the bravery of the Fees Must Fall generation, the courage of the black girls at Pretoria Girls High who challenged the racist policies, and the radical solidarity of the movement like Total Shutdown, which declared war on gender-based violence. In them, we see the living spirit of Solomon Masangu, who said:

> Tell my people that I love them and that they must continue to fight.

The ANC Youth League's perspective on the NDR calls on the mobilisation of youth as a dynamic detachment for the liberation movement. These youth are not a distraction. They are a continuation of our liberation project. It is our duty to resource their activism, not to repress it.

Hon members, liberation did not only happen in exile. It did not only happen in the camps of uMkhonto weSizwe and other

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liberation armies. It happened in the communities, in the kitchens, in the classrooms, in shebeens, in taxis, and in train stations, wherever our people were galvanised to focus on their own liberty. Local museums, communities, and heritage projects, and platforms like SABC's *Unsung Heroes*, are playing a vital role in telling some of these stories. We must support them. As the ANC's 2017 Policy Conference said:

> Memory and heritage must be reclaimed and democratised so that no community struggle is erased from the narrative of South Africa.

Let us ensure that the aunties who cooked for our forebears, taxi drivers who transported activists under threatening conditions and the teachers who taught banned literatures that their names are also known.

In closing, hon members, we must shift our ...

*IsiZulu*:

... awukahle wena ...

*English*:

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... our culture from mourning our heroes to celebrating them while they are alive. The hon Mama Sophia Theresa Williams De Bruyn is still with us. She is not a ghost. She is a living archive. Let us not only name bridges and halls after her. Let us give a platform in Parliament, in schools, in society to pass the torch herself. The ANC constitution commits us to recognising those who sacrificed for the cause of liberation. This recognition must be living, not symbolic. Let us fund their legacies. Let us document their stories. Let us ensure that no revolutionary dies in poverty or in obscurity. This has nothing to do with the noisy Mama Khawula. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon members, you make it very difficult for the Presiding Officer not to laugh when I am here. So, it will seem like I am part of the debate as well.

Dr L W MAHLATSI: Thank you, Chairperson.

*Sesotho*:

Kgotso, Maafrika!

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*English*:

The UAT declare before this House and the continent that African heritage is non-negotiable. Our surnames, our lineage, our land and our dignities are sacred trust from our forefathers, and it will be protected or defended by all cost. We call upon Africans to rise. We say ...

*IsiXhosa*:

... vuka daki ...

*English*:

... to reclaim our heritage, our names, our stories, our lands. Let us not betray the vision of our forefathers but carried it forward with courage.

The recent ruling allowing African men to take their wives' surnames may seem progressive for others, yet it undermines the foundation of African identity. When an African man relinquishes his surname, it severs ties to the ancestral land, inheritance and memory. This is not coincidence. It is part of the wider imperial design to dispossess us of our birth rights and destruct us from the land question.

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Colonial powers understood this in 1835 that if spirituality, culture and education were reshaped, the people could be prepared for oppression. That project lives through our legal system. Laws breeds culture and culture becomes heritage. If we want our children to know their history, we must replace the Roman Dutch and British law with native African cultural law, rooted in memory, dignity and land rights.

Our surnames are not labels; they are vessels of history and land claims. Ubuntu teaches us that I am because we are. To erase African surnames is to erode identity, culture and rightful claim to dignity. Let this Parliament, as custodian of African heritage, rise to defend our names, honour our forefathers and safeguard the land of every African. We are the custodians of the sacred heritage. We are the descendants of queens and kings. We shall defend our surnames, our land and our dignity for the generation to come.

*Xitsonga*:

Khanimambo!

*English:*

Ms M S KHAWULA: Point of order, Chair!

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon McGluwa, there is a point of order, but I am not sure where it comes from. Mama Kahwula, next time you must raise your hand because I cannot see you.

Ms M S KHAWULA: Sorry, Chair. I am really sorry.

*IsiZulu*:

Bengibheka ukuthi ngabe bekuthiwe abazosiculela yini namhlanje babuye basaba abe-GNU? Ngiyabona ukuthi bazimisele bayi-Black Mambazo.

*English*:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Mama Khawula, I am not even sure what you are talking about, so can we please continue. You are out of order. Continue, hon member.

Mr J J MCGLUWA: Hon members, next Wednesday I intend celebrating our country’s rich and diverse heritage in Oudtshoorn, the ostrich capital of the world. Both Oudtshoorn and the Cango Caves contribute significantly to South Africa’s cultural heritage, showcasing the beauty and you uniqueness of our nation’s cultural legacy. Unfortunately, even today some

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individuals and political parties continue to try to divide us based on our skin colour, language, culture and political-party affiliation, hindering national unity.

It is time for us to put aside our differences and embrace our diversity in promoting a harmonious coexistence. It is a day to pause and reflect on the rich tapestry of our culture by embracing our differences, listening to each other's stories and sharing our diverse backgrounds. As we come together on Heritage Day, let us be mindful of cultural nuances and celebrate our diversity with respect.

Hon Speaker, preserving heritage sites is crucial for our national identity. I stand here today, and I am reminded of a pivotal moment in our nation's history in 1994, when Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years in jail. Coincidentally, I was 27 years old at the time, making a wonderful moment in my own life, aligned with our country's journey to freedom. Sitting in front of the TV with my late father, I vividly recalled his excitement as he jumped celebrating Mandela's release running around our four-roomed house, beaming with happiness and joy.

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It marked a new chapter for South Africa, a moment where people can come together, to unite in hope and celebration. That sense of unity and collective joy is what we should strive to recapture today. Never did I think one day – yes – that one day I will become a Member of Parliament, overseeing heritage initiatives for this country. Just last week, I intended to visit Victor Verster Prison in Paarl, where Nelson Mandela stayed before his release in 1990.

I was shocked at being told that Nelson Mandela's cottage at Victor Verster Prison has been closed to visitors since Covid-19. It is sad that this historic site, a symbol of our nation's resilience remains inaccessible to the public. Hon members I visited Robben Island. The ferry, Sikhululekile, which means we are free is grounded and has not been sailing for almost a decade, yet millions of monies have already been spent.

This has severely impacted businesses reliant on tourism. What is concerning is that this is happening under the nose of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, who have received R2,7 billion towards heritage promotion and preservation. Speaker, I am left feeling helpless watching as funds are

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allocated without tangible results. Historical sites which could be generating jobs and stimulating economic growth are being neglected.

It is disheartening to see opportunities for development and job creation slipping away, while funds meant for heritage preservation and promotion are not being utilised effectively. However, House Chairperson, I would like to say a story of hope about someone who was three years old when Nelson Mandela was released. Today, that young and dynamic leader has shown that prioritising job creation and a thriving economy can yield remarkable results.

It is initiatives, such as the *Urban Safari* and *African Gateway* concept that have led to a record number of visitors to the mother city. It has supported investment, infrastructure development, enhanced security and innovative marketing campaigns. The successes of the DA-run City of Cape Town, under the remarkable leadership of Mayor Jordan Hill-Lewis, recently attested by the President, shows us that there is hope for our tourism sector and our economy.

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It shows us that with effective leadership and strategic initiatives, we can unlock opportunities, develop community-based tourism, support local businesses, drive economic growth and create jobs. Why can the Minister not show the same dedication in preserving our historical sites, such as Sarah Bartman, Robin island, Victor Verster and other significant landmarks?

Our heritage sites are not just bricks or plaques. They are the beating heart of our history and the reminders of sacrifice and opportunities for our children, for today, tomorrow and the future. We cannot afford more locked gates, broken ferries and wasted billions. The decline is not destiny. In the DA-run governments, honest and competent leadership has shown that heritage can be the driver of jobs, pride and unity.

Hon Chairperson, South Africans deserve leaders who do not reduce our heritage to vanity projects or political slogans, but to guard it as a national treasure, to build our future for generations. We must make a choice here today: Either decay or a new era where our history is preserved, our artists and athletes are supported and our people can be proud of who

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we are. The DA chooses the latter, and we, today, invite all South Africans to do the same. I thank you.

Mr S T D LOUW: House Chair. You must get very worried when you see the right wing speaking the language of the left wing trying to be revolutionary. It is quite as confusing as the way that people want to diminish what you call our heritage.

Hon Speaker, hon members, as the ANC, we rise in the House without hesitation, but with revolutionary clarity and to reaffirm our commitment to the values, the sacrifices, and the revolutionary vision that brought us to this democratic dispensation. We cannot afford to have a generation that is growing up alienated from their roots, disconnected from their struggle, and blind to the truth of who we are as people.

Hon Rev Meshoe, you say that you are quoting a scripture that you love your foreigner, you love your neighbour, but you hate the Palestinians. You hate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. LGBTQI. You are so selective in what you love and what you don't love.

Mr W M THRING: Point of order, Chair?

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Louw, please take your seat. Hon Thring?

Mr W M THRING: Chair, I think that the hon member is misleading the House. Not one occasion did Rev Meshoe say he hates Palestinians. In fact, it's just the opposite. We said we love all, Palestinians and Israelis. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Louw, can you please refrain from using words that other members did not use. Hon Louw, I did not say sit. Hon member, the Rules of the House say that you raise your hand first, then you are recognised, then you can speak. You do not just open the mic and start speaking. Hon Louw, please take your seat. Hon member, what's your point of order?

Mr S H M VAN WYK: The hon member is misleading the House. No one was speaking the language of the oppressor, because Afrikaans doesn’t belong to the language of the oppressor.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, that's a point of debate, hon member, please take your seat. Please take your

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seat. It's a point of debate. Please take your seat. Hon Louw, continue.

Mr S T D LOUW: But more than just a celebration, today must be a call to action to preserve our heritage and to defend and advance the democratic gains that our struggle has delivered.

Because our heritage is not static, it is living, breathing and bound to the journey of people who refuse to go backwards. Hence, it is our duty to reclaim it and tell our stories with pride from African perspectives for African people.

This is not just about education. It is about restoring dignity, building social cohesion and driving nation building rooted in the truth. The ANC asserts that the time is long overdue for history to be a compulsory subject in all our schools, but not just any history. We demand an Afrocentric decolonised curriculum that tells the stories of Nkosi Bhambatha, Nkosi Galeshewe, Chief Albert Lutuli, Mr Sobukwe, Mr Biko, Mr Mandela and Mr Sisulu, not as footnotes, but as central pillars of our identity.

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Hon members, the Freedom Charter declared that the people shall govern and that there shall be work and security. These were the exact dreams, these were the exact words that were to concentrate demands of people in the struggle, a road to a society we continue to build through the national democratic revolution.

That struggle has brought us far by dismantling apartheid, establishing a constitutional democracy and restoration of our rights, dignity and justice. To further preserve our heritage, it is important to remember where we come from. The pain of dispossession, the cruelty of racism and the courage of resistance, but it also means protecting the progressive values enshrined in our Constitution and championed by the movement of the people, the ANC, which is non-racialism, non-sexist, unity, democracy and equality in the contemporary landscape of South Africa.

The preservation of our heritage and advancement of our democratic gains is crucial for fostering a cohesive and unified society. At the heart of this endeavour lies the promotion of civic education and they are imperative for

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accurate historical accounts that reflect African perspectives.

Hence, understanding our history is not merely an academic exercise, it is an important component of social cohesion and nation building. And to defend and advance our democratic gains means ensuring that our people do not only enjoy freedom in theory, but in tangible material conditions that change lives.

In this current age, which is the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we must harness technology not only for innovation, but also for the preservation and the protection of our cultural heritage. You can stand up, MK. Shows like Shaka iLembe are more than just entertainment, they are acts of cultural reclamation. They remind us of who we are, where we come from, and the stories that have shaped our identities. We must multiply and support such efforts, what have been blindly and wanted to be political.

Establishing cultural clubs, heritage societies, and similar initiatives that are crucial to preserve our diverse traditions. The recent success of the second annual Khumbula

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Wethu Ingoma Yezitshudeni event held at University of KwaZulu-Natal, UKZN, Edgewood campus in KwaZulu-Natal. It is a testament to the growing appetite among young people to reconnect with their roots. Similar programmes across schools and universities have proven that when given the opportunity, the youth will rise to honour and protect the heritage.

These cultural spaces must evolve into vibrant hubs of political education, cultural pride and youth mobilisations where heritage is not only celebrated but also used as a tool to confront the challenges of the present and shape the future for confidence.

Hence, as we work to defend our heritage and deepening our democracy, deepening it, deepening it well and we must remain vigilant, must fight corruption, inequality and narrow nationalism that threatens the values of which our heroes and heroines sacrificed. It is our collective duty to guard against these forces, uphold these principles of the Freedom Charter and protect the democratic institutions built on the blood and courage of those who came before us.

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If it means that confronting inequality through radical socio-economic transformation, in making sure through the ANC Youth League resolutions, it is clear in making sure that we accelerate land distribution, we invest in youth empowerment and we build an inclusive economy that makes sure that we preserve our minerals, in making sure that there are quotas that are going to be imposed for those who are going to buy our minerals. They are going to buy our minerals and making sure that there's money created to create more jobs and making sure that our people are going to have access to equality and free education.

