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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The House met at Nieuwmeester Marquee at 15:00.

The Speaker took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The SPEAKER: Hon members, I would like to announce that the questions which were transferred from the written to the oral reply and which were on today's Question Paper have been removed from the Question Paper following receipt of the reply in accordance with Rule 146(2). Consequently, there will be no additional 30minutes to today's question session.

I have also been informed that the Minister for Trade, Industry and Competition is not available to answer questions today. The Minister for Trade, Industry and Competition has asked that Questions number 356, 333, 316 and 352 stand over

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in terms Rules 144(1A) and 144(2) of the Rules of Procedure. The questions are therefore postponed in these questions and will be scheduled in consultation with the Programme Committee.

The first item on today's Question Paper is questions addressed to Ministers in Cluster 5 - Economics. There are four supplementary questions on each question. Parties have given an indication of which questions their members wish to pose as supplementary questions. Adequate notice was given to parties for this purpose. The members who will post supplementary questions will be recognised by the presiding officer.

In allocating opportunities for supplementary questions, the principle of fairness among others have been applied. When all the supplementary questions have been answered by the executive, we will proceed to the next question on the Question Paper. The first question has been asked by the hon C M Phiri to the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure. The question is about the audit findings of his department and mitigation strategies.

CLUSTER 5: ECONOMICS

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(Questions for Oral Reply)

Question 311:

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Madam Speaker, thank you very much, and thank you to hon Phiri for the question. The weaknesses that have been identified in the department are significant and structural. We should not underestimate the scale of the problem we face in bringing this department to financial and operational viability. This is also not something that is going to be done quickly, but given a term in government, I believe we can bring the department and its entities into a full clean audit coupled with a healthy financial outlook.

It is also important to highlight the financial problems that we face including an overdraft of more than R3 billion, the Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE, is technically bankrupt. The client departments owe us R14 billion. Current and former members of Cabinet and current and former Members of Parliament owe us approximately R4 million, and it is just simply not sustainable.

Since the advent of the seventh administration, we have been hard at work to understand the nature of these weaknesses that

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have been raised by the Auditor-General of South Africa, AGSA, and these include non-correlation between expenditure and performance for PMTE, no improvement shown on implementing the matters raised on material irregularities, financial losses due to weaknesses on project management, the backlog of infrastructure projects and the inability to complete them on time and on budget, the weak control environment within the Independent Development Trust, and weak controls in our information technology, IT, systems.

This is why we have also set about to turn these around by developing a clear road map to improve governance and financial health. This will be led by our GRC branch, and we will work with the AGSA on live auditing and to implement interim financial statements to deal with issues as they arrive. We are not going to wait until after the fact where there is little, we can do about it.

However, there are centres of excellence we can take pride in, like the Council for the built Environment and the Construction Industry Development Board, which have produced satisfactory audit outcomes because they have implemented best practice in auditing standards and financial controls. Our

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path to clean audits is non-negotiable. It will be tough, and it will be uncomfortable for some.

Last week we convened our five-year strategic planning session, which will inform our annual performance plan, APP, where we will hold officials to account for what they do or do not do. The bold measures we have included and will implement are to build a culture of excellence, ethics, and purposeful outcomes. Each individual needs to understand what their contribution is to finding solutions and not just pointing out problems.

We are going to digitise and automate our systems to curb irregularities and inefficiencies. We will foster improved relationships with the AGSA to ensure proactive lifestyle audits are conducted and concluded and we are going to review the structure of the department, including the life cycle of some of our entities and assets and their contribution to our objectives.

We are going to ensure that interim financial statements are produced and our audit processes in the PMTE are implemented without fail. We are going to make tender systems transparent whereby they are open to the public and they are recorded both

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audibly and visually. We are going to reconfigure the PMTE into a property trading entity that is able to generate revenue to be used in the building and maintenance of social infrastructure.

Lastly, we are going to partner with Infrastructure South Africa to develop model for infrastructure management division, which will deal with projects that are the most severe, delayed, and that we will complete them on time and on budget. Thank you.

Ms C M PHIRI: Hon Minister, you have outlined that PMTE is bankrupt, but my question ... [Inaudible.] ... viability to deliver on its mandate and ensure that it is able to deliver its key performance areas, KPAs, as well as its programmes and projects. However, you also said that you held a strategic planning session last week. Can you tell us a little bit about the programmes that were put forward to improve the PMTE?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: The PMTE in our department is the source of all problems. The problem is that, for some unknown reason, the department has not implemented a Cabinet resolution that said that the PMTE ... [Inaudible.] ... the assets of the state are ringfenced and

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housed in that entity. ... [Inaudible.] ... and making that a South African Property Company is the solution to be able to dispose those assets where we do not need them so that we are able to ringfence that money that can be used for social infrastructure such as schools, police stations and clinics. This will not be an easy task, but the government has already decided to do this. And we must implement that decision. We must begin the work of creating the South African Property Company.

Madam Speaker, you would be aware that I have called an advisory committee to my office particularly on asset management. I do hope in the next coming weeks, we are going to announce that advisory committee and one of the first pieces of work they will be seized with is putting us on a pathway to creating the property company for our assets. I am confident that if we get that right, it will be a department that people do not make jokes about. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure was a joke at times.

Mr E J MARAIS: Hon Minister, what is the major obstacle ...
[Inaudible.] ...

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The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Let me say around two to three weeks, they outlined the seriousness. ... [Inaudible.] ... In fact, hon Marais, ... [Inaudible.] ... themselves do not lead to service delivery outcomes. They are important to ensuring that the public money is spent correctly. So, when we institute, live audits just like the one done during COVID-19 ... [Inaudible.] ... actions are done there, they are audited on the spot. The audited financial statements are made available at the beginning of the fiscal year so that we do not have to wait until the end of the financial year when all the problems have become known, and there is nothing we can do about it. ... [Inaudible.] ... financial controls we have got to make sure that we digitise, there is too much paper that lies around and is easy. And where we do award tenders, we must make sure that is easy ... [Inaudible.] ... and where we do award tenders, we must ensure that it is done in accordance with the law and that it is transparent. That is why we will also make it publicly available or provide audio or video tapes of the tenders. Thank you so much.

Mr S GAMA: Thank you, hon Speaker. ... [Inaudible.] ... Minister, can you indicate to us what is the ... [Inaudible.] ... and wasteful expenditure which was identified for the year

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2023/24. And also, if you can indicate to us what measures have you taken since you met the Auditor-General in terms of consequence management in the branches that you have submitted but have a lot of fruitless and wasteful expenditure, to accelerate the submission of the financials, the PMTE branch as well as the Independent Development Trust, IDT?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon Speaker, fruitless and wasteful spending is something our department cannot be known for. And fruitless and wasteful spending comes at the expense of our department's most important programmes. I have made it clear to the PMTE management that they will submit their financial statements by the end of this month. And I thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me permission to do so.

Hon Gama, ... [Inaudible.] ... we also inherited a problem in the department ... [Inaudible.] ... worth of mismanagement in the department ... [Inaudible.] We are doing everything we can to make sure that money is spent on social infrastructure, on economic infrastructure and that we ... [Inaudible.] ...

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Adv S SALIE: ... [First part of the question is not audible.]
... are their specific plans do the department have in place
to ... [Inaudible.] ...

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: ...
[Inaudible.] ... And it would be to some of the questions that
come later but let me just help. We do not deal with school
buildings, that is a provincial competence. I think the
provincial government in the Eastern Cape would be better off
here. But let me say this, I think there is a discussion to be
had, and it is important that we leading a discussion about
whether the R950 billion earmarked for infrastructure in the
Medium Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, is actually being
spent wisely?

I think that very few people would believe that there is value
for money in our infrastructure build in the country. We are
proposing to be putting Infrastructure South Africa at the
centre of infrastructure planning and co-ordination in this
country. You will have seen last week we launched a Project
Preparation Fund where people or at least government
departments or entities will be able to approach us. We will
fund that project preparation so that we package plan it and
even if they want to allow us to go to market to find

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additional funding, so we can solve the problems that you found in the Eastern Cape, hon Salie. But we need to have further discussions internally and we can get it right. I am convinced that we could deal with the issues that you have raised today. Thank you so much.

Question 297:

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon Speaker, the department relies on the White Paper on the National Rail Policy approved by Cabinet in March 2022 and the Freight Logistics Roadmap approved by Cabinet in 2023. The rail policy makes the statement that all rail infrastructure from the top of the rail downwards will always belong to government while everything above the rail could be utilised by the private sector and by government for both freight and passenger services.

It is important to recognise that the process now followed in rail was previously followed in the case of ports. So, this policy precept is not new. In 2000, Transnet's Portnet was separated into an infrastructure entity Transnet National Ports Authority and an operations entity Transnet Port Terminals. The outcome led over time to considerable private sector involvement such that currently there are 564 private

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operators across South Africa's ports and considerable long term concessions where private operators have invested in new infrastructure.

The licensing of these operators is facilitated by the Transnet Ports Authority through the Ports Act as the landlord Ports Authority, a model that has become the norm for 90% of global ports. With regard to Question (b), vertical separation will also create space for private rail operating companies to access the rail network and introduce new rolling stock, new technology and operational efficiencies that can enhance freight rail performance and reduce logistics costs for key sectors such as mining, manufacturing and other sectors. Thank you very much.

Mr T L MONTANA: Thank you, hon Minister, for the reply. A vertical integration is about ensuring each business reflects its true cost and in this way harness efficiency gains. This works under certain conditions but not in others. This understanding is key to understanding the viability and profitability of each separate business. With network businesses like Transnet Freight Rail, TFR, however, it is virtually impossible to separate or establish the true cost.

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Can the hon Minister, I know that you told me about ports, I am interested in rail. Can the hon Minister share with this House the actual numbers or any due diligence that has been done which shows that the efficiency gains that would be made from vertical separation will ensure that both the new team and the TFR are fully or adequately funded and will be able to meet current and future investment requirements in the rail sector? [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you, hon Montana, for the supplementary question. I think that is a very important issue and that work is currently being undertaken by the Interim Rail Economic Regulatory so that we are able to accurately determine the tariff that will be assigned to the network statements that we hope to put out later this year. Obviously, in determining the network statement, we have to take into account both of Transnet's requirements and the willingness that the other operators would be prepared to pay. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Let us allow the hon member to ask her question.

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Mr N S NKOPANE: Hon Speaker, through you, how is it envisaged to ensure that Transnet Infrastructure Management becomes a growing concern and a financially viable entity?

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you very much, hon Nkopane. It is envisaged that the Transnet Rail Infrastructure manager will become the custodian of a rail network for a multioperator environment with we hope significant higher volumes of rail.

The expected growth in train operating concessional companies and the concomitant increase in rail volumes will generate primary revenue ... [Inaudible.] ... through access fees structured on a full cost recovery basis. These access fees will be regulated by the economic authority starting with the Interim Rail Economic Regulatory Committee and transitioning to the Transport Economic Regulator once this is fully established. Thank you.

Mr M B BLOSE: Hon Speaker, the failure of government to invest in freight rail has led you to go and seek for private partners which is a phenomenon you have become accustomed to and which seeks deliberately to collapse these state-owned enterprises, SOEs, with the intention to privatise them. Now,

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hon Minister, do you consider that there is a body of literature that suggests that vertical separation improves efficiency or may even have negative effects? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon member, as I indicated earlier, our own experience indicates that vertical separation can be successful. It is our expectation in this environment where we need third party investors in our rail infrastructure that this will fund the necessary expansions and rolling stock in congested corridors and upgrade networks and terminal facilities to accommodate growing volumes of freight. We see this as ultimately helping to put Transnet on a better financial trajectory rather than the current trajectory which you know from our Scopa interaction yesterday is somewhat fragile. Thank you.

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Mutshamaxitulu, ndza khensa.

English:

Hon Minister, you have been in the position for a while now. Are you convinced sitting there that enough financial resources can be found and mobilise to repair and upgrade the dilapidated railway infrastructure including the signaling

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issues in the next two years? If so, what is the basis of your conviction? Thanks very much.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thanks very much, hon Gana. I think both myself and Transnet are receiving a lot of unsolicited bids to participate in this third party process. We obviously are of the view that any consideration of those bids needs to be on a level playing field.

That is the reason why we want to put out the network statement and why we want a proper private sector participation unit established under the auspices of the Development Bank of South Africa to be considering these bids and to make sure where appropriate they reach financial clause and ultimately to improve operations on our rail network. Thank you.

Question 337:

The MINISTER OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Speaker, according to our records, 33 beneficiaries were paid as of 22 July 2024. However, payments to the 50 households were affected by the changes to the payment system introduced by the National Treasury. This impacted the Commission's ability to process bulk payments, resulting in delays in

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financial compensation to claimants, as a result, the Commission has reverted to making individual payment via the government basic accounting systems. Until a new system is fully operational, there is currently a communication plan in place where all the affected communities are engaged, including Lower Zingcuka, to brief them on the requirement of the new payment system.

The change in the payment process is the requirement from National Treasury and beyond the control of the Commission. Some of the beneficiaries were paid before the targeted date of 30 September 2024. The Commission regrets the inconvenience that has cost for restitution beneficiaries at large. However, there has been ongoing communication with all affected communities. Furthermore, the Commission is working closely with the National Treasury and the Director General to ensure that the system is operational as soon as possible. Once the system is available, payments to the beneficiaries will be quicker. Thank you.

Mr N S MATIASE: Thank you so much, hon Speaker. Minister, thank you for being honest and concede that you have not met the commitment you made to meet the payment of the claimants as of the 30 September. Thank you for conceding that your

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department is inefficient and failing to help you. Now, we have had similar misleading replies in the past from your predecessors. Our advice to you is that avoid being misled by your staff and show that you are not added on the list of wall of shame of Ministers who have failed our people.

Now, seeing that you have been misled and been failed by your staff, what measures do you put in place against your failing and incompetent staff and departmental officials, and ensure that at least, before the end of this year, the payment to the claimant is made?

The MINISTER OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Speaker, one of the reasons why the department could not meet the deadline it is because the community, in fact, the chief in that particular community of Zingcuka, alerted the department that there were fraudulent claimants that were included in the list. So, because of that, and the National Treasury identified a gap that it must be fixed for us to pay rightful claimants. It's not about misleading, it's not about joining hall of fame of others, it is about doing the right things. [Applause.]

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Mr M MRARA: Thank you, hon Speaker, I don't want to assume that you have responded to my question. If it's not about misleading, what is the status of the Lower Zingcuka land claimants as of now, and the other land lake claimants in relation to their compensation?

The MINISTER OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you, hon Speaker, as things stand hon member, we are verifying because the verification was necessitated by the fact that the fraudulent claimants were included, and now we are verifying. Also, we're talking to the National Treasury so that they allow us to pay, and we believe that before the end of this year, we will pay. Thank you, Speaker.

Mr B S MADIKIZELA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister, the nonpayment of the community of Lower Zingcuka is not an isolated case, there are many similar cases throughout the country. We also know that there are about 5 700 claims of old order are yet to be settled. In a number of interviews recently and again at our portfolio committee meeting, you confirm that these will be settled in the next three years. Now, Minister, given the limited resources that we have as the country which has resulted in a number of budget cuts due to

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slow economic growth. How are you planning to achieve this goal?

The MINISTER OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you, hon Speaker, and thank you to the hon member. Yes, it is true what has happened in Lower Zingcuka is affecting all others in other areas. However, the truth is, we are going to make sure that we facilitate the payments. Again, you are right, there is 5 700 claims. It will be difficult to settle them in three years, and as I've said in the portfolio committee that we can't be going to Treasury and beg for money every day. At some point, we must talk to the private sector and ask them to assist in settling these claims. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. We now move to the next question, which is question 312 that has been asked by hon C N Malematja to the Minister of Small Business Development. The question is about the red tape reduction plans, core elements and its implementation strategy for small, medium and micro enterprises, SMMEs. Minister.

The MINISTER of SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker, and let me thank the hon member for that ...

[Interjections.]

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The SPEAKER: I'm sorry, Minister, I've been corrected. There's a mistake I made. I have not asked Mr Mncwango in the previous question. I'm sorry. Hon Mncwango. Is there anyone taking the question on behalf of Mr Mncwango?

Ms N H MHLONGO: Thank you ... [Interjections.]

IsiXhosa:

USOMLOMO: Ukhona, yimani.

English:

Ms N H MHLONGO: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Minister, your department holds several government buildings that are currently abandoned and in disrepair as its assets. Given the pressing need for office space, what strategies are being implemented?

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Hon member, can you pose the right question? It looks like ... [Interjections.]

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Order, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon member.

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Dr M Q NDLOZI: Point of order, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order. Hon Ndlozi.

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: Yes, what is your point of order?

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Speaker, under what rule are you saying that she must pose relevant follow-up question? Under what rule? She posed the question. The person must answer it and dismiss it as irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon ... [Interjections.]

Dr M Q NDLOZI: There is no basis in rules for your direction ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Ndlozi, thank you very much. If you can please sit. The hon member did hesitate and was now correcting herself. So, I was just asking us to be patient because she recognised the mistake herself. Hon member, you can proceed with your question.

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Ms N H MHLONGO: Thank you, Madam Speaker ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: If you can bring the mic closer to your mouth.

Ms N H MHLONGO: Whether giving the various commitments of unfulfilled promises, going back to 10 years ago in relation to the payment of the claim. He has found that official office department have been treating the people of Lower Zingcuka through their conduct, inhumanely. If not, why not? If so, what are the relevant details?

The MINISTER OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Speaker, I'm worried, and I don't want to dismiss the member. However, this question is the question that was asked by hon Matiase. It is Question No 2 from hon Matiase. Anyway, let me assist, Speaker. As I've said, we are in constant contact with the community of Zingcuka and we have since told them that by the end of this year we will be able to settle 50 households that are outstanding, 33 have already been paid. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Question 312:

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. The hon member will remember that there are

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lots of initiatives that we're embarking on in order to deal with the red tape as it cuts across many sectors. Now this requires us to work with a number of departments.

We have since established intergovernmental provincial task teams in order to make sure that when we get into a particular province, we are able to look at what is it that is the red tape in the different sectors. We have established that team, and of course our focus is mainly on the red tapes against MSMEs, which is why we have again initiated a study that focuses on the legislation first. We have identified 29 pieces of legislation that are prohibiting meaningful participation of MSMEs in our economy. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr C N MALEMATJA: Madam Speaker, through you to the Minister ...

Sepedi:

Tona, ka mo ntle ka mo batho ba a lla, gagolo borakgwebopotlana. Ba lla ka melao le melawana yeo e beilwego e ba šitiša go tsena ka gare ga ekonomi. Potšišo ke gore ...

English:

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... how does the red tape reduction framework simplify business regulations and compliance to ensure that companies and entrepreneurs can focus on growth, innovation, and job creation in other ways, grow the business? Thank you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you so much, hon member. In the red tape reduction framework, we are clearly articulating the areas in the pieces of legislation that we see as the obstacles to the growth of the MSMEs. Now, if you identify all of those, then you begin to ask what particular clause is a challenge to MSMEs, and therefore come up with a recommendation to say this particular department or sphere must be able to address these challenges by repealing or amending legislation.

We, ourselves as a department, are amending the Businesses Act, which, within it, we are trying to make sure that we simplify the process of licensing by digitalising some of the processes in order to make sure that there is alignment, both at national, provincial, and local level. That will, therefore, make it easier for MSMEs that as they register, there are basic requirements that they must provide, but at the same time, it will create commonalities amongst the

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municipalities and the provincial departments that you are working with. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms S SINGH: Thank you, hon Speaker, and through you to the Minister, what is the timeframe for the red tape reduction measures to be finalised and operational, considering that it is 10 years that this department is in existence and that these challenges were known at the outset? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Am I audible, Madam Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Yes, you are audible.

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you so much. Indeed, the department just turned 10 this year. We do understand, as lawmakers, that the process to develop a legislation in this country does not take less than three to five years. We have the Businesses Act, which is one of the documents or the legislation that I spoke about earlier that it has some clauses that are red tapes to MSMEs. This is the document that I said we are amending. It was only transferred to the department in 2020.

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Yes, the department is 10 years old, but the legislation was brought to us in 2020, which is why we are finalising the policy and the Bill that we have committed to this House that will bring before the end of the financial year. It will not take six days or six months because even the 29 pieces that I am talking about requires extensive consultation and engagements as they either talk to repealing of existing legislations or introductions. But, of course, the reason we set up the interprovincial task teams is to make sure that when necessary, for example, through the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, they can be able to issue certain directives to municipalities that must enable the MSMEs in their local spheres to be able to participate.

Different departments are also doing the same. If you look at the challenge that people are faced with in relation to the illegal ownership by foreigners of spousal shops. The Department of Home Affairs has passed through Cabinet the White Paper on Immigration and Citizenship. All these initiatives are meant to deal with the red tape at the different spheres.

So, unfortunately - I cannot say tomorrow, but timeframes are dependent again on the programming by Parliament and the

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extensive consultation that we must undertake. But we are committed, hence, we are working jointly as government nationally, provincially, and at local level. We do hope that in the next few years, we will be able to defeat the challenge that we are faced with.

Ms M C MAFAGANE: Speaker, through you to the Minister, many small, medium, micro enterprises have expressed frustration at the level of red tape. They must negotiate access to financial and incubation support services from your department. It has come to our attention that some small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises, SMMEs, are complaining of middlemen intermediaries that charges unreasonable interest rates to vulnerable SMMEs for them to access funding from your department. Does your department use intermediaries to facilitate funding of SMMEs? Who are these intermediaries? What is the amount of funding that was facilitated by these intermediaries in the 2023-24 financial year? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you so much once more, hon member. All the development financial institutions, DFIs, in this country utilises intermediaries - all. Whether you are going to go to the big ones or the ones

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that are supporting our MSMEs. Hon member, you are not going to hear this

Mr V G REDDY: Order. Order, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon member. Minister, can you take your seat? Hon Reddy, what is the point of order?

Mr V G REDDY: Hon speaker, I just need to know what is MSMEs? [Interjections.] Are we referring to the MSC cruise or what are we referring to?

The SPEAKER: Hon Reddy, that's the question for clarity. It's small and medium enterprises. Hon Minister, can you proceed?

IsiZulu:

An HON MEMBER: Kodwa usele!

English:

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, can you proceed?

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Yes, hon Reddy, it's micro, small and medium enterprises, which is what used to be SMMEs. We have just aligned with international

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standards. So, every time I refer to MSMEs, you must know that's the category we are talking to.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I think that you have not only clarified hon Reddy, but you have also clarified a number of members in the House. You can go ahead.

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. To the hon member who asked the question on intermediaries, although the question is not related to the main question, I will provide a response. As I was saying earlier, all DFIs are using intermediaries. These are allowed in law in line with the National Credit Regulation Act that is in place.

There are certain percentages that they are allowed to charge. But now we have realised that for the MSMEs, it means we are transferring the cost to them if they are to pay 30% or 40% interest, which is why you are in a process of reviewing the policy to say those that will be delivering on our behalf, there is a particular percentage that they can't go beyond it. There are many of them, and because the question is not linked to the earlier one, I will therefore send you the details in

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terms of the names and how much has been dispersed through those intermediaries.

Mr B N LUTHULI: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Minister, while the goal of eliminating the red tape is not to make it easier for MSMEs to operate, it can also create opportunity for corrupt practices. Therefore, striking a balance is crucial. What transparency measures are in place to ensure that the effort to reduce red tape do not end up facilitating the corrupt and undermining the very purpose of streamlining the system?