These are not new or radical ideas. It is a continuation of the mission passed down to us by our four bearers. We honour them today. Hon House Chair, as we allow inequality, division and justice to foster, we do not merely slow progress. We betray the generations who gave their lives for justice and freedom. If we allow opportunists and revolutionaries, sloganeers and all of those that distort our history and to try and twist a narrative of our struggle, then we are complicit. We are complicit in a way that we would not be able to find ourselves.

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As I conclude, it is quite important and significant, hon Mulder, you did recognise that people must live, they must have dignity to live, and it's quite surprising that your conscience only comes back now when you're on the podium. But, when you are alone, you lack consciousness because you haven't thought of giving us a piece of land, you haven't thought of giving us a piece of your wealth that you stole from our four bearers, that you stole today, and you want to come and lecture us about your history that you cannot make reference to.

As we conclude, it is more than a day of celebration, of a braai. It is a foundation for identity in the future. We must use our education, our technology to bring our stories, and we must continue to implement Basic Education Laws Amendment, Bela so that minority groups are irritated by transformative reforms that you we have brought back as the ANC. I thank you.

Debate concluded.

**FOSTERING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURES - HARNESSING GLOBAL CCOPERATION FOR EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT**

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): House Chairperson, the esteemed members of this august House. From the outset, let me, appreciate the opportunity presented to the Members of Parliament to reflect on their experiences towards the he Parliament, P20, under the following topic: "*Fostering an Inclusive and Sustainable Futures. Harnessing Global Cooperation for Equitable Participation of Women and Youth in Development*".

House Chair, the debate on the Parliament 20 which is P20 that we host here today, presents an important opportunity to reflect on the contributions of South African parliamentary diplomacy in advancing our national interest and also influencing global discourse on issues such as; debt restructuring, climate change, youth and women's development, food security and critical mineral harnessing processes.

Hon members, Parliament plays a critical role as the voice of the people. It is through parliamentary diplomacy that South Africa's active engagements in bilateral and multilateral forums allow our elected representatives to complement the work of the executive and also exchange knowledge with their

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peers and advocate for South Africa’s values on democracy, equality and justice for all.

House Chairs, since 1994, South Africa’s Parliament has participated in international platforms such as the United Nations, the African Union, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, BRICS, and most recently, the G20. On this global stages, our parliamentarians have consistently advanced an inclusive development agenda by championing the participation of women and youth. This interventions, have shaped global commitments into opportunities for skills development, entrepreneurship, development and also innovation for those who are often excluded. Parliamentary diplomacy always involves collaborative interactions with parliamentarians and relevant other non-parliamentarian actors at the international level.

It also aims to strengthen domestic constitutional mandates while complementing the executive brand’s efforts in promoting foreign policy objectives. I also need to indicate that parliamentary diplomacy continues to present a significant opportunity to extend knowledge and also experiences with other parliamentarians from other countries, globally.

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We need to work together towards the process of promoting peaceful and interconnected world where we need to advocate for South Africa's constitutional values amongst parliamentarians from other countries, to help us to complement the efforts of the executive in pursuing South Africa's interests and the process of championing our foreign policy objectives.

Through dialogue and cooperation, our parliamentarians have an opportunity to foster both north to south and south to south solidarity. These approaches have opened doors for young people and women in general, whilst enabling the process of sharing of good practices in legislative reforms that continues to empower the marginalized communities. And also strengthen social protection for those marginalized groups.

Hon members, everywhere we go across the length and breadth of South Africa, we are confronted by the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, where in 31 years into our democracy, we continue to have this triple challenges, continuing to affect mostly our young people and our women in general.

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It is against this backdrop that President Cyril Ramaphosa has made the decision to follow on the footsteps of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the previous Chair of the G20, which has hosted the first G20 Social Summit. South Africa will also host the G20 Social Summit from 18 to 20 November 2025, at Birchwood Conference Centre, here in Boksburg, Johannesburg.

The hosting of the Social Summit presents an opportunity for our government to take our G20 Presidency to the people of South Africa and also engage in meaningful conversations that really concerns them. We hope to produce a declaration for the outcome of the Social Summit that will include legacy initiatives that are conceived and led by the people themselves.

House Chairperson, our G20 Presidency under the theme: "*Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability*" continues to provide a timely platform to bring the voices of our people into the global decision-making process. Later this year, the social summit that I have already alluded to, will ensure that women, youth, children and labour federations, and also our communities from grassroots level, continue to contribute

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directly to the shaping process of the outcomes of that G20 Social Summit.

The declaration emerging from the Social Summit will be grounded in their lived experiences and also it will be aligned with the priorities of this P20 debate that we continue to have here today.

House Chairperson, Parliament has also been central in advancing the work of the P20 engagement groups, culminating in the Parliamentary Speaker' Summit that was held in October under the theme: "*Harnessing Parliamentary Diplomacy for Global Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability*". Our parliamentarians have influenced the international discussions on gender equality and also on issues of youth empowerment and most importantly, on issues of climate justice and the whole issue of inclusive peace building mechanisms that will continue to have in the continent of Africa and beyond.

At the African Union, AU Summit, South Africa's contributed to the adoption of the convention on: "*Ending Violence Against Women and Girls*" earlier this year, wherein we had agreed on a

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concretized step to protect women's right across the continent.

Hon members, South Africa has also been vocal in the global financing debate at the 4th International Conference on: "*Financing for Development Initiatives*" that was recently held in Spain. Our representatives have emphasized the need for a fair financing mechanism and also on the issue of debt relief and a greater fiscal space for investment towards a sustainable development goals. These efforts must also translate into tangible benefits for women and youth-led enterprises, particularly in the disaster-prone countries like South Africa.

House Chairperson, I need to indicate that for us to continue going forward with the global solidarity, it will require all of us to have bold actions on technology transfer and under the emerging critical mineral frameworks, South Africa is advocating for skills development and the whole process of industrializing our economy. Thank you, House Chairperson. [Time-expired.]

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Thank you very much. Hon members, I will now call hon Mkhize, and I am informed that it's her maiden speech. So can we practice kindness? Continue, hon Mkhize.

Ms P MKHIZE: Hon Chairperson, hon members, how can we speak of inclusive and sustainable futures when the present is soaked in equality and despair? In our townships, young people sit with degrees in their hands, but no jobs to go to. In our rural villages, women still walk kilometres for water, only to risk their lives along the way. Persons with disabilities are left behind by schools that cannot accommodate them, while children of the poor drown in floods because housing and infrastructure budgets are looted. These are not isolated tragedies. They are the daily reality of millions, many of which are the reason we still sit in this House today. They remind us that exclusion is not an accident. It is the product of government failure. And every time leaders gather to speak of development, while doing nothing for these communities, they further betray the very people they claim to serve.

We cannot speak of sustainable futures when half of humanity is unsafe, unheard, and unseen. We cannot preach inclusivity

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when government after government has perfected the art of policy on paper, but poverty in practice. Inclusivity cannot be a slogan. It must be a radical transformation of power, resources, and opportunities.

In 2020, government launched the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, promising to end femicide. Yet, in 2024 alone, 11 000 women were murdered. This means that every day, 30 women are killed, not by strangers in war, but their homes, their streets, and their workplaces. Shelters remain underfunded. Police stations still lack victim-friendly rooms, and the GBVF council is barely functional. Rural women farmers were promised vouchers under the Presidential Employment Stimulus. In KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, most never received them. Funds vanished into administration, while women returned to empty fields and empty promises.

Women carry this economy, yet earn 30% less than men, remain excluded from land ownership, and are shut out of finance. Only 13% of farmland is owned by women, despite them being the backbone of agriculture in the rural areas. The cost of exclusion is poverty. The price of equality would be prosperity. Globally, studies show that closing the gender gap

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would add 12 trillion dollars to the world economy by 2025. Yet here at home, government underspends budgets meant for women, while overspending on consultants and luxury travels.

Our youth has been abandoned. In 2025, 42% of young people under 35 are jobless. In some provinces, the figure is close to 50%. The Youth Employment Service promised 1 million jobs by 2023. Two years later, fewer than 130 000 short-term placements were created, most lasting less than 12 months. How can young people build a future on temporary stipends? The Presidential Employment Stimulus has become a revolving door. Young people move in for a few months, collect a stipend, and are dumped back into unemployment. This is not empowerment. It is pacification.

The National Youth Policy 2020 to 2030 promised mainstreaming youth voices, but young people remain excluded from boards, councils, and decision-making spaces. Parliament and government departments still treat the youth participation as decoration and not democracy. And the scandal at National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, more than 13 168 students unfunded, despite R988 million allocated. Thousands dropped out of universities and Tvet colleges. Meanwhile, government

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poured billions into collapsed ICT contracts. This is not mere failure. This is betrayal. It is robbing a generation of its future.

For persons with disability, inclusivity is not even an afterthought. It is an afterthought to the afterthought. Over 70% remain unemployed. Less than 5% of schools have facilities for inclusive education. Public transport remains inaccessible despite endless promises of upgrades under the integrated public transport network. The Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities under spent R133 000 million in 2024-25, while allocating less than 1% of its budget to disability programs. This is not a statistic. It is a death sentence for millions of South Africans excluded from schools, jobs, and society itself.

Globally, persons with disabilities represent nearly 16% of the population, and their consumer spending is worth 8 trillion dollars. Yet here, they are treated as charity cases instead of full citizens with rights and economic power. In June 2025, the Eastern Cape was devastated by torrential rains and flooding, with Umtata at the epicentre of this disaster. River burst their banks, homes were swept away, and

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families were trapped in their houses before sunrise. A school bus carrying children was swallowed by these floods. Six lives were lost, others remained missing, and countless households were left homeless. Yet, while communities grieved and waited for relief, government aid was delayed for weeks, trapped in bureaucracy and tender disputes. At the same town, township traders are being suffocated by rising costs, while foreign-owned monopolies dominate the spaza sector. These small businesses are the lifeblood of local communities, yet government refuses to put laws in place to protect them. The result is hunger, desperation, and the slow strangulation of townships' livelihoods.

Even the much-celebrated District Development Model has collapsed into another political talk shop. The Auditor-General's 2024 report exposed widespread underspending, poor co-ordination, and zero visible impact on the ground. This is not mere incompetence. It is calculated neglect of the poor. The P20 platform is supposed to harness global co-operation for inclusive development. For South Africa, it should be the space to fix broken schools, protect women walking to fetch water, create jobs for the youth, and open doors of opportunity for people with disabilities. But government turns

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it into another platform for speeches and not solutions. More underspending while poverty grows. More conferences while shelters crumble. More coalitions while women and youth are pushed to the back. Inclusivity without women is hypocrisy. Sustainability without youth is a fantasy. Development without persons with disability is injustice.

Hon members, the solutions are not miracles. They are common sense. Protect the budgets that belong to women, youth, and disability programs. Create legal, real, lasting jobs. Ensure representation by law, transform our schools, and end wasteful spending. But the ANC, even under its so-called Government of National Unity, GNU, has failed again and again. They promise equality but deliver exclusion. They promise sustainability but deliver stagnation.

Hon Chair, for three decades, this government has failed. For the past year, even the GNU has failed. They sign every international convention, but leave women raped walking to fetch water, youth jobless after graduation, and persons with disability shut out of schools and jobs. The MK Party refuses to accept empty rhetoric. We will fight for inclusion, not as a slogan, but as a lived reality. Because when women rise, the

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nation rises. When youth lead, the future is secure. And when persons with disabilities are included, we achieve justice. Let us not build a future of exclusion. Let us build a South Africa of shared dignity, shared prosperity, and shared justice. This is the revolution our people deserve. I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Thank you, hon member. Can hon members sit down? Hon members of the MK, please. We need to continue. I understand your excitement. [Laughter.] Hon Khanyile.

*IsiZulu*:

Nkz T A KHANYILE: Ngiyabonga.

*English*:

Hon House Chairperson and hon members, it is such a great honor for me today to speak on this matter. A matter that is deeply interconnected with a future we want to build fostering inclusive and sustainable futures by harnessing global co-operation for the equitable participation of women and youth in development. Sustainable development is not merely about

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economic growth or technological advancement. It is about ensuring that growth is inclusive, equitable and just.

For this to happen, we must ensure the voices of participation and contribution of women and youth are not treated as optional. We must not just speak about women and youth development on commemorative months, talking about these issues is not sufficient. We must demonstrate and intend to act on women and youth development.

Women make about 49,7% of the world population almost half, yet they continue to face systematic barriers in entrepreneurship, education, employment, leadership and access to resources.

Women encounter daily challenges which amongst them include Gender-based Violence and Femicide. While research done indicated that majority women in South Africa, are stuck with abusive partners because of financial dependency. Ultimately the theme “Fostering Inclusive and Sustainable Futures,” is more than a mere development priority, it is a prerequisite for survival and prosperity.

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For those women who try and work hard for themselves like Yandisa Mbulawa, who was awarded a contract by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, to provide accommodation for medical internship students and community services in six hospitals across the province her invoices that dates as far back as 2021 have not been paid. She was forced to take a loan to service the government hospital while she was not paid and used her trucks as a security. To date she has lost all her trucks which were worth about R10 million, lost her house, lost her furniture and the nonpayments has left her health critically deteriorating.

Hon House Chairperson, I want to reiterate that women development should be demonstrated in action. Talking about it is simply not enough.

In many countries across the globe youth constitute the majority of the population. Failing to educate employ and engage them is not just a moral failure, but a tremendous economic waste. For talent without opportunity means very little.

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They also face barriers to education. Those who manage tertiary education are unemployed. While many students from poor and missing middle families have not graduated because they owe institutions of higher learning.

Young people and women bring fresh perspectives and are often early adopters of technology and are drivers of social entrepreneurship. Meaningful inclusion is key to solving age old problems with new innovative solutions making our development efforts more resilient and adoptive.

Hon members, as a country we cannot talk about youth development while we do not want to confront the issue of substance abuse. Young people who have lost hope in ever finding employment find themselves addicted to drugs. Those who are ready to be rehabilitated are unable to do so because of government long waiting list on rehabilitation centres.

The biggest question we need to ask ourselves is about the President and SA Police Service's, SAPS's dedication in rooting out the drug laboratories and arresting the drug lords? Despite the monumental crises facing youth groups in South Africa, government saw it fit to splash a great amount

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of state resources on a National Dialogue when in fact such resources could have been used to invest in youth start-up businesses, clear student debt and fuel job creation initiatives.

Hon House Chairperson, it is particularly troubling that Minister Senzo Mchunu whom very serious allegations were levelled against Lt Gen Mkhwanazi amongst them being that he was allegedly involved in organised crime and associated with drug lords remains a Minister and still enjoys the ministerial packs paid for by the hardworking taxpayers.

Drugs kill the future of our youth and perpetuates gender-based violence, but it looks like there is a yard stick used to determine who should abide by the country’s laws and who should get a slap on the wrist. This is totally unacceptable as we are all equal before the law and should be treated as such.

Hon members, in August 2025, the DA launched the party’s six-point plan to turbocharge the economy. This bold, results-driven plan outlines a set of non-negotiable demands for

reform which will kickstart our economy and set South Africa on a path to growth and jobs.

Allow me to highlight these six points that will turbocharge our economy:

Removing job-killing policies and laws to enable more investment, entrepreneurship, and job creation.

Fixing South Africa’s energy crisis – to guarantee affordable and reliable electricity through competitive market.

Turning around falling railways, ports, and digital infrastructure for a competitive, connected, and modern economy.

Refocusing public expenditure, eliminating waste and bailouts, and supporting sustainable, pro-growth public finances.

Fixing collapsing municipalities to deliver better services by stabilizing coalitions, professionalizing administrations and decentralising powers.

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Cracking down an organised crime and corruption, by professionalising and decentralising public safety.

Hon members, these plans are realistic and will give us tangible results and without a strong economy we will not be able to develop our women and youth.

Women and youth need equal access to financing, markets, and employment opportunities. Investing in women-led and youth-led enterprises is not charity, it is smart economics. Studies consistently show that when women and young people thrive economically, communities rise with them.

However, despite the odds beacons of hope exist. Youth pioneering in fields such as Amapiano, Artificial Intelligence and e-Commerce inspire generations, and under a DA government would be supported to reach even great heights. I thank you

Mr S LONZI: Hon House Chairperson, South Africa is trapped in a cycle elite driven and neoliberal development where inclusion is promised on paper but denied in practice. If we are truly committed to an inclusive and sustainable future we must speak honestly and act decisively against forces that

continue to undermine the equitable participation of women and youth. It is our strong view that the stubborn exclusion of women and youth from meaningful economic activity is not just accidental, it is maintained by systems designed to exploit the most vulnerable in our society.

However, today, we want to turn to a matter much closer to home that we should attend to while we are trying to make sense of global co-operation. It is common course that the township economy is not owned by South Africans. It is common course that the over R200 billion spaza shop economy is not in the hands of our youth and women. It is common course that the R200 billion consists of goods largely not produced in South Africa and in some cases not produced legally.

Hon House Chairperson, it is common course that government has no real understanding of the spaza shop economy.

You know, during my constituency day I went and bought airtime for our volunteers at one of the spaza shops, hon Deputy Minister, to my surprise I was told that when buying airtime there is an addition cost that our people have to pay simply because they are paying with a bank card. This I am told is

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not an isolated incident but a daily reality in poor communities where our people are being charged illegally said charges for airtime, for buying electricity, for cash withdrawals and basic goods even when they SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, cards.

This practice is not only unethical it is illegal. The Consumer Protection Act is very clear. A supplier may not charge more than the displayed price. It prohibits unjust and unreasonable pricing. Parcel Regulations and the National Payment System Act further prohibit merchants from purchasing from passing transection fees to customers without disclosure.

Worse, we are told that ANC politicians go and collect these monies from spaza shops as protection fees. Meaning our grandmothers, our youth and social grants recipients not only ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Lonzi please take your seat there is a point of order.

Mr V G REDDY: Hon House Chairperson, thank you.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Reddy, I have not recognised you. Wait, hon Reddy.

Mr V G REDDY: Hon House Chairperson, can the speaker repeat which party, I did not get that, that is going to the spaza shops and robbing our people. If he can just repeat that I could not hear. Thank you.

Mr W T LETSIE: You want to gossip here!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Proceed hon Lonzi. That is not a point of order.

Mr S NOMVALO: ANC.

Mr S T D LOUW: The hon Lonzi is gossiping here!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon members on the virtual platform please, we cannot continuously speak about the same thing. If you are not recognised do not speak.

Continue, hon Lonzi.

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Mr M C MASINA: Hon House Chairperson, on a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Who is the hon member, because it does not show here?

The hon Sedukanelo.

Alright, we continue hon Lonzi.

Mr S LONZI: Hon Hose Chairperson, we are told that the ANC politicians go and collect these monies from spaza shops as protection fees. Meaning our grandmothers, our unemployed youth and social grant recipients are not only ...

Mr M C MASINA: Hon House Chairperson, on a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Lonzi, please take your seat, there is a point of order.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Hon House Chairperson, I have raised my hand on a point order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): The hon Masina.

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Mr M C MASINA: Hon House Chairperson, thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No before, I have not recognised you.

Mr M C MASINA: My apologies.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Yes.

You see I have been addressing all hon members here.

If you want to raise a point of order, please do not switch on your mic.

So, you are even a grant to those on the virtual platform to just speak. So, can you please raise your hand first, then I recognise you and then we can speak.

The hon Masina.

Mr M C MASINA: The hon Lonzi is adventures and sponsoring a ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Masina, what is your point of order?

Mr M C MASINA: My point of order is that the hon Lonzi is slanderers to the ANC comrades that we are collection money from spaza shops.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): That is the point of debate, hon Masina.

Mr M C MASINA: Because, there is no such.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Masina, that is the point of debate, it is not a point of order.
We shall continue.

The hon Tambo.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Hon House Chairperson on a point of order on the virtual platform.

Mr S THAMBO: Hon House Chairperson, thank you.

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We would like to remind this House and the hon Masina that there is no member called the ANC in Parliament. So, there is no one to slender here.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): That is why I called everyone out of order. I want us to continue. The hon Chauke.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Hon House Chairperson, thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Before you speak, I want to address you. It applies to you as well that you do not just speak but you raise your hand. The table staff is here to advise me if there are members who raised their hands on the virtual platform. Can you please practice that.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Hon House Chairperson, my hand is raised.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, they had advised me. I am saying do not switch on your mic and speak before you are recognised.

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Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Hon House Chairperson, apologies.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Thank you, continue.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Hon House Chairperson, I rise on a point of order.

My point of order is: The Lonzi is misleading this House in leading South African citizens. I think he must give a factual information. In fact he must start to look and interrogate at what his president is doing when it comes to the spaza shop industry.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Chauke, that is the point of debate, and we are continuing. It is not a point of order.

Hon Lonzi, please take the platform.

Mr S LONZI: Hon House Chairperson, we are told that the ANC go and collect these monies ...

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Mr N T TSHOTETSI: Sorry hon House Chairperson, there is a hand.

Mr S LONZI: ... from spaza shops as protection fees.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Lonzi, please take your seat. Hon Louw.

Mr S T D LOUW: Hon House Chairperson,

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Louw, I have recognised you but you fellow members are speaking right behind you. So, we will never hear what you are about to say.

Hon Reddy, ...

Mr S T D LOUW: You see now there is an hon member,

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Reddy, you raised a point of order, and I granted you and everyone listened to what you were saying. There is no need to howl.

Hon Louw.

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Mr S T D LOUW: Hon House Chairperson, my point of order is: the hon member is misleading and misinformation to apportion the ANC to tuckshops that could have more progress and strengthen and make sure that our people get access to the tuckshops in locals and where ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Louw you are out of order. I made a ruling on the matter. I did say it is a point of debate. Can we continue with the debate and stop raising point of orders. Thank you.

Continue, hon Lonzi.

Mr S LONZI: Hon House Chairperson, we are told that ANC politicians go and collect monies from these spaza shops as protection fees. Meaning that our grandparents and the unemployed youth ...

Mr M C MASINA: On a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Lonzi, please take your seat.

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No.

Hon members switch off your mics!

No hon Masina, I am not going to recognise you. You are repeating the same mistake I told you about.

Mr N T TSHOTETSI: Point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Tshotetsi. Yes, I am recognising you.

Mr N T TSHOTETSI: Hon House Chairperson, I would like to bring to the attention on this House that my nickname is ANC.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon members, can you please let us continue.

Hon Mhlongo, no, do not do that.

Hon Tshotetsi.

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Mr N T TSHOTETSI: Hon House Chairperson, I was saying that I would like to bring it to the attention of this House that my nickname is ANC. Now the hon member is very offensive.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, do not point fingers.

Mr N T TSHOTETSI: So, he must withdraw that nonsense.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): So, hon member, what is your point of order?

Mr N T TSHOTETSI: My point of order is that the hon is casting aspersions on me as my nickname is ANC.

Mr S TAMBO: Hon House Chairperson, we do not deal with nicknames here! Can we proceed.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon members, no. Honestly, time is not on our side. If we continue like this it means we are going to finish at eight o'clock. So, can we please continue.

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We do not entertain nicknames and everything else. Hon Lonzi Please continue.

Mr S LONZI: Hon House Chairperson, we are told that ANC politicians go and collect these monies from spaza shops as protection fees. Our grandmothers, our unemployed youth and even social grant recipients are not only expolited.

Mr M C MASINA: Hon House Chairperson, we need protection. This is wrong. This is very wrong.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Lonzi, hon Masina, you are as well abusing your rights. I have told you countless times that you cannot just switch on your mic. As I have said, casting aspersions in your rules is clear what it means. I did say that this is a point of debate. So, can we please continue because we are not going to finish.

He is going to say that then it arises other emotions. So, we cannot continue like this. I have made a ruling on this and I am cautioning you now hon Masina. You do that again.

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Mr V G REDDY: House Chairperson, on a point of order: It is a new point of order. The speaker has been drowned, and there are irrelevant points of order. He needs to start the speech again because we can't hear the speech, please.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Reddy, you are one of the members who have been drowning the speaker, so we are not starting afresh. Hon Lonzi, please take the platform.

Mr S LONZI: We were told that ANC politicians were responsible for taking money from spaza shops. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Lonzi, please sit again. Hon Sbonelo, I can't see your last name, yes?

Mr S NOMVALO: House Chairperson, on a point of order: Yes, apologies for coming in this manner. My hand has been up. House Chair, I think you've been more than patient. You have been patient enough with members of the ANC. They have been disrupting the session here, and I think you must just call security to remove them. Hon Masinga ... [Inaudible.] ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Sbonelo, you are also distracting us because we are about to continue, and we give the same time and platform for members to raise points of order, and I will say, as the Presiding Officer, that they are abusing that system. And I'm now giving an opportunity to hon Lonzi to continue with the speech.

Mr S LONZI: House Chair, ANC politicians are stealing the money of our social grant recipients as they go and fetch these additional costs from the spaza shops. Whilst the ANC is politically responsible, the banks are also financially complicit. These proceeds they processed daily for these illegal transactions. There are digital footprints. They are traceable and they are auditable. Yet, they do nothing about it. When banks knowingly process unlawful transactions without flagging them, that is not just negligence; it is money laundering. Not different from what the President did by hiding dollars under the mattress and the couches. It is aiding and abetting the exploitation of the poorest of the poor. And for this reason, we demand ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Lonzi, please take your seat.

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Mr G J SKOSANA: Hon House Chair, on a point of order: I am rising on Rule 85. The hon member is casting aspersion on the President. He says the President committed money laundering by hiding dollars in his mattress. Can you please rule on that, hon Chair?

Mr S THAMBO: Chairperson, if I could also raise a point of order on that order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Okay. Can I address this one? I will recognise you later. I did not hear hon Lonzi say that, but we will come back to that, listen to the Hansard and come back to that. Hon Thambo?

Mr S THAMBO: House Chair, on a point of order: No, I'm fine, Chair. I just wanted to indicate that I didn't hear the hon Lonzi mention a name, but it looks like the shoe fits somewhere. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, it's fine. I have attested that. Hon Lonzi, please continue.

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Mr S LONZI: This practice is no different to the President hiding dollars underneath the mattress and the couches. And for this reason, we demand, number one, a parliamentary inquiry into banking complicity in illegal point-of-sale pricing. Number two, a full Financial Intelligence Centre, FIC, investigation into suspicious transactions in the spaza shops.