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you so much, hon Luthuli, for that question. Indeed, every time government introduces a good deed, there are those that want to undermine the strategic intent of the deeds that it is bringing. So, in trying to address the challenges that are faced by MSMEs, others will want to exploit the opportunity. We are banking on the corruption practices that we have already put in place. If we digitise the system and therefore reduce many individuals as humans in certain aspects of the value chain of the work that we do, we will be able to minimise those. But there are certain things we cannot be able to do away with.

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For example, what we have observed in many areas wherein we are complaining about illegal traders, you find out that when you go to a municipality or to a particular shop, this person has a permit to operate this business, and the permit is registered under Stella, for example. When you come in, it is not Stella, it is a non-South African at times, but this person is renting this permit from the South African.

So, we are continuing to engage with all citizens to be first loyal to their own country for the benefit of the next generations, but also to make sure that we protect the local economic development initiatives that we're trying to bring. Because when we try to do ease of business for MSMEs, we are trying to make sure that people can create jobs. We are trying to make sure that we involve everyone in our society, but those that are devils, they will always find a way. This is why we are calling upon all the members of this House and everyone who's listening to us to make sure that they remain loyal to our country. At least they owe our founding fathers for democracy that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question 313:

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon member, research conducted in 2014 into the causes of fatal road crashes revealed that human

error, including distractions such as texting while driving, inexperience, speeding, jaywalking and drunken driving, was responsible for 73% of accidents. The condition of roads and the environment for 12% and vehicle factors for 14% of accidents. A study of the report of the Road Safety Regulator 2023-24 reveals a similar pattern with human factors causing over 65% of accidents reported. What these statistics suggest is that a focus on changing human behaviour coupled with better monitoring and enforcement of both road and rail regulations would significantly reduce accidents.

Current safety strategies include promoting responsible user behaviour, repair, maintenance and construction of infrastructure, delivering effective safety management, improving the quality of accident data and knowledge management, and ensuring better first responders to accidents. If we are to reflect on the implementation of our road safety strategies honestly, I think, hon member, we would need to agree that our approach is uneven and inconsistent. The Road Traffic Management Corporation, RTMC, indicates that it is difficult to get co-operation amongst the government and nongovernmental entities.

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Accordingly, the Transport Ministry is of the opinion that it is necessary to review the implementation of the current road accident and rail strategies with a view to putting more emphasis on consistent awareness campaigns through media, direct outreach and advertising to change public behaviour, maximising the visibility of law enforcement officers and working towards ensuring policing on a 24-hour, seven-day basis, working with provinces to extend the use of road monitoring technology to high accident zones on provincial roads, working with provinces to standardise and improve road incident management systems in response to accidents and their aftermath, and improving the co-ordination between the government departments and civil society so that we work together at every level to change behaviour, promote safety and overcome fragmentation. I thank you. [Applause.]

IsiZulu:

Mnu N MADUNA: Ngiyabonga, Somlomo, ...

English:

... my follow-up question to the capable Minister with more than 20 years' experience in the executive is what approach will the department take to ensure that weighbridges are functional, and that law enforcement is deployed to ensure

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road safety is complied with to improve road safety? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon member, there are three strategies we are employing. The first is the construction and upgrading of existing weighbridges on the N1, N3 and N4 to the value of R500 million which the SA National Roads Agency, Sanral, is currently undertaking.

The second is to improve self-regulation amongst the trucking industry through the promotion of a national overload strategy and thirdly, to work with the provincial governments to assess all weighbridges that are under the control of the provincial road authorities and assist the provinces to develop a plan to gradually upgrade and ensure that these weighbridges are in a good state of repair. Thank you very much.

Dr C H H HUNSINGER: Thank you, Speaker, Minister, the data in the yearly RTMC State of Roads Safety reports is based solely on fatal crashes ignoring injuries and associated crashes with no fatalities. These reports, therefore, do not reflect reality and the data used is not entirely representative. The Railway Safety Regulator records both deaths and injuries in rail safety reports. However, derailments are responsible for

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approximately 30% of rail incidents which is a cause for alarm. How, Minister, are you going to fix this?

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon Hunsinger, I think we can agree that whatever measurement you use, road accidents are costing us over 11 000 lives a year and 3% of our gross domestic product. Better enforcement and better public education will give us a much better outcome. I think the current situation where we only do sustain public education at the time of the festive season and over long weekends doesn't consistently change driver behaviour.

Similarly, a situation where we only have regular monitoring of our roads during those periods also doesn't ensure that we have proper enforcement and that is why I'm putting the emphasis on ensuring that we are monitoring and enforcing 24-hour seven days a week and this is a matter that we have to work with provincial authorities on. With regard to rail, the primary cause of the derailment is the bad state of our rails and the lack of signalling, and we have to undertake substantive investments in our rail network so that we can avoid these derailments, and we can restore signalling.

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This is one of the reasons why we require third-party participation together with government financing to improve the state of our rail infrastructure. Thank you very much.

IsiZulu:

Mnu T T S KUBHEKA: Ngiyabonga, Sihlalo ohloniphekile, ...

English:

... hon Minister, what is the department's strategy to reduce level crossing accidents and what is the department's budget provision in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework to deal with level crossing accidents? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon Kubheka, I will give you the budget allocation. I don't know that offhand but I do know the Rail Safety Regulator works with communities with scholar transport vehicles and with other public transport vehicles to try and highlight the importance of obeying safety rules at level crossings because one of the things we understand is that communities and drivers have got used to the fact that there haven't been trains operating and take chances on level crossings, I think that in the past year we've seen two terrible tragedies with scholar transport vehicles on level crossings.

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I think it's next week or the week after the Portfolio Committees of Transport and Education are having a joint meeting so that we can talk about promoting safety on scholar transport vehicles which is fundamental if we're going to save the lives of our children. Thank you very much.

Mr M B BLOSE: House Chair, now Minister, you say that part of the research you've been doing says that the quality of our roads contributes to the accidents on the roads. Now what is the capacity of the state to maintain its roads because taking these things out to tender opens the door for extortionists who have no interest in maintaining our roads, but they just want business interests and tenders. Does the state have the capacity to maintain its roads and rail safety?

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon member, Sanral has got extensive road development and road maintenance projects which are well executed and generally fairly well managed from a project management perspective. Where I think we have a lot of difficulties is with regard to the use of the provincial conditional grant and there we have two problems.

The one problem is, as you say, problems with project management and the involvement of those who would be seeking

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opportunities in an illegal manner in road construction, we also have a problem with regard to minor works, that many municipalities and provincial road construction authorities no longer have a yellow fleet. We are in the process of establishing a working group with the SA Local Government Association, Salga, and part of the purpose of that is to make sure that we effectively utilise the municipal infrastructure grant, Mig, to manage municipal roads better and also to apply to National Treasury for permission to utilise that grant to purchase the yellow fleet so that minor maintenance works can be done in-house. Thank you very much.

Question 296:

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you very much, hon Gana. The public transport strategy provides a broad framework for the development to sustainable transport systems through integrated planning and aims to involve both provinces and municipalities in improving public transport connectivity and making sure that factors like the transport availability, travel time frequency of connections and accessibility to key destinations are available to those both in urban and outlying areas.

From the perspective of our department we also believe that cheap, reliable and safe rail system must form the backbone of the transport system for both people and goods.

The hon member would be aware that rail and station infrastructure were severely damaged during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa has begun an important work on recovering 31 out of 40 priority lines and almost 300 stations which are being returned to service.

The revitalisation of the passenger rail system will mean that more affordable and safe public options are available to working people who are already spending a large portion of their income on transport.

Ongoing maintenance of our national, provincial and municipal roads is also a vital important in the quest for creating safer driving conditions for buses, taxis and in fact all motorists. In this regard, the SA National Roads Agency Limited, Sanral, is currently busy major with upgrades on the N2 and N3 and end decongestion these roads as well as the infamous Moloto Road that has taken a heavy toll of human lives over a decade.

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As I've already mentioned in the previous question, we are setting up a working group with SA Local Government Association, Salga, to support municipalities to access neutralised municipal infrastructure grants for road maintenance and for the purchase of yellow fleet.

We are currently reviewing the national road safety strategy to make sure that it is fit for business and that it ensures that we change drivers' behaviour and we also ensure that traffic policing becomes a 365-day job.

Effective public education will actively involve all actors in the transport sector including bus and taxi owners, operators and drivers. All of whom must take greater responsibility for their behaviour.

Discussions are ongoing with provincial and municipal authorities to see that the policing of our roads is done on a 24-hour basis as the period during which most accidents occur are early in the morning, late at night and of course on weekend.

The taxi recapitalisation strategy is also being reviewed as the taxi industry have informed the department that the scheme

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is unaffordable for their members. Making vehicle finance readily available to taxi drivers and owners will remove unroadworthy vehicles from our roads and ensure compliance with licensing authorities. I thank you.

Xitsonga:

Mr S M GANA: Ndza khensa, Mutshamxitulu.

English:

Minister, thanks for your commitment in terms of the 24/7 traffic policing. We do know that given the high number of people that are using public transport during the festive season, can you commit today that starting from 01 December, all major roads that have many accidents will be policed on a 24/7 basis so that we reduce the number of lives that we lose on our roads during the festive season? Thanks very much.

Xitsonga:

Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you very much, hon Gana. What I can commit today is we are in the process of developing a festive season road safety strategy. Part of that strategy involves the utilisation of the significance force of traffic

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officers that are stationed at the Road Traffic Management Corporation, RTMC. Once we have Cabinet permission for that strategy and for the utilisation of those officers to patrol the relevant roads, we will inform the public further. Thank you very much.

Mr K P SITHOLE: Thank you, hon Chairperson. Minister, what mechanisms did the department put in place to deal with unfinished constructions and the vandalised railway infrastructure? If any information, can you give us that relevant information. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you very much. I think that's a new question, but let me just say that recently we gave a whole report to the National Council of Provinces on a range of road construction projects in provinces and within the Sanral group that had not been completed, and the remedial measure that we were implementing in that regard. We are happy to share that report with the hon member. I think I have already spoken about the work we are doing both in Transnet and in the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, Prasa, to recover rail that was vandalised during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you very much.

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Mr E K MADLALA: Thank you! To the Minister, the question is as follows, many empty promises have been made to the taxi industry and this is a very critical black-owned industry and public transportation. In terms of your revised recapitalisation plan aimed at improving safety and reliability of public transportation, what is the roll-out plan and also the subsidisation plan? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you very much, hon Madlala. I think the fundamental problem in the current taxi recapitalisation programme is that the repayment that the drivers have to make are excessive. If you or I take a loan of R800 000 we would be paying on average between R4 000 and R5 000 a month in repayment. But the average repayment that taxi drivers are making on these vehicles is somewhere in the region of between R18 000 and R22 000 a month. The consequence of that is that drivers are not able to earn enough to fully cover those repayments and they rapidly fall into default. This is a matter that we are discussing with the industry itself because the industry itself is interested in positioning itself as an intermediary in the process with the aim of reducing the fees. We haven't done enough work yet, but that is where we are aiming ourselves because unless we get those repayments down for drivers, my view is that this

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process is going to result in the endless repossession of vehicles and indebtedness and blacklisting of drivers. Thank you very much.

Mr S N SWART: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Hon Minister, arising from your response the ACDP shares your deep concerns expressed about the high numbers of accidents involving taxis and buses, and you alluded to the 11 000 fatalities and the loss of 3% to the GDP. This is totally unacceptable and we as the ACDP trust and pray that your initiatives will succeed to reduce these figures. Have you considered, as you indicated, involving broader society in changing behaviour? Have you considered involving faith-based organisations such as churches, firstly, to speak about changing behaviour of drivers, and secondly, to pray for the safety of our drivers and passengers on the roads? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you, hon member. Indeed, when we speak about public education and partnerships with civil society we would see the faith-based sector as being crucial to get the message across the public that certain forms of behaviour which I listed in my initial response are not appropriate when one is behind the wheel of a car. We are

firmly convinced that the faith-based sector can partner with us in assisting us to achieve our objectives.