Number three, we want the enforcement of the Consumer Protection Act in the spaza shops. And fourthly, state-supported township co-operatives to empower our women and youth. Chair, if this House is serious about an inclusive and sustainable future, it must confront the criminals in our economy, whether they wear ANC t-shirts or bank-issued blazers.

The people are watching, and we must not stop until justice is served. We must remind the people of South Africa, and we must tell them they don't have to pay the additional costs in the spaza shops. And I'm not surprised by the response of the ANC. I am not sure when any of them last used the spaza shops, because they are so detached from the material conditions of our people. When our people buy airtime, they are charged

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more. When they buy electricity, they are charged more. When they want cashback, they are charged more. But you don't know this, because you are in Sandton, you are in Camps Bay, you are in the suburbs. These are the lived realities of our people, and we are going to continue to fight this struggle until our poorest of the poor are not exploited. Thank you, Chair.

Ms B E MACHI: House Chairperson, the IFP believes in the spirit of Ubuntu.

*IsiZulu*:

Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu.

*English*:

This same principle must guide international co-operation, because support from global partners should not be prioritised or imposed from above, but rather inclusive and empowering, especially when it comes to ensuring the full and equal participation of women and youth in shaping their future. Development cannot be done for communities; it must be done with them.

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We must urgently confront the structural inequalities that continue to limit meaningful participation. Women still carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work and remain systematically excluded from access to land, finance and leadership opportunities. At the same time, young people who represent Africa's most abundant resource face a youth unemployment rate of 46,1%, a crisis that cannot be ignored. It is vital that we continue taking proactive steps to create an enabling environment where global partners can support us meaningfully. This includes efforts to overturn discriminatory laws, invest in women and youth-led enterprises and expand access to digital infrastructure, quality education and skills development.

In South Africa, initiatives like the Youth Gender Action Plan, YGAP, demonstrate the power of local ownership supported by international co-operation. The YGAP provides a framework for addressing gender-based barriers faced by young people, including access to health care, economic opportunities and political participation. Similarly, in the She Says ZA platform developed in partnership with the international ... [Inaudible.] ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Machi, please just pause for a moment. I have a hand in the sitting or in the Chamber. Hon Deputy Minister, why do you want to be recognised?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon House Chair, on a point of order: Hon Reddy must stop taking photos in the House. This was raised earlier, and it's not correct. [Interjections.] No, I don't love you, but he must stop doing that. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Reddy, let me remind you once again that the hon Frolick earlier in the sitting read out the specific Rule which prohibits the taking of photos. [Interjections.] I saw it myself, hon Reddy, and I was waiting for hon Machi to ... [Interjections.] ... Hon Reddy, I'm not going to play games with you. You even invited the member behind you to smile for the photo. [Interjections.] Yes, so please don't do it again. Hon Machi, please continue.

Ms B E MACHI: This example shows that when local priorities align with global support, we can arrive at lasting change. But to scale these successes, we must foster inclusive

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partnerships rooted in shared responsibility and long-term commitment. The IFP calls for inclusive development to be more than just a buzzword. We must support child care facilities so women can work, run for office, and lead. Invest in youth innovation hubs, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas, not only through aid, but through financial literacy, soft skills, and entrepreneurial training. And include women and youth in peace-building efforts, not just in post-conflict clean-up. Inclusion is not charity. If we truly believe in a sustainable, inclusive future, then we must fund it, build it, and co-lead it together. I thank you, Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): No, please. Hon members on the virtual platform ... [Interjections.] ... No, hon members. [Interjections.] Order, hon members, let’s allow the hon Petersen.

Ms J S PETERSEN: House Chairperson, hon members and members of the public, let me begin with the harsh truth. The future we envision, a world free from poverty, inequality and environmental collapse, is simply not possible unless we fully harness the potential of two critical groups – women and youth.

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As we face crises on multiple fronts – climate change, economic disparities and political instability – millions of women and young people remain sidelined, denied the opportunities to lead, contribute and shape the future. This exclusion is not just a social injustice; it's a global failure. The future will not be inclusive. It will not be sustainable unless we ensure that these groups, who make up more than half of the world's population, have an equal seat at the table.

We must face the facts. The exclusion of women and youth in development processes is costing us everything. It's costing us economic growth, social stability and a lovable planet. However, here's the truth that should ignite us: We are on the cusp of change. We know that when women and young people are given equal access to healthcare and economic opportunities, entire communities thrive. We know that when women are empowered, not only are they able to lift their own families out of poverty, but they are able to transform entire societies.

The future is in our hands. The power to transform society rests in the hands of women and youth, but they cannot do it

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alone. They need our support, our resources, our policies and, most importantly, our unwavering commitment to co-operation.

This is not just a question of gender or age. This is a question of humanity. If we want a sustainable, equitable future, we must ensure that every person, regardless of their age, gender or background, has the opportunity to contribute, to lead and to succeed.

In conclusion, House Chairperson, it is concerning that some members still want us to clap for mediocrity, creating fake confidence, while on the Cape Flats, our children still die every day. That is why we can now be responded to as "woes" – we aren't "woes". Your projection is loud. We are angry – yes, rightfully and justifiably so – an anger that you mock from a space of ignorance, an anger that you will never understand. Thank you.

Mrs H DENNER: House Chair, fostering inclusive and sustainable futures by harnessing global co-operation for equitable participation of women and youth in development is a theme that addresses an urgent global imperative.

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The G20, including its engagement groups like the W20 and the Empowerment of Women Working Group, has established crucial targets such as the Brisbane–eThekwini Goal to narrow the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2030, and the Nelson Mandela Bay target to reduce youth need rates by 5% by 2030. However, as we reflect on South Africa's position, we must confront a stark and uncomfortable truth. Compared to other G20 countries, our nation performs dismally in fostering equitable participation for women and youth in its economy.

The statistics are alarming. South Africa's need rate stood at an average of 41,7% in 2024, the highest among emerging G20 economies. This rate has increased by 5% since 2014, while the global trend has been one of decline. We are a staggering 10,5% short of the G20 Antalya Goal to reduce need rates by 15% by 2025. Furthermore, unlike many G20 nations, need rates for young women in South Africa have also risen, indicating systemic failures rather than gender-specific progress.

For women, the challenges are equally profound. While the gender gap in labour force participation in South Africa has marginally narrowed over the past decade, it remains substantial at 10,7%. Women are largely concentrated in lower-

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skilled or semi-skilled roles. The unpaid care burden is immense, with South African women performing over 75% of such work, exacerbating economic and social inequalities. This contributes to a gender pay gap with women earning 23-30% less than men for similar work.

*Afrikaans*:
Die kern van hierdie uitdagings le in ons eie regeringsmislikkings oor die afgelope drie dekades. Sistemiese mislikkings en ondermeer oplys in opleiding, gesondheidsorg, maatskaplike dienste, plaaslike regering en polisieering het ‘n permanente agterstaan vir veral vroue en jong mense in hierdie land geskep. Terwyl die ANC ongelukkig probreer om ‘n rooskleurige prentjie van bemarkteging en inklusiviteit met kosmetiese transformasie teikens en tickbox oefeninge te skulder. Werklike bemarkteking vereies diepgaande ervormings, nie ‘n potlood toets nie. Gebreklike toegang tot kwaliteit onderwys en opleiding is ‘n reise indernis.

Tagtig persent van Graad 4 leerders in hierdie land kan nie lees vir begrip nie. Ons ekonomiese groei en werkskepping word ernstig belemmer duer oorregulering. Ook speel geuikte raasbaselierde wetgewene ‘n verniete rol. Hierdie wetgewing is

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injering diskriminierint, onregverdig en selfverniederant. Die wereldwye ten dens beweeg weg in die rigting weg van hierdie tiepe wetgewing duer dit afteskaf omdat dit bloed nie werk, maar Suid Afrika vyer om by die res van die wereld sy G20 vernote en uit sy eie geskiedenis te leer terwyl ons jong vroue, ons vroue en ons jeug die prys daarvoor moet betaal.

*English*:
We must shift our focus from superficial targets to addressing the root causes, fostering a truly merit-based economy, drastically improving education and skills development for all, and dismantling regulatory burdens and discriminatory legislation that stifle growth and opportunity.

Global co-operation is vital, but it must support South Africa in implementing authentic, structural reforms that ensure genuine, equitable participation for women and youth, rather than merely endorsing cosmetic efforts. Only then can we truly build inclusive and sustainable futures for all our citizens. I thank you.

Ms M P KOBE: Hon House Chair, the inclusive and sustainable future that we all speak of will remain out of reach if half

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of the world's population and the next generation are left behind.

Women and youth are not simply participants in the development; they are the very drivers of economic growth, social cohesion and democratic renewal.

Firstly, inclusivity is the foundation of sustainability. Excluding women and youth from decision-making perpetuates inequality and undermines long-term progress. Studies show that full gender equality in the labour force could add trillions to global gross domestic product, GDP, while youth-led innovation is fast-tracking the green and digital transitions that our societies so desperately need.

Secondly, no nation can address the great challenges of our time alone. Climate change, unemployment and technological disruption do not respect borders. Global co-operation, therefore, is essential through sharing resources, technology and best practices, while tailoring solutions to our local realities.

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Thirdly, we must confront the barriers that persist. Women continue to face wage gaps, gender-based violence and limited representation in politics. Youth continue to struggle with unemployment, lack of skills and restricted access to finance. These are not isolated problems of individual countries. They are global patterns that demand collective action. We cannot ignore that, in too many places, citizens are still denied equal rights simply because of their race, gender and background. Such injustices make genuine inclusion impossible.

The pathway forward, colleagues, is clear. As ActionSA, we call for policy alignment that mainstreams the participation of women and youth in trade, climate and digital strategies, and capacity building through investment in education, digital literacy and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, we call for financial inclusion that expands access to credit, capital and social protection. Finally, representation that ensures women and youth sit at every table of governance, from Parliament to multilateral corporations.

From a Global South perspective, these challenges are absolutely urgent. In South Africa, for example, the youth unemployment rate is unacceptably high and gender inequality

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continues to limit our women's potential. Harnessing global co-operation, therefore, must mean ensuring that benefits of global trade, globalisation and digital transformation reach young entrepreneurs in Soweto or the women farmers in Moletjie, not only the elite and selected few. It must mean that partnerships must be fair and empowering, from climate finance to technology transfer.

Hon members, if we want a world that is sustainable, we must make it inclusive. If we want a world that is inclusive, we must place women, children and youth at the centre of development. If we want this vision to become a reality, then global co-operation must move from pledges to action. Let us commit today to building a future where women and youth do not only participate but lead in shaping the destiny of our nations and the world. Thank you, House Chair.

Mr W M THRING: Hon House Chairperson, the ACDP welcomes the Parliamentary Group, P20's, focus on fostering inclusive and sustainable future through global co-operation. We affirm the urgent need to ensure an equitable participation of women and youth in the development, both as beneficiaries and as architects of change. South Africa's hosting of the 2025 Group

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of Twenty, G20, and P20 platforms presents a unique opportunity to champion women and youth employment strategies, responsive budgeting, and inclusive governance.

Yet, as noted by the Financial and Fiscal Commission, our national budget still lacks embedded gender redistribution mechanisms and women remain disproportionately burdened by economic exclusion. The ACDP asserts that we must confront the reality that many South Africans, especially women, face intersecting barriers of poverty, violence and exclusion. We agree with Professor Jantjies, Director of the Parliamentary Budget Office, who urged G20 states to commit to increased public and private investment in affordable, quality child and elderly care, and other services that disproportionately burden women.

The ACDP has consistently called for targeted investment in youth entrepreneurship, skills development and rural inclusion. We urge the Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities to increase funding for mainstreaming women, but caution that without measurable outcomes and accountability, these measures risk becoming merely symbolic. The ACDP affirms that employment and promotion must be based

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on merit, yet we recognise that unlocking the full potential of women and youth requires a whole-of-government approach. What's needed now is the political will to open doors and remove barriers, integrating equity wherever possible.

South Africa is not short of talent in either demographic, but what is lacking is education, opportunity and structural inclusion. As kingdom builders, the ACDP calls for this P20 moment to be more than just a summit. Let it be a turning point, igniting a shift in global conscience, a pivot towards justice, and real opportunity for every woman and young person in fostering inclusive and sustainable futures through global co-operation. This can be done from the dusty streets of Umtata to the corridors of Geneva. I thank you.

*Xitsonga:*

Ttn S M GANA: Ndzi kombela ku khensa Mutshamaxitulu wa Yindlu. Ndzi khensile swinene.

*English:*

The topic before us today, says that we must foster inclusive and sustainable futures and harness global co-operation for the participation of youth and women in development. That's

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the topic. Too often, when we speak of inclusion, the conversation is misplaced. We frame youth and women as recipients of development, as if they are brought in at the margins, when history tells us something very different. From political liberation to economic innovation, it has always been the energy, the courage, and the creativity of young people supported and sustained by women that has driven transformation. They are not guests at the table of development. They have always been builders of the table itself.

What we must recognise and accept is that youth and women are not waiting to be given permission to lead. They are already leading. They are leading in technology, in climate activism, in community development, and in political reform. The challenge is not whether they can contribute, but whether systems, policies, and older generations are willing to stop acting as gatekeepers, blocking this leadership from flourishing. Creating an inclusive and sustainable future demands more than rhetoric. It demands structural change.