If we want to change driver behaviour the message is going to have to go out all the time through every forum. We think that obviously the congregational nature of many of the key religions in South Africa of us an appropriate forum for utilising that message. Thank you very much.

Question 314:

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNVATION: Deputy Speaker, and thanks to hon Shiviti for the question. We are making several interventions. Firstly, is that the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation has a task team that has been set up under the Interministerial Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation, using a tool called Science, Technology and Innovation, STI, budget co-ordination. This task team consists of my department, the National Treasury, and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation simply to this, that there are several departments that have budgets on science, technology, and innovation. To maximise the expenditure and the impact, these departments' budgets need to talk to each other and be able to be co-ordinated so that we can maximise expenditure. So, this mechanism is in the

process of being finalized regarding achieving the maximum budget co-ordination objective. Also, science, technology and innovation priorities leverage support from both National Treasury and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation through incorporation of STI priorities on both planning and budgeting regime and frameworks of government, like the Medium-Term Expenditure Committee.

The second major initiative is that we are accessing funds for science infrastructure from the budget facility on infrastructure that is run by the National Treasury. We are also putting a lot of effort in mobilising private sector investment into science, technology, and innovation to increase the footprint of research and development in our society. We are also continuing with what we call the research and development tax incentive that is aimed at encouraging the private sector to increase investment by giving incentives in this regard. We also have what we call the Innovation Fund, which is a public-private partnership fund aimed at catalysing private sector co-investment into South African venture capital.

Lastly, and briefly, Madam Deputy Speaker, we also have international partnerships with the European Union, for

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instance, which has funds that are sourced competitively. We are also having partnerships with BRICS, including the new Development Bank, which also has funds that are set aside for infrastructure as well as working with the Belt and Road initiative of the Chinese government. These are some of the ways and means of addressing the challenge of underfunding and budget cuts that is affecting my department. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Xitsonga:

Man T G SHIVITI: Inkomu, Manana Xipikara.

English:

Minister, what specific measures do you plan to implement to increase research and development investment by the public and private sector as a catalyst to economic growth and industrialization, given the substantial budget reduction of your department?

Dr M Q NDLOZI: On a point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot see who is raising a point of order. Hon Ndlozi, what is your point of order?

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Dr M Q NDLOZI: With respect, hon Deputy Speaker, the hon member read the original question again, word by word as it appears in the Question Paper. She does not have a follow up. It is wrong we are not taking Parliament seriously.

[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Ndlozi, please take your seat. Hon Ndlozi, the decision to decide whether it is a new question or the same question rests with the presiding officer and the Minister. So, I will leave it to the Minister to reply. It is not for members to take points of order on whether the question is now another question or that it is the same question. Thank you. [Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNVATION: Hon Madam Speaker ...

IsiZulu:

Uhleli endaweni engafanele yingakho ubuza izinto esingazazi. Akufanele ngabe usahleli lapho. Uhamba nini? [Ubuwelewele.]

English:

Hon ... [Interjections.] ...

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, could you please direct anything through the Chair. Hon Minister, please proceed, but please speak through the Deputy Chair.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNVATION: Oh yes, thank you. I am sorry. My apologies, Madam Deputy Speaker. I think that in addition to what I have said, we should also address the question, and thanks for the question hon member. We are reviewing very seriously our own spending as a department. Much as our budget is just over R8 billion ...

An HON MEMBER: On a point of order, Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point of order, please indicate there at the back. Yes, please proceed with your point of order, hon member.

An HON MEMBER: Can the Minister take a question?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. Hon Minister, please proceed.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNVATION: We are now
We are now focusing on a portfolio approach to say that we

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group our spending according to priority portfolio areas again to maximise mobilisation of funds and expenditure. We are also relooking at allocating our budget as the department better in order also to identify partners that are willing to partner with us to increase investment. Also, as I have said, co-investment together with specific departments in particular areas, for example, the Department of Agriculture, regarding dealing with the impact of climate change, we may work with them together co-fund certain programmes so that we are able to maximise expenditure, to try and deal with the shortfalls that we have. In other words, we are trying to be innovative as the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Ndlozi, is it a point of order?

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Yes, Deputy Speaker, in terms of:

Rule 142(6):

A supplementary question must arise directly from the original question and the reply given thereto and may not constitute a new question.

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There is a definition of a supplementary question. I request you Deputy Speaker to be consistent with the Rules as we move on. It is out of order for a member to stand in the opportunity for a supplementary question and read the original question. You should have ruled that as out of order, and the precedence we are setting now is that I can simply stand. And in an opportunity of a supplementary question, ask the original question which is inconsistent with the Rules. Thanks.

Thank you, hon Ndlozi, the fact of the matter is that if the hon member wish to repeat the original question, it is that hon member who is forfeiting the opportunity to ask another question. So, I have ruled on it and that is my ruling. We will now proceed. The hon Ramongalo.

Mr T R RAMONGALO: To the hon Minister, the committee undertook an extensive oversight and saw that undoubtedly this department can grow and diversify the South African economy, as well as making South Africa a serious player in the international science, technology, and innovation world. Given the importance of this field and possibilities we possess as a world leader in these fields, is the Minister in talks with other countries as to how we can become larger players on the

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world stage of science, technology and innovation, and if so, could the Minister elaborate on what the talks involve?

[Applause.]

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thanks hon member for your positive comment to realise the potential that our department has, which is true and correct. We have extensive international relations as this department, and we also undertake what we call science diplomacy. To use science to strengthen our international relations. We have extensive relations on the African continent, which is our priority globally that as South Africa, we cannot be able to develop as an island without looking at the rest of the continent. We are very active in the Science, Technology and Innovation Programme of the African Union, including the whole area of supporting the AU's Agenda 2063. We also spend a little bit of the money that we have in the continent to support what we call the Oliver Tambo South African and Africa Research Chairs, and we have funded quite a few of them in several of African countries for those African countries to undertake research in the priority areas for themselves and for purposes of collaborating amongst ourselves as African countries. As I have said, we have extensive relations with the European Union, which has several research instruments which several

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African countries apply for. We are also an active member of UNESCO. The education science ... [Time expired.]

Mr M N PAULSEN: Minister, the reality is that these budget cuts will continue under the Government of National Unity, GNU, including those departments that you want to lean on to get their budget towards research and development. So, how do you plan to meet your own National Development Plan, NDP, target of 1,5% of GDP in research and development by 2030? Also, given the relatively low involvement and investment by the private sector in research and development - I know you said you are going to get increased funding from them and increased investment from them - How do you plan on stimulating that increase in research and development from the private sector? Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNVATION: Hon Paulsen, I think that I have addressed quite a few of the issues from what I have said. I have answered them, and if you can ask your colleagues to be a little bit more behaved, it would help for you to listen to what I am going to say. Firstly, it is incorrect to say I am asking my partner departments to give their research and development money to me. You did not hear me properly. I said, most departments

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have money set aside for science, technology, and innovation, which they must spend in their own programmes. But it is helpful if we can better co-ordinate that spend so that where there is double spending, we are able to realign that so that we can make maximum impact; secondly, I have not given up lobbying Treasury for more money. It is clear, as the other hon member who asked earlier ... without investment into science, technology, and innovation, we are in trouble even in terms of growing and developing our economy. So, I will continue to lobby, and I have not given up, and the fact that we now have the interministerial committee appointed by the President on Science, Technology and Innovation that places us better to increase the spend on science and technology, which is not the same as spending on my department because we are looking at our national system of science, technology and innovation as a whole. So, those are some of the measures that we are going to take. Welcome back, long time no see, hon Paulson. Thank you.

Dr W J BOSHOFF: Hon Deputy Speaker and hon Minister, the Department of Science and Innovation is one of those departments that if you cut spending, it is not particularly visible, but eventually, it is a huge problem. And then we have also seen that this department has a huge impact. It can

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spend its money, and it can account for it properly. In that sense, it is quite a good candidate for more money. Now, in your previous department, there is the privileged 1% skills development levy, which goes to the sectoral education and training ecosystem and the Skills Development Fund. What I would like to know is that would you engage your previous department and the Minister of Higher Education in redesigning the whole sectoral education and training landscape in such a way that 50% of that 1% on the national wage bill can be invested in research and development? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNVATION: Well, thank you very much, hon Boshoff for those comments and questions, which are helpful. We are not raising this for the first time. We were together in my committee in the Sixth Administration. I do wish to say to you that I am engaging with a view or to have certain monies from the Skills Fund to be set aside for high end skills. I am in the process of engaging on that, but the decision finally is not mine. I will also engage the Minister of Higher Education and Training on that score. But I also do want to say that already over the past five years several Sitas have been funding skills programmes. At the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR, we have a massive internship programme which is run by the Human

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Sciences Research Council. So, I entirely agree with what you are saying. It is something that I am going to follow. Just lastly, you will remember also that from the National Skills Fund, last year, we set aside R1 billion for the Presidential PhD Programme, which aims to take our brightest PhDs for research and postdoctoral studies in many parts of the world, so that we can acquire the skills that we do not have, so that they can bring them back and work here in South Africa.

Afrikaans:

Baie dankie, agb Boshoff.

Question 361:

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon Marais, thank you for this important question. Since 3 July, I have been counterplanting how the state should be leveraging these assets that it owns to drive economic development and job creation.

In truth, we are the single largest property owner in the country which generate no financial return on its assets. If we did and which we will do, we will be able to use that income to maintain our properties and invest in new schools, police stations and hospitals. In order to do this, the

department will repurpose and reposition the Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE, as a viable and efficient vehicle to deliver comprehensive value creation through the state immovable asset portfolio.

Our intention is to direct private sector investment projected over R10 billion in the next term of this administration within the state property portfolio. This will allow the PMTE to deliver proper management services and become an income generating entity which means we can reprioritise our budget elsewhere such as expanding the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, or boosting structure development. The formation of this entities is crucial to ensure any revenue earns through rental disposes in property remains within companies for onwards investment.

Hon Marais, we also need to be realistic, the state does not need to own or can financially afford to own 81 000 properties and 5 million hectares of land. Where properties have no use to the department clients or other spheres of government or cost more than they generate, disposing of these properties while keeping the revenue earned from the disposal would go a long way into reducing the R3 billion overdraft and be better spent on infrastructure projects. A perfect example of this is the

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Telkom Towers worth approximately R1 billion sunk into that projects with nothing to show for it. It could make far more economical sense to dispose of that assets and get it off our books rather than spending millions each year in trying to secure it.

Let the private sector come in and put its own resources into helping us with this building. Assets must be made to sweat. Meaning, they must not just set idle but generate income from them not only for revenue but to provide more funds for infrastructure, maintenance and upkeep. We as a use is not optimise, we will investigate whether there is a need for this property or whether it should be disposed of.

We are also not afraid to commit some of our assets to Participatory Action Learning and Action Research, Palar, projects. For example, land owned by our department in and around small harbours should be palated through public-private partnerships, PPPs. Many of these small harbours are sitting in a state of disrepair when state they could become hubs for the local economy. Communities can be uplifted through jobs and infrastructure development in these areas.

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Next month, I look forward to announcing a pilot project where we will seek proposal from the public on a number of buildings that are either not being used or in a state of disrepair.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is how we turn South Africa into a construction site and used public assets for public good.

Thank you so much. [Applause.]

Mr E J MARAIS: Minister, could you clarify to whom these identified properties will be disposed of or lease to? And what conditions must these entities meet to qualify for access to these assets?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon Marais, our first priority is to try and seek collaboration with other government departments entities or local municipalities, particularly where land and buildings can be used for social housing. That's our first priority. If we can get that right, we are more than willing to make those land and buildings available.