It means removing barriers to participation, opening doors for young innovators and women entrepreneurs, and ensuring that

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the environment is conducive for their ideas to emerge, grow and reshape society. It means ensuring access to education, finance, mentorship, and governance spaces where decisions are made. Global co-operation is vital because the challenges we face, including climate change, inequality, conflict, and technological disruption, do not respect borders. Neither does the creativity of our youth, nor the resilience of women. To harness this power, nations must collaborate to share resources, knowledge and opportunities that enable women and young people everywhere to thrive.

However, let us be clear, this conversation is not about allowing youth and women to lead someday in the future. It is about recognising that they are already leading today. The responsibility of government institutions and older generations is to support and not obstruct, to enable, not control, to walk alongside, not ahead. If we truly want inclusive and sustainable futures, then we must not stand in the way of young women and young people who are already shaping them. Our role is simple, to ensure that the path is clear and the doors are open.

*Xitsonga:*

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Ndzi khensile swinene, Mutshamaxitulu wa Yindlu. [Nkarhi wu herile.

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: House Chair, we really want to welcome this opportunity, as Build One South Africa, to engage in a conversation that we believe is vital, and that of inclusive and sustainable futures for women and youth. In my limited time, I want to focus on the complex economic plight of women in South Africa. I want to recognise International Equal Pay Day. This is a global day that reminds us that fairness cannot wait. Like the women of 1956 did with political freedom, we must recognise the urgency of now as it pertains to real economic participation. I've said before that I don't know a more hardworking group than South African women on this very platform.

Yet, for decades into our democracy, women remain disproportionately represented among the poor and economically marginalised. Women are paid less than men, and that is a fact. On the continent, women in Eastern Southern Africa are paid 19% less than men on average. To make up this difference, women would then need to work an additional five hours every day. This is according to UN Women Africa. You can imagine the

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impact on families and communities of that. That's those women who do have jobs, because the unemployment rate for women is 35,9% compared to 31% for men. That reflects a gap of 4,9% points among graduates. The unemployment rate for women is 15%, and that's compared to 8,9% for men. It indicates a disparity of 6,1% points.

That's why I've introduced to this House the Fair Pay Bill. It seeks to close the gender wage gap. It seeks to confront wage exploitation, to enforce salary transparency and hold employers accountable. These are measures that ensure that women and youth work is valued equally and fairly and fosters the economic inclusion which we speak about and debate today. I want to use this opportunity to call on every single Member of Parliament, MP, in this House to support the Fair Pay Bill when it comes to this floor. If we say we want to see economic inclusion for women and young people, this is one of the ways.

We are today calling on the public as well to exercise the power right to all MPs on the Employment and Labour Portfolio Committee and urge them to back this progressive reform. We've got to commit to turning proposals into policies and policies ultimately into measurable change. Therefore, we must act

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together to build an economy where women and youth not only participate but lead, thrive fairly and equally. Once again, I call to MPs to the public to support the Fair Pay Bill, to support equality, and to support justice and inclusion of youth and women. I thank you.

Ms A N KUMBACA: Hon House Chair, hon members and fellow South Africans, we have gathered today at a moment historic significance, not only for South Africa but for the global community. As we prepare to host the 11nth P20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit from 1 to 3 October in Cape Town, we are called to reflect deeply on how parliamentary democracy can be harnessed to foster inclusive and sustainable futures, and how we can strengthen global co-operation to ensure full and equitable participation of women and youth in development. South Africa's Presidency of the G20 is a profound responsibility. As the first African nation to host the G20 Summit, we have the opportunity to bring the aspirations of our continent to the center of global economic discussions.

For the first time in history, Africa is not at the margins of global discussions, Africa is at the table shaping the agenda. Hon members, the global landscape is shifting. The world is no

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longer defined by the power of few, but by the voices of the many. This presents both challenges and opportunities, especially for emerging economies such as ours. We must seize this moment to leverage change, not only for the benefit of South Africa, but for the advancement of Africa in the entire Global South. This year we marked the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, a living testament to the power of collective action. When the Charter declared in 1955 that the people shall govern and that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, it was not mere rhetoric. Seventy years later, the words that people shall govern still echo as a call to action, not a relic of history.

These values must continue to inspire our domestic policies and our contribution to building a fairer global order. Fellow South Africans, South Africa is a proud child of international solidarity. Our liberation struggle succeeded because the world stood with us against apartheid. That legacy is placed on as a moral obligation to support those who today continue to fight for justice and freedom. Solidarity is not charity, it is justice in action. Our freedom was won because the world stood with us. Today, we must stand with those whose freedom is under siege. It is in this way that South Africa has

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mobilised the world against the genocidal war being waged against the Palestinian people.

By launching a genocide case at the International Court of Justice, ICJ, we affirm that justice knows no borders. Our stance has since been joined by peace-loving nations across the globe. Today, 18 September, marks exactly one year since the UN General Assembly, UNGA, overwhelmingly voted for Israel to end its unlawful presence in the occupied Palestinian territories. In pursuit of peace, South Africa remains committed to silencing the guns and addressing the root causes of conflict. We believe in dialogue, diplomacy and strategic peacebuilding. Peace is not the absence of war, it is the presence of justice, equality and inclusion, but peace will only be sustainable when it is inclusive, when women, youth and people with disabilities are not afterthoughts but central actors in peace processes.

Their voices must shape the solutions that rebuild societies and secure futures. Hon members, inclusion is not a slogan, it must be embedded in the fabric of governances. When women and youth are given equal access to education, jobs and leadership, they do not just uplift themselves, they uplift

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their entire communities. A young person empowered with opportunity is not a burden on society, they are engines of innovation. A woman equipped with economic tools is not just a participant in development, she becomes a multiplier of progress. This year also marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a groundbreaking framework that placed gender equality at the heart of global development. This was adopted by 189 governments.

It affirmed that women's rights are human rights and sets clear call for ending discrimination and advancing the empowerment of women and girls. Thirty years after Beijing, equality cannot remain an aspiration, it must become an achievement. Hon members, let us recognise the transformative potential of our youth. South Africa is a young nation with the majority of our people under the age of 35. The energy, creativity and resilience are amongst our greatest national assets. But too often, this potential is stifled by unemployment, exclusion and inequality. To waste the talents of our young people is to betray the future.

That is why our commitment to youth empowerment must be practical and not just a symbolic thing. It must translate

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access to skills, to entrepreneurship and to platforms where their voices can shape policy. South Africa must therefore use its leadership of the G20 and the P20 to champion bold and ambitious commitments for inclusive growth, gender responsive policies and economic empowerment of women and youth. A future that excludes women and youth is not a sustainable future, it is a broken promise. Development without women is incomplete, development without youth is unsustainable and development without both is impossible, and it will not happen.

Hon members, as we carry forward the spirit of this debate, let us be guided by the principles of solidarity, equality and sustainability. Let us be unwavering in our commitment to uplift the historically marginalised, to multiply our efforts for peace and justice, and to ensure that no one is left behind in the march towards development. As Che Guevara said: "The revolution is not an apple that falls when it is ripe. You have to make it fall." Change does not wait. We must act now for women, youth and oppressed everywhere. Injustice will remain undefeatable. I thank you.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Is there a speaker on behalf of Al-Jama-Ah, the NCC, the UAT, Good? I recognise hon Mbiko. Order, hon members.

Ms F MBIKO: Hon House Chairperson, today, I stand before you not just as a community leader, but as a fellow South African who believes in the promise of our people and the hope of a new tomorrow. The theme we gather under, that is the fostering inclusive and sustainable future, is not just slogan, it is a moral imperative, and within that, our focus of harness and global co-operation for the equitable participation of women and youth in development, is the heartbeat of our future. South Africa is a nation of extraordinary potential and limitless possibility, but also of painful contradictions. Youth unemployment stands at 46% for those between 15 and 34. For disabled youth, the rate is even more dire, and it is amongst highest in the world.

Women, while increasingly visible in leadership, remain disproportionately affected by poverty, violence and exclusion. One in three women has experienced intimate-partner violence. Gender-based violence, GBV, and child abuse, are not isolated incidents, they are in national crisis. Over 10 000

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rape cases were reported in just three months, last year. Children are being violated, trafficked and silenced. They are not just statistics. There are stories, there are lives and they demand action. We must build a society rooted in fairness, where no one is left behind. A society that champions freedom, not just from oppression, but freedom to dream, work and thrive. A society that celebrates diversity, not as a challenge, but as our greatest strength.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Mbiko, just take your seat for a moment. Hon member, why do you want to be recognised?

Ms K L KHAKHAU: Chair, could you please ask hon Reddy to respect the seriousness of the topic and respect the member on the podium by stopping to gesture.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Reddy seems to be engaged for now. He is not yet at the point where he is disturbing her. However, hon Reddy, you are treading on a fine line. Yes, thank you. Hon Mbiko, please continue.

Ms F MBIKO: Hon House Chairperson ... [Interjections.]

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon members, everyone is disrupting hon Mbiko, and as her Whip indicated, she is actually addressing some very serious statistics. So, let us give her the floor.

Ms F MBIKO: We must build a society rooted in fairness, where no one is left behind, a society that champions freedom, not just from oppression, but freedom to dream, work and to thrive. A society that celebrates diversity, not as a challenge, but as our greatest strength and the society that guarantees opportunity, especially for those who have been historically excluded. So, what must we do? We must empower women and youth through global partnership, support initiatives like SA Youth Gender Action Plan, SA YGAP, which offers a road map for gender equality through education, safety and economic inclusion.

Leverage international co-operation like Sweden support for youth-led GBV prevention to amplify local solutions. We must also create pathways to employment for youth and disabled. We must promote platforms like job, abled and disability workshop development enterprise which connect disabled youth to real jobs and skills development. We must continue to encourage

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business to invest in inclusive partnership that lead to permanent employment. Strengthen community-based projects and justice. We must expand access and better fund Thuthuzela centres and legal aid for survivors of GBV and trafficking.

We must advocate for full implementation of National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, NSP on GBVF, between 2020 and 2030. We must educate and mobilise by launching local awareness campaigns that teaches children and families about the rights, safety and support system. The community leaders to recognise and respond to signs of abuse and explanation. In closing ... [Interjections.]

Mr N G MYBURGH: Melani and I are deeply grateful ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Myburgh, on the virtual platform, please remain muted.

Ms F MBIKO: Let us be clear, the future we want will not arrive by accident, it must be built brick by brick, voice by voice and hand in hand. A nation that marginalises women and youth is a nation that is at war with its future. Let us be

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the generation that say, no more silence, exclusion and violence. Let us be the generations that fosters a future that is truly inclusive, truly sustainable and truly South African. So, what do we do next? We commit, collaborate and challenge. We commit to amplifying the voices of women and youth in every sphere of development, we collaborate across borders, sectors and generations, and we challenge the status quo that tells us, inclusion is optional.

Before the future, because the future we seek is not built by exclusion, it is built by equity, so, I asked each of you, what legacy will we leave, and what legacy will you leave? Let it be one of courage, co-operation and transformation. Let us build systems that work for women, economies that trust youth and futures that reflect the full spectrum of human potential, because when women and youth leads, nations rise. Let us be bold, brave and well where every woman and every young person can say, I belong, I matter, and I believe it. Thank you very much, hon House Chairperson.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITY: Hon House Chair, hon members, fellow South Africans. It is with profound responsibility to rise in this

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House as South Africa hosts the G20 and convince the P20 Summit for the first time on the African soil. This is not merely ceremonial. It is the recognition that Africa is no longer a passive observer, but an active participant and shaper of global futures. The question before us is stuck. Will the multilateral system continue to reproduce inequality, austerity, and dependency? Or will it be finally embracing development, justice, equity, and empowerment? History warns us of the dangers of exclusion.

Structural adjustment programmes imposed by the Brenton Woods Institutions were packaged as solutions but proved disastrous. They cut health agenda. They cut education budgets. They privatise national assets and strip countries of their sovereignty. Let me tell you, they present outdated governance dominance by Global North, and they also show the failure to prioritise the needs of low and middle-income countries, who bore the heaviest cost, vulnerable groups.

It is therefore why, in this current moment, South Africa's Presidency of G20 must be understood against this backdrop as we advance the theme, solidarity, equality, and sustainability, to ensure that no one is left behind through

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erasure. This presents an opportunity to reimagine a multilateral order, not as just the fortress of powerful but a democratic arena, where the Global South, especially Africa, contributes to shaping outcome that affects us all. Through the leadership of His Excellency President Ramaphosa, we are leveraging G20 as an important multilateral platform to position empowerment of women, youth, and persons with disabilities but also ensuring that they are not just tokens of representation but full participants in decision making, in economic transformation and in future of our societies.

Hon members, despite progress we must be frank to acknowledge the barriers that remain entrenched. Youth unemployment is amongst the highest globally. Women face persistent pay gaps, invisible unpaid work, limited access to finance and under representation in leadership. We have seen it with many parties only presenting men. Persons with disabilities remain largely excluded with formal employment often below one percent. Globally, the anti-gender movement threatens to roll back the decades of hard-won gains. These are not just temporal problems but are structural and require deliberate interventions.

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Nevertheless, we must also shine a light on achievements in the past decade. Empowerment and transformation have not only been an aspiration but it is practiced already, reshaping our society. We share, of course, seeing that many of the youth without a matric now have matric. This has seen the decline from 61% in 2014 but now we have just below 50%. Higher education enrolment has risen in the country to 13,2% and we are seeing women driving much more of this growth. Expanded access through Tvet colleges, Sector Education and Training Authorities, Seta, learnerships and national skills fund, linking skills to labour markets demand. We are seeing much more participation of women and youth.

Hon Mkhize of MKP, facts are important, even in your Maiden Speech. Lies have no legs and they will be exposed. First lie was around National Student Financial Aid Scheme, Nsfas. Since the inception of Nsfas, it has opened doors of learning with more than five million South African youth students, proving that public investment can transform lives. This really exists. No other G20 country has shown so much power and so much investment like South Africa with nearly 70 percent of undergraduates through Nsfas.

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The second lie, you have said, hon Mkhize, that last year the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has underspent R118 million. That is a lie. It was only R8 million. And you have to understand this, that we have presented this in portfolio committee.

*IsiXhosa*:

Uza kuyazelaphi ke ungayifundanga?

*English*:

Hon House Chair, by 2024, 77% of female-headed households had mobile internet access ... I am not interested in you ... enabling women in rural areas to participate in digital markets. In South Africa, the gender gap in mobile banking is narrowing, and we have seen this taking shape and improving many lives because there is access to internet. Initiatives such as the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP Youth Digital Empowerment Programmes are training one million South Africans in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

I want to also respond to hon Lonzi, his obsession about the ANC. We see exactly what it is. Those that continue to charge, because he raised the issue of spaza shops, to charge people

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over buying of data in spaza shop are involved in unscrupulous behaviour. I agree with him on that part. But what we will not accept, hon Lonzi, is adopting to the same behaviour of blaming ANC and casting aspersion on the ANC and its members. Change your way.

House Chair, South Africa has taken a bold step with the Public Procurement Act of 2024, which makes the inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. [Interjections.] This is transformation that we need to continue seeing. The Public Procurement Act is very important, and President Ramaphosa has made this announcement, and women, youth, and persons with disabilities are, of course, going to get a share of what was passed here by yourselves in the government budget 3,0. This is not only just a rhetoric statement. It means that billions of Rands will be redirected to women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

*Sesotho*:

Le rata kapa le sa rate ...

*English*:

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... that economy will go in the hands of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. What is quite important, the strategy of economic empowerment for women, youth, and persons with disabilities also provides us with measurable targets and fiscal instrument of empowerment. Women are showing us entrepreneurship. Women are playing role and breaking the ground in Information and Communications Technology,ICT, in finance and in green economy.

Allow women to take and shape all these sectors and let them participate equally. But what will be at this level where we need to shape up in the global level, where we must see that intersectionality matters? Oppression is never singular. A rural woman with disability faces overlapping barriers of gender, geography, class, and systematic exclusion. Our policies must address these layered realities, ensuring that commitments across P20, W20, and Y20 are transformative, not rhetoric.

South Africa is deliberate, and we are going to ensure that our work continues to contribute to prioritise on food security, health, and inequality reduction with the intersectional lens. And I want to say that in the W20

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inception, we were reminded that G20 members' policy must be rooted in lived experiences, including of women in the rural communities, women in the informal sector, young people, and persons with disabilities. These commitments ensure that our global agenda does not treat people as single categories but recognises the overlapping identities that shape exclusion and inclusion policies needed to overcome it.

Hon Chair, I want to say this, South Africa's G20 Presidency is our opportunity to demand a multilateral order that is democratic and just. Africa cannot remain a less than five percent of the vote in International Monetary Fund, IMF and World Bank. Regression conditionality must end. Human development must be placed at the centre of global finance. It is quite important in the commitment we have made that the people shall govern. That was the aspiration of our Freedom Charter. Our Constitution carries the same inclusion vision. It is our duty to make it real, both within our borders and in the global fora, where tomorrow's rules are being written.

It is why hon Lozi and Members of Parliament must understand that ANC still leads. Our renewal agenda will continue to lead

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you in the greatness of all, particularly for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Thank you so much.

Debate concluded.

## CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR ON 2024-25 THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT REGARDING PERFORMANCE OF DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR AND ENTITIES IN MEETING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2024-25

Mr B M MANELI: Hon House Chairperson, hon members, in particular members of the Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour, hon Ministers and Deputy Ministers, committee support staff, South Africans following the deliberations of this House, this report is introduced on the backdrop of a very important judgement by the courts of our country on a very important matter of employment equity, in particular targets that must be met by employers in line with section 15(A) of the Employment Equity Amendment Act.

The court’s decision deals with part A, which focuses on the set targets and resumption targeted date of the 1st of

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September 2025, and part B, which focuses on the constitutionality of section 15(A), which is yet to be heard.

This is important in the continuous efforts in terms of the reversal of the national oppression imposed by colonialism and apartheid, characterised by race, gender and class. In the current reality, this characterisation of the national oppression is represented by the current fault lines of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

We maintain that employment equity has nothing to do with reintroducing racism, but the empowerment of women has no race and the empowerment of people with disabilities has neither race nor gender but looks at people from the point of disability.

I am therefore presenting the reports of the committee as adopted on the 7th of May 2025, having received a presentation from the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities on the 5th of March 2025 and the 2nd of April 2025.

The overall nonfinancial performance for the quarter under review is at 77%, which is a decline from the first and second

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quarters of 2024-25. Capacity constraints, financial limitations and unfilled vacancies contributed significantly to the challenges experienced in the 7% achievement of the administration programme. Despite these setbacks, the department made progress in reporting on irregular expenditure cases, ensuring compliance with financial regulations.

The financial performance is overall 75% ... spending, which is R2,89 billion spent out of the allocated R3,85 billion, reflecting moderate spending for the quarter.

Fellow South Africans, the committee's observations and recommendations are stated in the report, which takes into account all views expressed in the meeting. Amongst others, the committee observed persistent audit irregularities and recurrent findings which reveal systemic weaknesses in governance, internal controls and compliance within the department.

Hence, the committee recommends that the department strengthens internal audit capacity, conducts timeline follow-ups on audit findings and enforces accountability measures to

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address systematic governance ... and prevent the recurrence of irregularities.

This report is presented for this House's approval. I thank you.

*Declarations of vote*:

Mr M BAGRAIM: Chairman, by the very nature of reports, they more often than not reflect the majority parties. Fortunately, under a government of national unity, GNU, we are starting to detect rays of sunshine.

I have pointed out in the past that the reports emanate from within the department. The department sets the goals, sets the assessment and sets the outcome. The glowing report is then sent to a committee that has to discuss the report within the parameters set by the very same department that is being held to account.

It is vital, not only for the Members of Parliament, but for the public to take a step back and see the vastly different assessment the department gleaned, from the users of the department and the general public.

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I get constant feedback of a negative basis from the public, with the occasional golden thread of positivity. I must add that this thread of positivity is getting a little brighter, which speaks volumes about the nature of our new parliamentary structure.

However, the constant feedback, if we are to be honest, is generally negative. I receive about 500 emails per month, with only about 5% indicating positivity. The deluge of complaints speaks volumes. At this point, I must add that my interaction in most instances with the senior staff of the various entities is positive. The response from the senior staff has been incredibly different to the previous dispensation. The GNU has indeed worked its magic with at least the thinking few.

Within hours of me reporting each and every complaint, I receive a response from the upper echelons with a promise that this complaint will be sent on to other individuals who will tackle it with vigour. It is at this point that we find the breakdown and disappointment.

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The department has access to the most sophisticated tools available and to world-class service providers. It should not be a problem at all to tackle an individual's claim for unemployment insurance monies.

Every single individual who is registered with the Unemployment Insurance Fund, UIF, has a perfectly documented digital footprint through the Receiver of Revenue, which is then cascaded down to the Department of Employment and Labour and eventually to the UIF. After spending billions of rand on these systems, you would have expected that the users of the systems are well-trained and well-versed in ensuring that the claim will be activated with electrifying speed. Clearly, there's no worry about the availability of funds, as we are regularly told that the UIF has billions invested through the Public Investment Corporation, PIC, and a huge surplus.

Therefore, the only holdup can be the inability of the staff or the inability of the system. We are told that the system is foolproof and, in fact, has been tried and tested for decades by the private sector. Where does the problem lie?

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When trying to hold the department to account, we very seldom get cogent answers. The only thing we do hear from quarter to quarter is how the system is going to be improved and how the staff are going to be held to account. This monotonous story has been told to me for 11 years. Over these past 11 years I've asked, I have accused, I have shouted, but very little improvement.

You have to couple this administrative nightmare with the unacceptably high unemployment rate in the country. Daily, we see companies closing down and retrenching. As a labour lawyer, I am faced every single week with the news of mass retrenchments and businesses reluctant to try and create further employment.

Again, I'm aware that because of the positivity of the GNU, we are starting to see businesses, for the first time in years, investing in themselves and creating more jobs. However, with the jobs bloodbath explained above, the Department of Employment and Labour has reported an overall performance of 96% and the administrative branch reported an achievement of 90%. How can this add up? Either the numbers are wrong or the

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department is setting itself targets that are far too easy to meet.

There's a path to high unemployment ... growing an economy. This path ... outlined by the DA's plan to turbocharge the economy. The Minister would do well to keep a copy on her desk when her department sets its next performance targets. Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr N N SHEZI: Hon House Chairperson, hon members, I rise today as Umkhonto weSizwe Party to reject the portfolio committee’s report on the 3rd quarterly performance of the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities. This report does not show enough progress that can address poverty and the catastrophic nature of poverty that our people are facing. Hon Chairperson, as we stand here today, our people are languishing in poverty. Employment rate in the period under review for 15 years to 24 stood at 60,8%. So, this department ...

*IsiZulu*:

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... uma kungukuthi izohluleka ukulwa nokuswelakala kwemisebezi, okusho ukuthi singagcina sesiyibiza ngokuthi yi...

*English*:

... department of unemployment rather than Department of Employment and Labour. Hon Chairperson, logically, it will tell you it is simpler to come up with statistics, counting the number of unemployed because in many developed countries and progressive countries with progressive leaders, there are fewer people who are unemployed. Therefore, you can't ... the unemployment rate. Maybe in South Africa, we are reaching a threshold where we should count those who are employed because very soon, we will go above 50% of the unemployment rate. Hon Speaker, I'm saying today. I'm listening to the debates and the discussions of the so-called ruling party or leading party.

*IsiZulu*:

Ngithi uma ngabe singayishintshi indlela le umnotho osebenza ngayo eNingizimu Africa ...

*English*:

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... we are heading straight for a catastrophe. I'm warning that if we are not changing our ways and copy from countries that are progressive enough. And if we hide behind Donald Trump's ... . We will not progress if we are stuck on Donald Trump's sanctions against South Africa. There are countries that are progressive. Countries that have been sanctioned over 25 000 times, but they are progressive, and their unemployment rate is so low that every citizen can share in the country's wealth. If you look back at what is happening around the country, the MKP's labour desk has risen to fight the scourge of the illegal immigrants ...

*IsiZulu*:

... abathatha izindawo zomsebenzi zabantu baseNingizimu Afrika.

*English*:

It is the duty of this department to supply labour inspectors to go into every factory, every shop and make sure that what remains is ours. As we stand here today, we commend the work that the MKP labour desk is doing because our youth and unemployed citizens of South Africa find themselves cold in the streets having to fend for themselves. We are promising

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South Africans that if you vote for the MK Party, we are going to change the trajectory of this economy. We are going to stop the dismantling of departments of government and make sure that we nationalise the resources of this country so that we can benefit from them and create a growing economy. It is an example that has helped other nations. Why don't we copy from them? ... that they must invest so that we can get jobs.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you, hon member, your time has now expired. Thank you, the EFF. Thank you, hon members, please take your seats.

Ms T J MOKWELE: Chairperson, greetings to the CIC, commander-in-chief, Julia Sello Malema, commissars, fighters and fellow South Africans. The report before this House reflects the performance of the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities for the third quarter of 2024-25. It also carries observations and recommendations of the committee, of which EFF happens to recommend.

What we see in this report is the department collapsing under its efficiency. The committee itself has noted challenges in operational efficiency and policy implementation. The report

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reveals a shocking truth and lack of accountability, persistent corruption activity and a backlog of unresolved cases. It is clear that this department is failing to address corruption. That is not incompetence; it is a failure to protect the public purse. Inspection and enforcement unit achieved 100% of its target. The reality on the ground is that workers continue to face daily exploitation. This suggests that the scope and capacity of this unit are still too constrained to truly address the scale of the problem.

The compensation fund is underspending on its budget. While at the same time failing to reach its target. This is proof that this department cannot even spend money it already has, let alone create opportunities for young unemployed youth.

The report confirms what we already know. Targets mean nothing without political will. The political will to transform the economy without radical economic transformation and industrialisation, this government will never be able to create jobs. It is unacceptable that the very same department tasked to create jobs is crippled with acting leadership positions and endless vacant positions.