Where they make strategic sense to dispose of those assets, we will do so, so that we can generate revenue and used that for social infrastructure. Where there is also the ability to call

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on the private sector to give us ideas through a request for proposals, we will do so as well. The simple truth, hon Marais, the department cannot continue to carry the burden of 81 000 properties when they are declining budgets that are given to our department for maintenance. Coupled with that, we have tried departments that owed us R14 billion. We simply cannot be required to produce services to clients while they don't pay for us. I think there is a discussion to be heard around devolving some of their power that results in our department to client's department to manage their own infrastructure and maintenance needs going forward. Thank you very much.

Ms N E NKOSI: Minister, what is the plan of the department to improve revenue streams from immovable assets of government to ensure that it serve the public good and is able to fund maintenance and further the development of property portfolio? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon Nkosi, that's an excellent question because right now this department is not an income generating department. If any other property assets company was run like us, we would have long been liquidated.

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So, we need to look at where is the opportunity to generate income from how value assets in the department certainly owns that and where we can repurpose them, where we repackage them and where we can partner with the private sector to generate annuity returns. That is a priority for us. But where it makes sense to dispose of those properties, we must be realistic about doing so. What we have seen particularly in suburban areas is that a number of these properties or either derelict because they have not been used or they have been overtaken and they then contribute to crime in communities. It is unfair that we inflict that on them just because we are unable to maintain or secure our properties.

If we are able to start generating income, if we are able to start generating revenue like any other property as a business work, we can take that money and put it into building schools, hospitals and maintaining police stations. No police officer or no nurse should have to work in some of the conditions that they are currently do because we are unable to afford the maintenance. No prisoners should be sitting in some of the horrific conditions that we have seen of late. But we need to start generating our own income if we are not going to get more income or more grants for National Treasury. Thank you very much.

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Mr V G REDDY: Thank you Minister for that response. In the light of South Africa's perverse homelessness and the constitutional imperative to provide adequate housing why is the majority of the departments 81 000 properties left idle and empty while millions of South Africans are without a roof over their heads? We have read today that over 188 buildings owned by Public Works have been hijacked when these buildings could be used to house homeless people in this country. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon Reddy, that is not true that the majority of the 81 000 buildings are derelict or abandoned. So, I don't know where you got that information from.

The reality is that also, we need political parties to stop encouraging people from invading buildings and invading land. [Applause.] That's a massive problem that we faced in this country. So, I would ask that you to join us in saying that people should not invade buildings. They should not invade land. We must work with local municipalities to ensure that where homelessness exist that we are able to repackage and repurpose those buildings. But if they are invaded, we now have to go to the court to go and get them out. That's

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incredibly expensive and difficult. But I will say that there is one city that is dealing with homelessness in a various effective way and that is the City of Cape Town. [Applause.] It is the only City in the country that has spent R250 million for facilities for homeless people to be able to have a dignified existence. They are able to go through social relief, be able to get access to Home Affairs, and that's the City Of Cape Town. That's why we are able to get an eviction at the Castle of Good Hope quickly because of the work the City of Cape Town does here. And I think there is a lot that we can learn from it.

Mr N S MATIASE: Minister Macpherson, one of the immediate pressing needs is the plight of students in inner cities whose accommodation has been leased out to dubious characters who milk the students.

The question to you is, Minister, can you repurpose properties in inner cities for purposes of accommodating Tvet and university students to free them from the dubious characters who take money from the Department of Higher Education and subject students under unbearable inhabitable conditions under which they cannot study and fulfil their university turner. Can you please ensure that by the end of this year these

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properties are purpose for that objective? Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: I think we must be careful about making timelines definitive because it was the hon member's leader who said five years ago that he wanted to build a private school in Alexandre, and he said, that if we don't build that school in the next five years don't re-elect us next time because we would be useless. And I think that that was a very prophetic statement by the hon Malema.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Deputy Chair?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please take your chair. Please, take your seat. There is a point of order, Minister. Please, take your seat. Hon Paulsen?

Mr M N PAULSEN: Deputy Speaker, how relevant is that nonsense that he just disputes to the question that was asked to them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Paulsen that is not a point of order. Hon Minister, please proceed.

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The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: I think I said all I needed to. Thank you so much.

Question 298:

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you very much, hon Gama, for the question. Through the Transnet National Ports Authority, TNPA, Transnet has been engaged in crowding in private sector investments in the port system, and currently, there are 566 private terminal operating agreements across the entire port system. I've developed some tables for you, hon Gama, and I think it will be clumsy to read them in detail here. However, let me say that the first table has the most recently concluded section 56 concessions by TNPA with the private sector and it includes six terminal agreements that were signed between 2013 and 2022 that cover Richards Bay, Durban, Cape Town and Saldanha.

I've developed a table for you which I thought you would also be interested in of four projects which will be concluded in the current financial year, three in Richards Bay and one in the port of Durban, and the last one is 11 section 46 concessions that are in different stages of development and will be proceeding to the market shortly. Thank you very much.

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Mr S I GAMA: Hon Minister, it would be profound, indeed, if you have 566 port terminal operators in South Africa. I look forward to seeing the details that you're talking about. You need to be careful that your people don't manage you with misinformation. Recently, it has also been announced that our biggest container terminal, which is at the Durban Container Terminal, will soon be handed to a small international container terminal operator, and there's also noises that are being made about the introduction of private sector players in the rail space. Are these actions an admission of the failure of Transnet and the coalition government to manage our port and rail infrastructure? If not, why are these assets being managed for failure given that since 2019 they are showing spectacular poor performance. [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Well, hon Gama, I guess the rewriting of history continues from yesterday's scope permitting. However, let's agree with you that, indeed, it is entirely true that the Transnet Freight Rail system is underperforming in the wake of the coronavirus disease, COVID, pandemic due to vandalism, and also, you may recall, that a certain rail contracts where there were complexities, and we don't yet have delivery of the full 1 000 locals. Yes, indeed, Transnet is operating under difficulties, but there is a

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growing concern, and we will proceed with the vertical separation, and we will proceed with bringing in third party participation. Thank you very much.

Mr S D SELAMOLELA: Hon Minister, of course, understanding that some of these challenges that these entities are facing are historic and find themselves squarely in the hands of some amongst us here. I may want you to really share with us and make us understand as to what are the necessary and required legislative reforms and regulations that may be required to operationalise and establish public private partnership in the port and rail space. Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Thank you very much, hon member, for the supplementary question. The private sector participation that I was referring to in the primary question was conducted in terms of the existing Public Finance Management Act and other legislative precepts, such as the preferential procurement policy and the Companies Act. Obviously, we are also setting up an independent transport economic regulator which we think will be very important for determining the tariff when we introduce third party operators on the rail network. Thank you very much.

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Mr M B BLOSE: Deputy Speaker, through you to the Minister, now as part of investment in the ports and rail infrastructure, we remember that sometime in 2018, the President promised to build a speed train. Now, the question is, has the President actually mandated you to build that speed train, and then can you give us a timeline for delivery? Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: That's a very important question. The National Rail Master Plan is currently in development. That master plan will lay out the development of rail over the next 20 years. What is included in that Rail Master Plan is high speed rail between towns and rapid rail within towns because, as I've already explained, we see rail as being the backbone of the public transport system for people and for goods. Thank you very much.

Mr T B MABHENA: Deputy Speaker, through you to the Minister, we are very encouraged that government's approach towards the private sector participation in government is changing and that government finally recognises the private sector as valuable partners that can bring positive change, as was contained in the DA manifesto. We're quite encouraged. We welcome with excitement the establishment of the private

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sector participation unit, which will be housed under the Development Bank of Southern Africa, DBSA.

However, we just want clarity in terms of what role will government oversight ... [Inaudible.] ... such as Parliament plays in monitoring the activities of the public sector participation unit, and can you commit to at least a monthly report submitted to the Portfolio Committee on Transport in this regard? And also, maybe lastly, what are the set terms of reference of the private sector participation unit? However, overall, we welcome government's approach in terms of recognising the valuable role that the private sector can bring in terms of positive change and assisting government. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon member, I think I've pointed out that the private sectors involvement in Transnet is not so new. It certainly goes back over many decades. The private participation unit is going to be set up under the Development Bank of South Africa. The purpose of setting up that unit is to make sure that those who respond to the network statement and the network statement is essentially the menu and the price for third party participation is to make sure that those expressions of the interest should reach financial clause

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because one of the learnings we have had from the independent power producer programme is that many of those bids never reached financial clause and never resulted in the production of energy. Therefore, we want to make sure that this process does reach financial clause and does result in new operators and new investment in our rail system. Thank you.

Question 315:

The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. The safety of all South Africans, including our tourists and visitors, is paramount and we are determined to do all that we can to ensure that all tourists have a safe and memorial experience in South Africa. The department continues to support the development of tourism safety initiatives at provincial level. We collaborate with provincial partners and also with the SA Police services and other relevant stakeholders to drive the implementation of the National Tourism Safety Strategy.

In preparation for the festive season, we will conduct safety awareness campaigns with our partners in the private sector and the police. On 14 October, we had a consultation with all our partners, including SA Police Service and the provinces, where we shared our plans with the police, to tighten safety for tourists during the festive season. The department

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invested R174 million and implemented the Tourism Monitor Program.

The Tourism Monitor Program is part of a broader government intervention that include the training, mentorship and deployment of unemployed young people in identified tourism attractions. The trained 2 300 monitors are currently placed at tourism attraction hotspots across our country, and we are working together with the private sector in this program.

Also, part of the initiatives will ensure that tourists have access to information on their destination, that they understand the dos and the don'ts while on tour and that provinces are also looking at ensuring enough visibility of police in partnership with the SA Police Services. I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms L A MNGANGA-GXABHASHE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Minister, I heard your explanation in terms of your discussions with the Department of Police. Could you please elaborate further on the plans and time frames on your engagement with the Department of Police. I thank you.

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The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, we do have a memorandum of agreement with the police. The police continue to assist us, to train our tourism monitors and we continue to work together. So, next week we will be launching our summer campaign in the Free State. Again, we will be providing information because this campaign must also continue to be implemented beyond the festive season. I thank you.

Ms H ISMAIL: Thank you, House Chair. Minister, in preparation for Tourism peak season, what type of technology integration monitoring have you initiated to ensure tourists are safe when they are in the country to enhance safety monitoring? You have stated that you are making something available to tourists. Can you please specify what type of tourist safety information is provided to tourists, like safety guidelines, emergency contact information and crime prevention tips? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Thank you, hon Ismail. Hon House Chair, this is a partnership. We work with the hotels. They provide safety tips in the rooms of our guests and at their reception areas. We work together with the tour operators and the tour guides. We are all in it together to provide safety tips at all times. So, the technology at work now is an app that is being designed and funded by the private sector - the

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Secura Traveller app - where tourists can download when they arrive in our country. Even local tourists can use it. Then, they are able to have access police and to medical aid services. So, it is ongoing.

We regret the attack on any of our tourists, even our local tourists. As South Africans, we must all work together to make sure that our tourists leave our country safely. Even locally, they must remember their experience. Crime is a problem for all of us. The police are looking after us, as South Africans, including our visitors, like I have said. So, we are really trying our best, but as we know, the crooks are always one step ahead of us and we have to continue improving what we are doing. Thank you.

Ms G MCHUNU: Thank you, Chair. Hon Minister, I am Mchunu. What has been the strategy relating to managing crime in high-crime tourist destinations in the past? Why has this strategy failed? Is the National Tourism Safety Strategy not just another strategy that will contribute to undermine South African Tourism value proposition through the ineffective management of crime in their country's crime hotspots? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Thank you, hon Chairperson. We, indeed, in the past 18 months have shared our plan on the National Tourism Safety Strategy with all the missions based in our country - all embassies and all consul generals. We also informed all our missions abroad about the plan. Because we are all working together to secure safety, we need to continue to improve on what we are doing and continue to work with the police whose mandate it is, first and foremost, to look after the safety of all South Africans and our visitors.

We cannot lower, we cannot wait, and we cannot just blame each other. We regret, we don't want any of our toddlers to be attacked while they are visiting our country. However, it is certainly not a waste of time. Thank you.