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The EFF calls for the full capacitation of the state to create sustainable jobs and drive industrialisation. We further call for skills development and nationalisation of key sectors of the economy, because jobs cannot come from a government that has surrendered the economy to private sectors. The EFF Labour desk will continue to be the vanguard of the working class and the workers. It will continue to advocate and educate workers for their rights. Unlike the ANC, DA-led GNU that is protecting the interest of ... [Inaudible.] The EFF supports the report.

Mr S L NGCOBO: House Chairperson, the IFP notes, the portfolio committee's report on the third quarter performance of the Department of Employment and Labour for 2024-25. While we acknowledge areas of progress, particularly inspections and enforcement services, and in public employment services, we remain deeply concerned about the areas of underperformance. Administration achieved only 67% of its targets with serious weaknesses in fraud resolution as a mere 13% of cases were finalised in six months.

Labour policy and industrial relations also underperform with delays in processing collective agreements and implementing

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the ethics work plan. In light of this, the IFP continues the call for agent filling of vacancies, improved expenditure planning and strict accountability on unresolved fraud and corruption cases. Strengthening governance and efficiency will ensure that the department delivers fully on its mandate. The IFP supports this report.

Ms J A BASSON: Hon members, we as the PA welcome this report, but this report is not a true reflection of what we see in the House. As the portfolio committee, we are left with more questions than answers. EFF, DA, MKP, PA, believe it or not, in that House, fight is one for the people of South Africa. Humongous to think that even today here we cannot agree 33,2. That is the unemployment rate. We asked about COVID cases. In 2022, COVID was lifted in this country, yet arrest has not been made. More than 80% of cases are standing over. Our own government takes us to Artificial Intelligence, AI, technology functions, yet there is no reality when it comes to labour. We have only started using biometric fingerprints now. Our system is flawed. Our system is corrupted. More of the employees of the Department of Labour are sitting with cases against them than cybercriminals attacking labour. It is sad that, as a committee, we seek answers. We fight for South Africa. We

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stand for the people of this nation. But as a report, we read, all is well. All is not well. It is time we go back to the drawing board. It is time we are looking at the mirror.

Minister, I plead with you to lead by example, not typed words on a piece of paper. Every race in this country deserves better. [Time expired.]

Mrs H DENNER: House Chair, this report highlights the performance for the reporting period of the department and its six entities. These include the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, CCMA, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, UIF, the Compensation Fund, Supported Employment Enterprises, Productivity South Africa, and the National Economic Development and Labour Council, Nedlac. But for the purposes of this declaration, I will focus only on the UIF.

In response to a written question concerning UIF maternity claims, the Minister of Employment and Labour answered in July of this year that for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years, a substantial number of maternity benefit claims were processed by the UIF with no backlog of outstanding claims. For the current financial year, a backlog of only 2 600 claims

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was reported. The report that we are handling here today describes the UIF as a vital social security programme providing short-term financial relief for various reasons, including maternity leave. It aims to be a caring, accessible, and customer-focused institution. However, the report indicates that the UIF faces challenges in financial management, compliance enforcement, and programme execution, explicitly mentioning claims processing delays and administrative inefficiencies.

The overall UIF performance for this quarter stood at 62%, and the committee's observations on the UIF's performance for this period specifically noted that delays persist in the processing of claims. There is a clear and significant discrepancy between the Minister's answer regarding backlogs and the department's own performance report. The performance report unequivocally states that the UIF is experiencing claims processing delays and that such delays persist across its operations.

Since receiving the Minister's answer, the FF PLUS has received a number of claims from individuals that are still outstanding from the very periods for which the Minister

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stated there were no outstanding claims. This direct, real-world feedback from claimants further the Minister's official answer. House Chair, I must say, someone is not speaking the truth, and it's not me. Thank you.

Mr A D BEESLEY: Chair, South Africa continues to face the world's highest unemployment rate, where one in three jobseekers cannot find work. Yet the Department of Employment and Labour remains unable to show meaningful progress in addressing this national crisis.

Instead of clear outcomes and measurable improvements, we are presented with vague plans and endless promises. The committee itself has now confirmed what many South Africans already know that the department is failing to track results, failing to implement policy effectively, and failing to coordinate with labour market stakeholders. At the very moment when every effort should be focused on creating jobs, the department cannot even fill its own senior vacancies, including that of the Director-General.

Chair, the tragedy is not that this department cannot create jobs, it is that it cannot even protect those who lose them.

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The Unemployment Insurance Fund and the Compensation Fund, institutions meant to provide relief to vulnerable workers, have become exposed as breeding grounds for fraud, maladministration and reckless financial management. When the funds meant to sustain unemployed and injured workers are looted, it is the dignity of South African workers that is stolen. This is just not an administration failure; it is a moral failure.

Chair, ActionSA calls for urgent accountability and reform in this department. Until this rot is addressed, the Department of Employment and Labour will remain the department of no jobs and no responsibility. I thank you.

Mr M NONTSELE: Hon House Chair, hon members, the third quarter report of the Department of Employment and Labour demonstrates the tangible progress in advancing broader socioeconomic objectives of job creation, fair labour practice and social justice. The positive performance across multiple programmes underscores a committed effort to promote inclusive growth, protect workers' rights and uphold constitutional values. Notably, the department has made significant strides, despite

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challenging economic conditions showcasing resilience and strategic focus aimed at building a more equitable society.

The report highlights that in the third quarter, the department achieved 96% success rate across its non-financial indicators, fulfilling the majority of its set targets. For instance, the inspection and enforcement services achieved 100% in specific indicators, having inspected 227 067 workplaces against a target of 223 578, overachieving by 3 489 workplaces. This proactive approach ensures compliance with labour laws and safety standards, safeguarding workers from exploitation and harm, which is vital for fostering societal stability. Additionally, 99% of non-compliant employers were served with 14-day notices reflecting swift enforcement mechanisms that underscores the department's commitment to accountability. Furthermore, the department's public employment services registered over 753 000 job seekers, exceeding the 639 000, thus actively contributing towards reducing unemployment. Notably, it filled the 71 017 employment opportunities against a target of 45 000, achieving an overachievement of 26 017 placements. These figures, House Chair, illustrate the focused effort on mobilising employment

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initiatives to connect job seekers with opportunities, impacting the economy and empowering communities.

Hon Bagraim, figures don't lie. We adopted the report collectively without any coercion. Significantly, the department's labour policy and industrial relations initiative recorded that full achievement across all indicators, consolidating the foundation for sound industrial harmony and social dialogue. Achieving all targets in this area fosters a conducive environment where workers' rights are protected and constructive employee-employer relations are nurtured, which is imperative for sustainable economic development.

On the financial front, resource utilisation reflects prudent management with most programmes operating within their allocated budget. Although under-expenditure was noted in some areas, such as the core operation and capacity-building programmes, these reflect careful planning and phased implementation. For instance, the department spent R922,5 million of its R1,3 billion budget, which is a 68% expenditure rate, highlighting responsible financial stewardship necessary for sustained service delivery.

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Whilst challenges remain, particularly in achieving some targets like the timely payment of benefits that is claimed, which is 92% paid within 10 days against a 100% target, ongoing efforts are aimed at enhancing efficiency. The department continues to develop ICT systems and monitoring networks, which will bolster operational capacity and service quality in the coming quarters. Overall, the report reflects a national commitment to addressing unemployment, upholding decent work standards, and advancing socio-economic transformation.

The achievement of 17 out of 25 performance indicators in the labour activation programme and full success in key service delivery areas underscores the resilience and strategic approach. This progress aligns with the overarching goal of creating a society where all citizens have equal access to opportunities and social safety nets are strengthened and workers' dignities prioritised.

In conclusion, the third quarter report exemplify that dedicated efforts to foster a fair and inclusive labour market, promote social justice and strengthen institutional capacity.

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These achievements foster hope and confidence that ongoing reforms and progress will continue to yield positive outcomes, paving the way toward a more equitable, productive, and prosperous society. Continued focus and resource mobilisation will be essential to sustain these gains, to address emerging challenges characterised by the tariff wars and the need to diversify our markets, in line with the thinking that is broadly expressed by the House, House Chair, in building an inclusive economy that benefits all South Africans. The ANC supports this report.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: Hon House Chair, I move that the report be adopted.

Motion agreed to (uMkhonto weSizwe Party dissenting).

Report accordingly adopted.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR ON THIRD QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE OF DEPARTMENT AND ENTITIES**

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Mr B M MANELI: Hon House Chairperson, hon members, in particular members of the Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour, hon Ministers and Deputy Ministers, committee support staff, South Africans, following the proceedings of this House. I introduce this committee report on the backdrop of historic court judgment and sentencing of Chinese nationals for noncompliance with labour laws of our country, as employers and on human trafficking. This was a result of inspections conducted by the Department of Employment and Labour, working together with the Department of Home Affairs, the SA Police Service and the Hawks.

This is not only about demonstrating the good work done by our law enforcement agencies but is also about a message to deter those who would want to ignore compliance with the laws of our country. In particular, we would like to congratulate and thank the leadership of Adv Msiza, who at the time we were at Bosparadys Dairy Farm, was regarded as a person who did not understand the implications of the law and how to define the employer, is now vindicated by this court’s decision.

Hon House Chairperson I therefore present this report as adopted by the Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour in

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its meeting held on 23 October 2024, having considered presentations from the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities on 11 and 18 September 2024. This report presents a 96% overall nonfinancial performance of the department for the period under review. The inspections and enforcement having achieved 100% of their performance target, just to mention, without stating other programmes outlined in the report.

Hon members, the financial performance indicates an overall 68% performance, resulting in R439,9 million underspending from the R1,363 billion allocated for this quarter. The observations and recommendations of the committee take into account different views expressed in the committee, which reflects a collective oversight role that we play over the executive as Members of Parliament, representing the people of South Africa first before our parties.

Fellow South Africans, amongst others, the committee observed that the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration, CCMA as an important platform to ensure labour peace is negatively impacted by underfunding. Hence, the recommendation that the department should explore ways in

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which the entity can be adequately funded to avoid compromising the service quality.

In addition, the matter of vacancies and acting positions are amongst the sources of instability in the leadership of the department and entities, in particular the Unemployment Insurance Fund, UIF and the Compensation Fund, which have got acting commissioners, hence the recommendation on the filling of critical vacancies, including that of the director-general. The report is now presented for the approval by the House. I thank you as I saved you some time.

*Declarations of vote*:

Mr M BAGRAIM: Don’t worry, I will be quick. I am like a bad penny. House Chair, in my previous speech, I lamented the fact that the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities greatly exaggerated their positive performance. I highlighted the way in which the various portfolio committees were hidebound by reports specifically designed to reflect positivity. In light of these Alice in Wonderland type reports, the committees are then entrusted to observe and to reflect on the report in the absence of external feedback,

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I'll make this point again and again, like I always do. We need to try and reflect reality. I'm glad that the committee's observations largely try and conform to this idea. Firstly, the committee reports and I quote: "Challenges in operational efficiency and policy implementation." That's an understatement.

Secondly, it laments, I quote: "Delays in monitoring and evaluation of employment-related initiatives." The committee then boldly went on to state and just listen to this carefully: "Inefficiencies in budget utilisation, with concerns over expenditure trends." Shock and horror. Even more remarkably, it was reported, I quote: "There's a need for improved oversight in labour market interventions." Shock again.

I'm almost shocked to report that the committee's blunt observation, and I quote: "The departments ethics plan, has not been implemented, showing poor integrity initiatives." Horror again. It is difficult in this time allocated to me to fully describe my disappointment and they said: Only 13% of fraud and corruption cases are resolved within six months, indicating delays." How's that for an understatement?

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The one consistent and realistic body is the Auditor-General, the committee observed, and I quote:

> Persistent audit irregularities and recurrent findings reveal systemic weaknesses in governance, internal controls, and compliance within the department.

In other words, they're just broken. This means that the department has once again failed to do the bare minimum of good governance. It can hang its head in shame. It would be interesting to get a full audit of how much the department has spent on external legal advice and external litigation. We also know that it is good and extremely useful to have rules, regulations and laws within reason. However, these rules mean nothing, without enforcement, nothing. Invariably, these are being flouted.

For instance, we are told that 39% of domestic workers earn less than the minimum wage. Labour inspectors are few, and their tools of trade are insufficient. The National Economic Development and Labour Council, Nedlac should now be at the forefront of what is happening in the labour market in South Africa. They, with the CCMA, should be the shining jewels of

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the department. Nedlac suffers because they have resource contracts, and their social partners still have enormous difficulties dealing with each other. Nedlac is the true debating chamber of South Africa and should be better resourced and given greater powers, rather than money being spent on less representative so-called dialogues elsewhere in government.

Nevertheless, Nedlac must be applauded for amending Schedule 8 of the Labour Relations Act, which will indeed lead to more employment and reduce the burden on the small business sector. Once again, House Chair, the UIF is the champion of delays and is faced with allegations of significant fraud, having lost over R1 billion in bad investments. It’s about time the department opens its eyes to the use and abuse of workers’ insurance money. Once again, we have a cry over enhanced digital systems to improve efficiency. Maybe one day we will stop blaming the system and start looking at those who are managing it. The Compensation Fund can be best described as a ... [Interjections.]