Mrs L F TITO: Thanks, House Chairperson. Minister, already you have highlighted to us the knowledge of safety on the issue of tourism. However, can you give us in detail how much liability was actually incurred by the tourist sector, and by extension the country, from all the harm that we incurred to date; and also, on the intelligent set up, how much intelligence have you put in place to ensure that, when tourists come to South Africa, they are safe and not confronted with any harm?

Thanks.

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The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Hon Chairperson, can I repeat? The safety of all South Africans is important, including that of our visitors. Therefore, we don't make a distinction to say we must just look after tourists. What we have been doing is that in the safety forum, we even have the National Prosecuting Authority. Last year, they have been able to amend the Act to make it possible that even if an attack took place in our country, a visitor doesn't have to come back for a court hearing, because they are now able to attend it virtually.

So, the only thing that I can commit to is that all of us have got a responsibility. All of us must work together with our police services, our metro police and our provinces to make sure that all tourists, including South African tourists, have an enjoyable experience. I thank you.

Question 329:

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: House Chairperson, indeed the department did not achieve the planned completion of its contemplated projects for the financial year 2022-23 and has recognised the need to implement interventions to improve project performance.

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When I was appointed by the President as Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure it became clear to me that there was a culture ingrained in some areas where there is no concern or consequence management for projects which are not completed on time or more importantly on budget. I have seen report after report where projects are awarded to companies which clearly do not have the capacity to complete such big projects and then fail after a short space of time, despite being given large sums of money upfront. It is evident that many of these companies should never have been awarded tenders in the first place. Contracts are then ceded where more funds are then required to complete the project.

One clear example of this is in the Sarah Baartman District where a cultural centre was supposed to have been built as far back as 2013. To date, R247 million has been poured into this project which is yet to be finished. Only 37% of the project has been completed but has multiples above its original budget. In this instance the project has been ceded twice since being awarded. This is just one of many examples.

I must emphasise that with my appointment as Minister, issues such as these will not magically be fixed overnight. However,

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one promise I will make is that I will ensure that projects such as Sarah Baartman and Telkom Towers do not happen again.

Tenders must be awarded to companies that can complete projects on time and on budget, and if they don't they will be blacklisted from working with us. You cannot get a tender and then simply contract the project out. Contractors who fail to meet the requirements of construction will be terminated and appropriate legal action sought to recover any amounts arising out of their breach of contract. In addition, any person found to be stalling a project or interfering in its progress will be dealt with by the full might of the law, whether that is an employee of the department or outside person or community.

The foundation of any successful department or government is its strict compliance with governance principles, meaning that where money is allocated it is not wasted or stolen. By getting the foundations of our tender process correct, projects will begin to be completed on time and on budget.

Coupled with this, we have to drastically improve project management because this has not been done to an acceptable level. As a member of the executive, I have also written to the Speaker of the National Assembly to request an opportunity

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to make an executive statement relating to unfinished and delayed infrastructure projects. I look forward to the National Assembly agreeing to my request given the importance of this issue we face together, working with you as Members of Parliament on solutions. This will allow me to present a comprehensive plan to Parliament as I know this issue is important to members and to the constituencies they represent. I thank you, House Chair.

Mr N M HADEBE: Thank you, hon Minister for that detailed response. Hon Minister, I would like to know what initiatives the department has implemented to monitor projects and to quickly identify underperforming ones for timely intervention so as to ensure that contractors that have required intervention due to poor performance are not awarded future contracts by the department.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: House Chairperson, let me also express my condolences to the IFP on the passing of her royal highness, Princess Buthelezi as well.

Hon member, let me say that the problem that we face is that there are very little consequences for people who don't implement project management and that's where our departure

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point is. It is to recognise what our problem is and then to find solutions to that.

So, we are currently working and having consultations with Infrastructure SA and the councils within the built environment as to how we can partner with them, whether it's through quantity surveyors, engineers, whoever that may be, to help us get our project management and preparation skills correct.

In terms of preparation, that is also vitally important. If you haven't packaged and prepared the project correctly to begin with, it is going to fail. So, I think that the processes that we started, the discussions that we've had, the partnerships that we also want to build as well ... we've taken some advice from best practice overseas and what we're going to be looking to do, hon member, is to pilot maybe 10 of the worst delayed projects. Then we're going to put that into our system and actually see how quickly we can get them back on track through partnerships. If that works then obviously we'll be able to roll that out more intensely.

Let me also say, you know, I think that the department often takes on more than it is capable of at this point. That's why

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I go back to my earlier point that I made. We need to reconsider what the department takes on and whether clients are better suited to implement some of these maintenance and building contracts themselves. Thank you very much.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu M DLELANGA: Enkosi, Sihlalo weNdlu ohloniphekileyo ...

English:

... hon Minister, I've listened to your responses. What consequence management is going to occur for incomplete projects and how will the money be recovered from construction companies who fail to deliver? Thank you so much.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon member, that is an important question because I think for far too often impunity and lack of consequences has been the name of the game.

Recently, I signed affidavits and court papers for the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, to go and recover R300 000 from a contractor that had been paid erroneously or that had done work that we had not asked them to do. However, that is simply not enough. We've got to see officials that allow projects to

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go on and on disciplined or removed, and those contractors that are clearly not capable of being awarded contracts must be blacklisted.

Those people who steal from us and from our tenders must go to jail. That's where they belong. They don't belong anywhere else but in jail. Let me give you this assurance, hon member. When we have the reported independent investigation that I commissioned into Telkom Towers – because that is a microcosm but a good representation of what goes wrong within our department where money is spent, contracts are given to people who can't complete them and then the government sits with these massive, failed projects where we've spent over a billion rand – I want to see money recovered but I also want that report to detail which officials were responsible for that failed project so that they get removed and people go to prison. That is where they belong, not working within our department. Thank you so much.

Mr E M BATH: Hon House Chairperson, I'd like to ask the Minister to please elaborate on the specific internal and external challenges that led to the failure of about 80% of its planned projects, and how these challenges will be addressed in the department's new strategy. Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Thank you for the question, hon Bath. What we've seen is a lack of project preparation, and so you would have seen last week we announced a project preparation facility of R179 million where we are literally going to pay and fund the preparation of infrastructure projects so that they become bankable and that they have a head start along the way.

The second problem that we experience, and I have to be honest with you, is the awarding of contracts to people that are just simply not able to deliver. That's why I have made a commitment that tender processes in our department are going to be open to the public. We are going to make sure that those meetings are audio and visually recorded so that any person is able to access them through application to our department, so that there is no veil of secrecy in how these tenders are awarded.

We simply cannot afford to keep funding the same projects over and over again, as we've seen in Sarah Baartman where we've paid a quarter of a billion rand. It's nearly the same amount of money that we spent in Nkandla, yet we have been able to complete only 37% of that project. So, we want to make sure that we start getting value for money.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Minister, please take your seat for a moment. Hon member, why are you rising? Is it a point of order?

An HON MEMBER: We're starting now.

Mr D M SKOSANA: Yes, it's a point of order, Chair. He's too excited. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): No, that's not a point of order. Hon Minister, were you done?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: You are absolutely right. I am excited. I'm excited to beat back corruption, I'm excited to deliver projects and I'm excited to make sure that we are able to get this country working.

[Applause.] So, you're absolutely right that I'm excited, hon member. [Interjections.] I know that it terrifies the opposition that this government is working together. We are ... [Inaudible.] ... the people first and there's no money ... [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Minister, there's another hand. Hon member, is that now a real point of order?

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Mr D M SKOSANA: No, it's a real point of order. He's casting aspersions and the arrogance ... We cannot tolerate arrogance here. He cannot say what ... He must withdraw. He's casting aspersions, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): No, hon member, you have to cast aspersions on a member of the House in order for me to rule.

Mr D M SKOSANA: Chair, you know, if that's the case you're going to get this from us. Watch this space. We won't tolerate racists here.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you, hon member. The hon Rev Meshoe will have the opportunity to pose the last supplementary question. There's another hand there. Well, I see two hands. Will the Minister and the Chief Whip decide who will take the floor?

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE SECOND LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: House Chairperson, the hon member, when referring to the Minister, said we will not tolerate racists here. Can he withdraw his statement, please?

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon member, did you refer to the Minister as a racist?

Mr D M SKOSANA: I don't know, sir.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Okay, hon members, I will refer to the Hansard and come back with a ruling in that regard. Hon Minister, do you want to be recognised?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Yes, has my time expired in responding to the question?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Minister, unfortunately I cannot hear you properly now.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Has my time expired because I still have some more excitement to share?
[Laughter.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Yes, there's another 20 seconds left on the last question.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Okay, great.
Thank you very much, House Chairperson. In response to hon

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Bath, at the end of the day we are committed to making sure that we get this department back on track and we're going to do our best to complete those projects that are incomplete. We are going to make this country proud of what this department can do, so that everyone can share in the excitement that we feel on this side of the House. Thank you so much.

Rev K R J MESHOE: Hon Minister, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has allegedly spent 98% of its budget in the 2023-24 financial year, and only completed 59% of its projects. This points to poor leadership, inefficiency, mismanagement and possible corruption, which has become endemic in many departments, and must be rooted out before government loses more of its resources. The Auditor General's, AG's, report, which exposed what they call the department's blatant refusal to address rampant misconduct and corruption over this period, highlights the presence of individuals who have become a law unto themselves.

My question, Minister, is when will these individuals who refuse to be accountable be replaced by servants of the people who are committed to serving their country and the department with integrity? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Thank you, Rev Meshoe, for the question. You're absolutely right that there is no correlation between the budget being spent and projects being delivered, and so we are effectively spending more on delivering less and that is not a situation I'm prepared to accept. Rev, that's why one of the first things I wanted to do was to bring stability within the department and we took the permanent appointment of the deputy director-general for governance, risk and compliance to Cabinet to get its approval, so that he can then systematically start working through all of these problems that have been highlighted by the AG and so that we are able to see disciplinary action being taken.

There is no place in our department for crooked or corrupt officials. I want to make that very, very clear. If people have evidence or they are being solicited for bribes or any sort of inducement for work, I really want them to bring that information to my attention.

It's not an easy task, Rev, to be able to turn a department like this around so quickly. So it is an issue of patience that we do require. We do require the support of the portfolio

committee, and they have been very supportive in the work that we want to do and so I am grateful for that.

I do hope that when we are able to look back at the end of this term in 2029, we will be able to say, yes, indeed the Minister kept his word. He cleaned up the department, he was able to achieve clean audits across the board and he was able to deliver value for money to the people of this country. Thank you so much.

Question 374:

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Hon House Chairperson, thank you to hon Meshoe for this important question. Hon Meshoe, according to Lesaka Technologies, they say it is estimated that the informal sector contributes about R750 billion to the GDP. Now, in this contribution, it is estimated that between 60 to 70% formal sector is the only revenue tax contributor. Spaza shops are categorised in that 30% that is not contributing towards the tax. This therefore means that, firstly, as the department that does not have the mandate to monitor tax contributions, we are not able to see what is happening.

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The second aspect is that, for those businesses that we are supporting, we can monitor as part of the business support that we provide to ensure that there is compliance to enable them to be able to also get access to markets and finances. The last component is that we are working with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission, CIPC and SA Revenue Service, Sars. We are working with these services to ensure that we share data but most importantly, we raise awareness amongst other informal traders and the other SMMEs on tax benefits. This is because most of the informal sector do not want to be registered for tax because they are scared that their profits will be reduced. This is why the commissioner has set up a special unit under Sars that is looking at tax for small, medium and micro-sized enterprises, SMMEs and has also introduced incentives for those that are tax compliant. Thank you, House Chair.

Rev K R J MESHOE: Hon House Chairperson, may I ask for your indulgence to ask the follow-up question after the next person? I have a challenge with my gadget.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Meshoe, unfortunately, the rules do not allow me to pass you and come back to you, I can give you a few seconds. Hon Meshoe, can we move on? Okay,

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order hon members. The next opportunity to ask a follow-up question goes to hon Jonas.

Mr G F JONAS: Hon House Chair, Minister, many South Africans cannot see in practicality how these spaza shops contribute to the economy, especially in light of five children that died from poisonous snacks from these shops. Nonetheless, what specific measures were taken between the stakeholders to address noncompliance of illegal foreign national's spaza shops owners who are not registered for tax? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Hon House Chair, let me thank the hon member for that question. Firstly, let me explain that in South Africa, as things stand, we do not have effective regulations on spaza shops, whether owned by South Africans or foreign nationals. But there is the Businesses Act that gives authority to local municipalities to ensure that they are the ones that issue permits. As a department that has been recently established, responsible for the sector we are talking about, we are bringing a legislation to Parliament to ensure that we are able to give ourselves some authority to be able to ensure that we can issue certain directives when it comes to the licensing.

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Now, you are saying the issue of the illegal foreigners that are owning some of the spaza shops - The Department of Home Affairs clearly stipulates who can get a Visa and who has been given access to South Africa. This means that, if you are here on a Study Visa, on a Work Visa and or any other visa that is not of business, you do not have a right to trade, whether you are here legally or illegally.

For you to be able to trade, the Immigration Act, section 15 says that you must at least invest a minimum of R5 million into the economy for you to get Business Visa. This requires enforcement to check, first, whether people who are trading are compliant with that, if they are foreign nationals. The Department of Home Affairs is working day in, day out to make sure that they increase their capacity so that they can reach out to all those that are there. The second aspect is that foreigners that we are talking about, are renting spaces to property owners that are owning those businesses, not government buildings. This requires us to work with communities in terms of saying, when you are leasing your land or your building, make sure that the person you are leasing to is a person who has the right to trade. Earlier on, I spoke about the Department of ... [Time expired.]

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IsiZulu

Ngiyabonga Sihlalo.

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu. Holobye ...

English:

... so, the essence of the question is whether, you, as a Minister of Small Business Development, believe that foreign nationals operating in South Africa should enjoy the same tax benefits that South Africans who own small businesses must enjoy. And, whether you, as a Minister of Small Business Development representing South Africans, you are going to lobby Treasury that it introduces a special tax regime for foreign nationals who operate businesses in South Africa of whatever size? This is irrespective of whether you are doing shoe repairs or selling vegetables. We believe there should be a special tax regime for foreign nationals operating in South Africa. What is your view on that?

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Hon House Chair, the matters of tax regulations, incentives and everything are a competency of the Department of National Treasury. But of course - do not howl maan, please ...

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IsiXhosa:

... niza kuva kanjani?

English:

You are lawmakers. [Interjections.] Now, the reason I said earlier on that we are introducing the amendments on the Businesses Act and the Licensing of Businesses Act is simply to say that there should be certain sectors that are reserved for South Africans within the different segments of our economy. What that means is, if you are outside that category, you are forced to do certain things that will be dictated to by the National Treasury. On our side as government, as section 22 of our Constitution dictates that:

Every citizen has the right to choose their trade, occupation or profession freely.

But it further says:

The practice of trade, occupation or profession may be regulated by law.

That is why we are saying, as part of the global economy, because South Africa is not an island, we are not able to say

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foreigners should not trade in South Africa. That is not allowed in this country because our Constitution does not allow it. But you can preserve certain sectors for your South Africans as any responsible government.

National Treasury has introduced the Public Preferential Bill that has been signed which seeks to make sure that it allows for set asides that must be reserved for small, medium and micro-sized enterprises, SMMEs especially owned by South Africans. So, when that time comes, I do hope the hon members will support the Bill and be specific on what must be done in the interest of protecting and growing our economy, especially for South Africans, in certain sectors. Thank you, House Chair.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu. N L S KWANKWA: Kwekhu, anisakhumshi kamnandi, ndide ndanencilikithi. Andazi nokuba ndenziwa ngala manzi adikidiki ingathi ngawaseChankcele. Ingathi ngawakwaMaNgconde.

[Kwahlekwa.]

English:

Minister, we precisely raised the point you are talking about, many moons ago ...

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IsiXhosa:

... ngela xesha uMphathiswa yayinguKhumbudzo Ntshavheni.

English:

We cited specifically the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act, No 865 of 2013, section 27, where it specifies the sectors to be reserved for South Africans, in particular ...

IsiXhosa:

... izinto ezifana neziphaza neendawo zokucheba iinwele. Awukwazi ukusuka apha eMzantsi Afrika uye nakuwaphi amazwe kwilizwekazi lalapha eAfrika, ngethemba lokuba uza kuvula isiphaza, uthengise okanye uvule indawo yokucheba iinwela. Kulapha eMzantsi Afrika kuphela apho kukwaxhel'eyakhe akabuzwa. Ndifuna ukuqonda ukuba icothe phi lento sasicinga ukuba iza kukhawuleziswa kwisigaba sokuqala (first term)? Ingaba iza kukhawuleziswa njani kuba aba somashishini sebengakhathali nje ...

English:

... is because of the absence of the regulations that we are talking about. Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Hon House Chair

...

IsiXhosa:

... ohloniphekileyo, uyibeka ngokukhalaza ...

English:

... in terms of the pace of ensuring that we address the challenge we are faced with. Earlier on, I spoke of collaborative efforts by the different departments that have a responsibility around the matter he is talking about. I articulated what the Department of Home Affairs is doing. I spoke about what the Department of Employment and Labour is doing in relation to the National Labour policy. I also indicated that the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs is busy finalising the gazetting of the directives that must guide the municipalities on what to license in relation to the sector that we are talking about.

Now, as he says, this matter was raised with my predecessor, indeed, my department is in a process of addressing that. I, earlier on, spoke about the process towards developing a legislation in this country that the hon knows that there are certain things that are expected to be done. It is not

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different when it comes to the Licensing of Business Bill that I spoke about, just like it is not different to the development of the Township Economic Development and Revitalisation Policy that the department had committed to this House. We committed that, by the end of this quarter, we will be tabling it to Cabinet and of course gazetting and finalising it before the end of this financial year.

The Township Economic Development and Revitalisation Policy looks at some of the aspects that we are doing. The reason I am highlighting what other departments are doing is because it is not something that can just be done by the department. I said earlier on that this department is 10-years old this year. It needed some legal authority in terms of the legislations that are there, and the Businesses Act was only transferred in 2020. Parliament just approved and the President signed the Small Enterprise Act, which gave us some authority to be able to establish certain instruments that must give effect into dealing with the challenges that are faced by the sector.

We continue to work with other departments whilst we are not waiting on our side. As I said, we are bringing the policy to

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Cabinet by the end of November to make sure that some of the issues that we are raising are addressed. So ...

IsiXhosa:

... asimanga, Kwankwa ohloniphekileyo, siyaqhuba.

Question 317:

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Thank you very much for an opportunity for me to continue my excitement. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure does have an immovable asset register. The immovable assets under the custodianship of the department comprises of 27 150 land parcels and 81 120 buildings. The total value of these properties is recorded to be R153 billion as at 31 March 2024.

Approximately 2 100 land parcels are still to be vested in the rightful custodians. However, I do not yet have sufficient confidence in these numbers and do not believe that the valuation or number is an accurate representation of what we own, and in fact the number of properties and land parcels are most likely higher and far more valuable.

To be honest, House Chairperson, I'm not sure that after the state trying to ascertain this for the last 30 years under

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previous administrations, it would be correct to expect this to be done in 12 months. The reality is that due to the complex nature of a registry, we may also have to accept that we may never fully know what we own. However, this will no longer be used as a smokescreen for not disposing of assets, especially those that the state does not require or leverage high value assets for infrastructure investment.

I've recently met with a number of companies in the technology space, financial institutions, investment funds, and others who gave us presentations on how best to deal with our asset portfolio and more specifically how to ensure we have an accurate representation of what we own. We discussed at length the available options to us, and we will soon be looking to go to the market service providers to provide us with credible options to risk manage what we own, what we should own, and with an accurate, realistic asset value.

We will also be looking into the best use of technology to enable an asset information management platform that provides us with a single risk-based assessment of our immovable assets, data integrity and data security for our assets, a whole asset lifestyle management system based on technology that is able to predict asset problems based on data points

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before they arise. So, essentially, we will be able to predict maintenance problems before they actually take.

This is what our plan and it is obviously a long way to go, but it is crucial that the state understands and knows what it owns, what its value is to best determine the course of action going forward. I thank you. [Applause.]

Ms N E NKOSI: Hon House Chair, to the Minister, what are the challenges experienced by the department in compiling the physical asset register thus far, and what resources are required to complete it? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Thank you very much, hon Nkosi, for the follow up question. I think the first problem is actually trying to, with some authority, understand exactly where all of the assets are and what is their condition. That is really important because that determines its value.

My view is that we should be looking at this in three buckets, If I can put it that way. The first one is to understand what is the most valuable of assets that we have and what condition is are those assets and what can we do with them. The second

bucket that we should be looking at is assets that are in need of investment but can also generate return for us. That's the second priority focus that we should have and everything outside of that, if we find it along the way, we should dispose of it because it is not valuable to the state; it does not add to the state's objectives and other departments or clients or other spheres of government don't need it.

That should be wrapped in a risk-based assessment and approach that we are able to categorise the riskiest assets so that we are able to intervene where they exist in the shortest amount of time. What we don't want to see is our assets catching fire, collapsing or being used for other purposes than which they were originally intended to do.

I also think that it's important that we understand what the value of the most valuable assets are, because if we can ring fence those in a property fund, we are able to leverage debt off of them that we can then use into our infrastructure build and our social infrastructure. That's essentially how property asset managers run their businesses and that's what we want to start bringing into this department.

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If we want to be able to go forward and deal with the infrastructure backlog, we have got to generate our own funds because our budgets are being cut by National Treasury, not increased. So, this is one way to be able to do it and we can use public assets for public good in that way. [Time expired.] Thank you so much, hon member.

Mr E M BATH: Hon House Chairperson, to the Minister, in your opinion, given the persistent challenges in compiling a complete and reliable immovable asset register, does the Government Immoveable Asset Management Act of 2007, otherwise known as GIAMA, remain fit for purpose, or does the department see a need for legislative review or amendments to ensure more effective management of state assets? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon member, it is a good question because GIAMA really underpins what we do with our assets and how we deal with them. That Act has been in existence, I think since 2007, and I think that it's time to review GIAMA and the provisions of it so that we are able to make it nimbler for the state to be able to use its properties in its best interests.

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One of the tasks that my asset advisory committee will be tasked with is a review and legislative inputs into GIAMA and how to make it fit for purpose in 2024 and going forward. So, that is something that we will obviously then take the Cabinet. It will then come to the to the portfolio committee and hopefully in the not-too-distant future. I look forward to engaging on that Amendment Bill to GIAMA. Thank you so much.

Mr S I GAMA: Minister, I hope you won't be taking a detour to Nkandla on this question but that you will answer the question itself. Otherwise, I begin to understand why the Premier Panyaza Lesufi has a hardline where he rules. In the 30 years of putting together the asset register, do you know what is the value of assets in the former TBVC's territories - the Bantustans - Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei? ...
[Time expired.]

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: There was sure one detour that the hon Gama took to get to ask a question. Hon member, let me say to you that, as we had previously said, there is a number of land parcels that we still have to vest - there's around 2100 left to go - I think the vast majority well within to the 90% has taken place.

The truth of the matter is that no matter where land is located, whether it's located in the former homelands, in urban centres or even buildings, it must be put to good use and there is far too much land and buildings that government owns that is not being put to good use. That is why we are determined to make sure that we understand what the value of it is so that it can be correctly accounted for and correctly leveraged and that we're able to determine where that land is so that it is able to be correctly appropriated wherever that may be.