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Bagraim, will you please just take your seat for a moment, I have a hand to my left. Yes, hon member, why do you want to be recognised?

Mr S LONZI: House Chair, I'm rising on the hon member misleading the House. He said, he's going to be short. [Laughter.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Well, that's the point at this time of the evening I want to sustain. But let's give him chance to conclude.

Mr M BAGRAIM: I am shocked and thank you for reminding me. After having lost over R1 billion in bad investments it is about time the department opens its eyes to the use and abuse of employment's money. Stop blaming the system. Look at those managing it. The Compensation Fund is a train smash. While the department continues to draw on UIF and Compensation Fund, CF surpluses to fund its pet projects, the CCMA is being hollowed out.

We are starting to see constraints affecting dispute resolution capacity and an increase in labour disputes. With

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employment shrinking in the business community under siege, the only body that is suitable qualified to handle the majority of disputes is starting to crumble due to funding shortages. [Time expired.]

Ms H H MBELE: Hon House Chair, hon members, the MK Party rejects this Report of Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour on third quarterly performance of department and entities. This is not just about the statistics and gloss representation, it is about the lives of the millions of South Africans who are desperate for work, justice and dignity, and this department is failing them. Yes, there is a number of inspection claims processed and outreach programmes, but for what use are these numbers when rural communities remain excluded, when programmes are stalled and when the intensity co-ordination is collapsing?

In provinces like North West where I am deployed, people are not seeing delivery, they are seeing despair. The government arrives with reports but never with the results. The Labour Activation Programme, Lap is the clearest example. Instead of being a lifetime, it has become a cesspool of corruption and incompetence. We have repeatedly asked for the due diligence

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response on the company given these contracts and we have been ignored. We have asked whether these companies have the skills and infrastructure to deliver, and we have been ignored.

Then there is the scandal of Dephethogo Security, a company that was awarded a Lap tender using the fraudulent document which originated from the inside at the department itself. Hon members, this is not a clerical error, this is a state-enabled fraud. This is why communities have lost faith. This is why youth unemployment stays above 40%. This is why the MK Party rejects this report.

We are not just rejecting; we are demanding the immediate tabling of the two diligence reports on all Lap contracts. A full forensic investigation into Dephethogo Security. Suspension of all Lap disbursements linked to the compromised contracts. But MK Party will go further: When we govern, we will open the books to the public, Lap contracts, reports and even cents spent will be published. We will blacklist companies that defraud the state, and we will make the Lap funds go straight to the real skills development co-operatives and the small businesses, not to the pockets of the cronies.

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Hon members, accountability is not negotiable. The MK Party is here to clean up this department. To restore integrity and to make every rand work for the unemployed and poor. This is our solemn pledge and MK Party will not endorse fraud. We will not tolerate silence, and we will not allow the hopes of our people to be stolen. Thank you very much.

Ms T J MOKWELE: Chairperson, I will never listen to the gallery, because all members of the committee have accepted our report. The report presented here paints a stark picture of a country struggling to provide meaningful opportunities for its people. The spending patterns of the department and its entities indicate to South Africans that they don't care about the crisis of unemployment. For example, the departmental budget allocation for 2023-24 was R4,16 billion, spending about 99,5%, yet achieved only about 81% and programmes like Administration only achieved below 60% of their target.

While inspection and enforcement services spent 98% of their allocated budget, they failed to address the systematic challenges faced by vulnerable workers. The Compensation Fund with a budget of R12,6 billion overspent by R13,1 billion, yet

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achieved only 57% of its indicators, receiving a disclaimer audit opinion, due to inadequate ICT control, poor record management and lack of consequence management.

The quarterly labour force survey showed a decrease in unemployment from 1,4% to 32,1%, but we must question the quality and sustainability of these jobs. Are they dignified, formal-sector positions or informal work that offers no security? Young people aged 15 to 24, for years, face dire prospects with 3,5 million not in employment, education or training.

Black African women are affected by an unemployment rate of almost 39%. Whites still constitute 61% of top management positions, underscoring slow progress of unemployment equity. The EFF advocates for enforced compliance aligned with the Constitution and international conventions.

With the EFF Labour Desk, we will continue to advocate for the vulnerable workers and the working class. The EFF supports this report. We participated fully and even gave progressive recommendations to ensure that we create sustainable jobs. After industrialisation, we nationalise key sectors of the

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economy, to make sure that we change the status quo of our economy. Thank you very much.

Mr S L NGCOBO: Chairperson, the IFP, having considered the annual reports of the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities, notes progress in expanding UIF coverage, strengthening supported employment enterprises for persons with disabilities and exposing workplace noncompliance.

However, serious concerns remain. Material irregularities, weak procurement practices and delayed UIF post-verification processes undermine accountability. ICT projects remain poorly aligned to strategic goals. Disaster recovery readiness is inadequate and persistent vacancies in the inspectorate weaken enforcement of labour and immigration laws. Further, the Compensation Fund continues to struggle with internal controls, ICT deficiencies and skill shortages.

The IFP therefore calls on the Minister to act decisively, strengthen financial discipline, expedite the UIF recovery processes, align ICT projects with departmental objectives, urgently fill funded vacancies, and implement turnaround strategies in the Compensation Fund.

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South Africa cannot afford inefficiency when workers' rights, livelihoods and dignity are at stake. The IFP accepts the report.

Ms J A BASSON: Chairperson, as the PA, we accept and support the report. Seven years and three months to arrest and convict seven Chinese foreign nationals is remarkable, but not a work pace that we as South Africans should follow. Let us arrest seven foreign nationals in seven days.

Let us start with the plus minus 7 000 illegal spaza shops in our townships that are taking away jobs from Africans and coloured South Africans alone. This report is amazing on paper, as are the DA's promises before elections, but in reality, we all know that they are only promises. Too many children go to bed hungry, as their parents are unemployed and cannot even afford bread.

The UIF is not a till open for free for all, or staff; it is a form of security for people who lost all.

CCMI and labour officers are undermanned, overwhelmed and cannot help the poorest of the poor. Not all of us can afford

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labour lawyers. Labour Department, we need to do better. We need to reflect the truth in our reports. We need to tell the people of this country that we are struggling. Let us get help from labour professionals. I am sure the government can afford it.

Let us get people that can do the job to assist us and teach us how to do it. The time for failing the people of this country is over. It is time we rise. Rise up, vote better and make better decisions. Thank you.

Mrs H DENNER: House Chair, the department showed significant under expenditure with public employment services, using only 26% of its R526 million allocation, under spending by R389 million. This was compounded by persistent ICT challenges and critical unfilled vacancies.

The Unemployment Insurance Fund that I touched on in the previous declaration achieved only 68% of its targets. So, it reduced in the later quarter, failing on prompt invoice payments and essential service channel procurements. Its labour activation programme, though apparently reaching 80% of its targets, recorded severely limited participation of only

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4 444 beneficiaries taking part in employability programmes against a target of 30 000.

The Compensation Fund performed at 71%. The Compensation Fund is crippled by pervasive ICT issues, skills gaps, poor data quality, legacy systems and a history of underperformance, rife with fraud and corruption. And claimants like Hansie De Ville, an injured farmworker from Riviersonderend, suffer because of the fund's inability to get its own housing order.

Further, Productivity SA faces liquidity risks and supported employment enterprises suffer from revoked preferential procurement status and hiring freezes, leading to job losses. Let me not be all negative.

Something positive, the CCMA achieved an exemplary 100% performance in quarter three, delivering on all indicators, despite being negatively impacted by underfunding. Its dispute resolution programme overspent due to caseloads, highlighting the need for adequate funding – so, there is still something wrong there - to preserve service quality.

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These collective failures severely impede the department’s mandate and exacerbate unemployment. I am sure we can do better. I thank you.

Mr A D BEESLEY: Chair, there are many grave concerns with the Department of No Jobs and No Responsibility. Chief amongst them is the rampant corruption and mismanagement in the Compensation Fund and the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

These funds exist to protect and support hardworking South Africans in the most vulnerable moments. Instead, they turn into slush funds for fraud and maladministration. The dignity of our nation’s workers is being stripped away by those who are entrusted to safeguard their welfare.

A few months ago, the Auditor-General tabled its audit findings on these two funds, which together manage an annual revenue of R46 billion before Scopa. What was revealed can only be described as a horror show. These include a complete breakdown of internal controls, missing or non-existent supporting evidence for transactions, duplicate payments, fraudulent transactions enabled by the manipulation of bank account details, reckless investment in unlisted and failing

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startups, and a total lack of consequent management for corruption and mismanagement.

Instead of providing financial security for injured or unemployed workers, these funds have become a breeding ground for mass looting and impunity. The very institutions designed to provide relief in hardship are now the ones deepening it, robbing workers of both their dignity and their right to financial security.

The Department of No Jobs and No Responsibility is not only failing South Africans through its inability to stem the job losses; it is also failing injured and unemployed workers through the unchecked corruption and mismanagement of the Compensation Fund and the UIF. I thank you.

Mr W M THRING: The ACDP notes that while some progress has been made in meeting strategic objectives of this department, persistent inefficiencies and missed targets remain a concern. The Department of Employment and Labour reported achieving 72% of its nonfinancial performance indicators for quarter three, while critical programmes, particularly those aimed at youth employment and workplace inspections continue to underperform.

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The ACDP reiterates its call for a more agile and accountable labour administration, especially in light of South Africa's high unemployment rate of 33% and youth unemployment rate of 62% for those aged between 15 and 24 years old. We support efforts to strengthen the public employment services and expand the Unemployment Insurance Fund, UIF, cover, however, the Auditor-General’s repeated findings of irregular expenditure and weak internal controls must be met with consequence management. The Compensation Fund in particular, continues to face backlogs and payment delays, undermining trust in the system. The department has been criticised for its slow response to workplace safety violations, especially in the mining and agricultural sectors.

The ACDP calls for urgent reform in inspection protocols and enforcement capacity. On implementation of the Employment Equity Amendment Act, the ACDP reiterates its position, stating that transformation must be driven by merit not political experience. We assert that decent work is not a slogan, it is a constitutional imperative. As Kingdom builders, the ACDP remains committed to a labour market that is fair, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all South Africans. We support the report. I thank you.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order, hon members. Even the ANC has the right to speak.

Ms N S NKOPANE: Hon Chair, third quarter reports of the Department of Employment and Labour reflects significant progress in advancing social justice, economic empowerment, and the protection of workers' rights across the country. It is a statement on the ongoing commitment of government to create a more equitable society where every individual has the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the economy and enjoy their basic human rights.

The report highlights important achievements. That align with the overarching goals of inclusive growth, social cohesion and building a capable state responsive to the needs of the people. One key strength of this report is the notable performance of the Inspection and Enforcement Services Programme. Moreover, the department's efforts to support employment creation are evident in the higher than targeted registration of job seekers and the filling of employment opportunities. While acknowledging some administrative challenges, including capacity constraints and delays in

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processing certain cases, the overall trajectory remains positive.

The department is dealing well with the consequence management. The Special Investigating Unit, SIU, investigation has found that 9 officials were implicated in the SIU report regarding their role in irregular appointments of five media houses. And the UIF was charged with R6,1 000 000 of irregular expenditure. Those cases were dealt with and currently ... let me conclude with that one. We are also seeing that the department is working well with the Public Service Commission, PSC, where senior management services were found dishonest and the nondisclosure of financial disclosure. The UIF claims fraud cases.

Also, dealing with provincial offices we found that 35 were implicated, then eight officials' cases were finalised with three dismissals and 27 remain pending for finalisation. The department is also working well with the Auditor-General of South Africa, AGSA, in responding to the issues raised and the findings. It is working well with all the oversight bodies, including the portfolio committee itself. Hon Chairperson, the financial management as reported in the quarterly expenditure

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analysis indicates responsive stewardship of public funds. The emphasis on aligning expenditures with strategic priorities ensures that resources are directed towards impactful programmes that benefit workers and the economy at large.

Steady increases in budget allocations to critical areas such as employment service illustrate a strategic long-term vision aimed at fostering industrial harmony, sustainable growth and the approach that is recognised and investing in social cohesion and fair labour practices as a strong foundation for economic resilience. Engaging government, organised labour, business and community representatives fosters consensus, building transparency and shared responsibility, culturally rooted in the nation's history and collective struggle these engagements serve as vital platforms to advance policies and promote social justice.

In conclusion, the third quarter's achievement showcase a government committed to transforming society through a proactive policies, responsive governance and continuous improvement. The focus on enforced employment support and social justice aligns with the product developmental agenda of

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building a nation that is fair, inclusive and resilient. It is through these ongoing efforts that ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): No, no, no, hon members, this member has some time and when we interrupt her the time gets paused, so she will have all her time. Hon Reddy, do you really want to be recognised? No, no. Let her conclude. Thank you.

*Sesotho:*

Ha ke lebohe, Modulasetulo.

*English:*

It is through these ongoing efforts that meaningful progress is being made towards realising the vision of a society rooted in equality, dignity, and shared prosperity of all its citizens. The ANC supports this report.

*Sesotho:*

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Ke a leboha!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: Hon Chairperson, I move that the report be adopted.

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Motion agreed to (uMkhonto weSizwe Party dissenting).

The House adjourned at 20:14.

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