What I also do want to say is that we have picked up that land that one day was on our register, the next day it's not or land that was valued at x amount of money is valued at something else when you go and look at the municipal valuation. That's why it's absolutely key that we get it right. It can't be that after this long there is not the credibility in that asset register as it should be as it undermines the very base in which we as a department are trying to work from. So, I do hope that assists you and I thank you for the question, hon House Chair.

Ms N H MHLONGO: Hon House Chair, to the hon Minister, your department holds several government buildings that are

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currently abandoned and in despair as its assets. Given the pressing needs for the office space, what strategies are being implemented to repurpose these buildings for use by the government departments that are spending millions on rental office space? I thank you, House Chair.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Thank you, hon member, for the question. Currently we pay out R6 billion a year on office leases for government departments and in my view that is an extraordinary amount of money considering the number of buildings that we own. So, what we are looking at is saying how do we bring departments back into government buildings, particularly those that are in the inner city, so that we are part of driving inner city regeneration. That's why I set up a working group with the City of Tshwane, eThekweni and Cape Town so that we are able to start that process of identifying properties where government can occupy in the city centre so that we are able to regenerate those centres in conjunction with them.

What we have also seen is that government is too quick to go and take offices with sea views and in nice suburban areas, instead of occupying those within the city centre. They can pay a R120 or more per square metre on those offices. The

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problem that we face is that our cost per square meter on building is around R26 and that is just because those buildings are completely under invested in. So, if we want to get it up to a A-grade office space, we need to instead of putting more money into leases, put that money into those buildings and uplifting them.

We also want to work with the private sector so we can create public-private partnerships in those buildings so that they can take some office space, and we take office space. I think that if we can start to do that it will make a big difference. There are examples of where we create these precincts - in Tshwane there is Salvokop and a whole lot of government departments that have come into there. That is a flagship project, another portfolio committee was there not too long ago. So, if we are able to do more of those partnerships and get government back into government buildings, we can reduce costs. [Times expired.] Thank you so much.

Question 299:

IsiXhosa:

UMPHATHISWA WEZOBUYEKEZO LWEMIHLABA NOPHUHLISO LWAMAPHANDLE:

M-Afrika Mngxitama ...

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English:

... the total amount of R25,4 billion has to date been paid to landowners to acquire land for restitution purposes. The commission does not have records in terms of race on payments done. Thank you, hon Chair.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu J A MNGXITAMA: M-Afrika, Poqo ...

English:

... we were all shocked during the meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Land Reform and Rural Development when the Chief Commissioner of the Restitution Commission openly admitted that the government pays land claimants financial compensation where they opt for it, instead of getting back their land they were dispossessed of.

In such cases, the Chief Commissioner informed us that land thieves get to keep the land and thereby the state effectively buys the land on behalf of beneficiaries of apartheid and colonial land theft.

Minister, do you agree that the restitution process benefits the land thieves more than the victims of land dispossession?

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Essentially Minister, the restitution process is the legitimisation of land theft. Do you agree?

Apart from this injustice of buying land on behalf of land thieves, the restitution process is a distortion of the history of land dispossession by pegging it in 1913 instead of 1652, when Jan van Riebeeck arrived here with his thugs on the De Reiger, De Drommedaris and De Goede Hoop. Thank you.
[Applause.]

IsiXhosa:

UMPHATHISWA WEZOBUYEKEZO LWEMIHLABA NOPHUHLISO LWAMAPHANDLE:
M-Afrika Mngxitama ...

English:

... I do not agree that the restitution serves the former ... or the landowners. All I can agree with is that the process is slow, and this department is going to make sure that the pace is fast, and people are getting land. I don't agree with you ...

IsiXhosa:

... M-Afrika

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Sesotho:

Mong L W MAHLATSI: Kgotso, Moafrika. Moafrika ...

English:

The department's reports indicate that only 10% of previously white owned land has been transferred to black beneficiaries at a cost of R57,8 billion spent on restitution.

IsiXhosa:

M-Afrika ...

English:

... to what extent does this method of restitution align the principle of justice, redress and sustainable development?

Xitsonga:

Khanimamba.

IsiXhosa:

UMPHATHISWA WEZOBUYEKEZO LWEMIHLABA NOPHUHLISO LWAMAPHANDLE:

M-Afrika ...

English:

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... president. I agree with you that the pace is slow, and we are going to change that pace. For example, president, this Friday we will be allocating land to black people in the Venda to the tune of R77 million.

Now, we are changing the pace. Otherwise, I agree with you, it's 10%. But as time goes, we'll make sure that we address it fast. That is what we're doing.

Mr B S MADIKIZELA: Minister, section 25(3) of the Constitution sets out a range of factors that must be taken into account when calculating just and equitable compensation. For example, the current use of the property, the history of the acquisition, the market value of the property, the extent of direct state investment and subsidy in the acquisition and beneficial capital improvement of the property and the purpose of the expropriation.

Would you say Minister in all the payments that have been made so far for the land, your department complied with this section of the Constitution?

The MINISTER OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes, hon member, the department has complied with this section. That is

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what the department is continuing doing right now. Remember that in the same section there is also the Expropriation Bill, that today is sitting in front of the President. It was processed by this Parliament. And with that we are going to make sure that we comply. But as things stand. We are complying, comrade. Thank you.

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Hon Minister, since this complaint you are repeating about the slow pace of the return of the land for the last 30 years in relation to restitution. But if we are to take the 1600s, it is hundreds and hundreds of years, our people have been waiting for the land.

May I request your opinion on the well-known policy of the PAC, which might in this case accelerate this policy. What do you make of the "One Settler - One Bullet" policy as a way forward. Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: "One Settler - One Bullet", is an old slogan of the PAC. It is the slogan that was used at that time by Azanian People's Liberation Army, Apla forces. It is the slogan that was used to make sure that we save rounds. Each one gets his own round. Otherwise, it is not the slogan that is used today because we

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are not fighting at all. And by the way, Comrade Ndlozi, leave PAC affairs to PAC members. Thank you.

Question 335:

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much hon House Chair, and thanks to the hon Pambo, who asked the question. Our department has a dedicated and extensive portfolio of engagements committed to advance South African's participation in international science, technology and innovation partnerships. As a matter of fact, I've addressed this extensively in answering the earlier questions.

These, for example, seek to enable South Africa's sharing international experience and expertise including through researcher training and staff exchanges, promoting science, technology and innovation oriented foreign investment in South Africa, and advanced strategic priorities as I have said, such as the African and South-South agendas in science, technology and innovation, STI.

We already have in our annual performance plan, performance indicators that are focused on these objectives. The department currently has no direct partnership or collaboration with apartheid Israel and strictly adheres to

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the prescripts of South Africa's foreign policy on matters related to engagement with Israel.

Instead, what I wish to say, hon House Chair, is that I have established a research partnership between South Africa and Palestinian researchers as a way of continuing active solidarity and contributing also to arresting the prospect of a whole Palestinian civilisation being wiped out by the current genocide that is taking place in that part of the world. Thank you very much.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Thank you very much House Chair, and thank you very much, Minister. Those of us in the progressive left appreciate the effort to assist the Palestinian people. So, Minister, would you support a Bill that would make it illegal for all South African researchers, public and private, to collaborate with research institutions or individuals, public or private, in apartheid Israel, given that boycott sanctions and divestment assisted us in our fight against apartheid South Africa? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Hon Paulsen, thank you very much for that question. Well, whether a Bill or not may work, it's a subject that could be

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considered by Parliament itself. But what I agree with is that as far as I'm concerned, we should terminate all relations with the Israeli universities ... [Applause.] ... and colleges.

As a matter of fact, more than 100 university professors in Gaza have been killed. And all the universities in Gaza are destroyed. The schooling system is gone. I don't know which sane South African would like us to collaborate with such murders and pursuers of genocide. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order hon members. Let us listen to the hon Ngubane.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Hon Minister, thank you very much for that clarity of totally not working with Israel. But hon Minister, with the current so-called Government of National Unity, GNU government being on the slow pace in implementing its resolutions of closing all embassies of Israel in South Africa, just to make sure, is Armscor or the Department of Defence or any other department not in partnership with your department in relations to collaborations with Israel on any nuclear, drone or iron dome knowledge in relations to selling of sophisticated arms to Israel or sharing any knowledge of

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scientific defence mechanism on airborne diseases against attacks from any Middle East countries? Thank you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION:

Unfortunately as you know, I cannot answer for ...

[Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Minister, your colleague in the Cabinet, the hon Minister of Water and Sanitation, let's all listen to the Minister of Science and Technology.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Hon Ngubane, unfortunately, I cannot answer for my colleagues or the entities like you are mentioning, whether there's collaboration with Israel or not.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Minister, I think the hand waves at the back are not points of order, it's just indicating that you're not audible.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Am I not audible?

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): We know that you're one of the taller members of Cabinet, but will you just move closer to the mic, please. [Laughter.]

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Order, hon Chair. What I would like to say is that I cannot speak for my colleagues or the entities under them on collaboration with Israel. All what I know is that I am not aware of any of the entities under my department that would be working with Israel. If I were to find that on my side, I will be able to act on that. Insofar as entities that are under my ...
[Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Minister, I have a hand here to my left. Hon Manyi, why are you rising?

Mr M MANYI: Chair, I think the Minister is violating the Constitution. In terms of the Constitution, they have collective responsibility as the Cabinet. So, you can't have a Minister saying it's somebody else and somebody else. He must take responsibility and respond.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Manyi, that's no point of order. That's a point of debate. Hon Minister, please continue.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: I think that I've actually answered. Hon Manyi, yes, we do take collective responsibility, but Ministers have got responsibilities. I can't just go into another Minister's portfolio and be able to comment authoritatively and about what is essentially a new question, by the way, which is not in line with the question that has been asked here. So, I have answered insofar as I've answered and I have stated my position that if you are aware of any of my entities that are working with the Israeli government, I will have to deal with that matter when it actually comes to that and what is the nature of that relationship and what is it that actually needs to be done. So, I think that what I've told you is how far I can go. Thank you very much.

Mr T R RAMONGALO: Thank you, Speaker. Can the Minister elaborate on what events South Africa will be hosting regarding science, technology and innovation and also at what international events, be they local or international, will be

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showcasing our achievements and plans to advance our STI sector? Thank you. [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much, hon Chair. Well, thanks for the question. We do regularly host events. The next one that we are holding is our annual event which is the Science Forum south Africa which we are hosting in December this year.

We've just hosted our annual Science week now in September. And before that, for instance, we had an event of SA Women in Science Awards, awarding our women for their participation in science.

I'm also likely to be going to the World Science Forum next month, which we hosted in the African continent for the first time in Cape Town last year. I will be attending this year, as part of the handover of having done this, we've got numerous other activities.

I would be more than happy to supply you with those because as South Africa, much as our science system is not big, but is the single largest in the African continent and we've got very

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extensive relations, and our scientists are respected globally. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you hon members, there was no request for the last supplementary question. Hon members, earlier in the sitting I deferred making a ruling on a point of order raised in respect of remarks of the hon Skosana. I've since consulted the Hansard. As a background, let me say that of course, in the rough and tumble typical of a political arena like this House, it's not strange that we disagree with one another, but those disagreements must happen within the confines of the Rules.

It is, however, also the duty of Presiding Officers to protect all members and specifically members who are busy exercising oversight over the executive. The essence of the Rules is that we must treat one another with respect and in that sense it is important that we make use of the Rules and do not abuse the Rules to engage with ministers outside of what the rules allow for in question session. So that's a general reminder to all members. And certain statements would not only be disrespectful but would certainly be unparliamentary and call for a substantive motion.

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In the current situation, Hansard that has made it clear that the hon Skosana used the words, "we won't tolerate racism." That, however, is not a direct reference to the Minister. And consequently, I will not ask the hon Skosana to react further or to withdraw. [Applause.]

That concludes this question session. The time allocated has expired. I request members to stand and wait for the Chair and the Mace to leave the Chamber. It concludes the business for the day. The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 18:07