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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The House met at 15:00.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, the first item on today's Order Paper is Questions addressed to Ministers in Cluster 2: Social services.

There are four supplementary questions on each question. Parties have been given an indication of which questions their members which to pose a supplementary question. Adequate notice was given to parties for this purpose. This was done to facilitate participation of members who are connecting to the sitting through the virtual platform.

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The members who will pose supplementary questions will be recognised by the Presiding Officer.

In allocating opportunities for supplementary questions, the principle of fairness amongst others, have been applied.

If a member who is supposed to ask a supplementary question through the virtual platform is unable to do so due to technical difficulties, the party Whip on duty will be allowed to asked the question on their behalf.

When all supplementary questions have been answered by the executive we will proceed to the next question on the Order paper.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

CLUSTER 2 - SOCIAL SERVICES

Question 384:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon House Chair, the post school education and training macro indicators trends of March last year report, observe that

access to the post school education and training system generally favours females over males, with the gender parity index for the sector system being amongst the highest in the world.

Within the university sector female students continue to be in the majority in all major fields of study that include business management education and humanities.

In the science, education and technology fields, male students still outnumber female students, all be it with the classtictly narrowing gap over the same period of 2010 to 2019.

When it comes to graduation though, in the science, education and technology sector, an interesting and a notable development is that the number of female graduates started outstripping that of males from 2014 onwards. We are also seeing the narrowing of the gap in relation to the PhD graduates as well.

On mainstreaming young women in science, the ministerial guidelines on achieving equity in the distribution of

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bursaries and scholarships and its successor index of the National Research Foundation, NRF, postgraduate funding policy, both set an equity of a minimum of 55% of female postgraduate students receiving support.

This target at Master's level was soon achieved after the policy was introduced. So, there was some lag at postgraduate level.

But I would also like to say, hon House Chair, that in addition to postgraduate support the Department of Science and Innovation, through the National Research Foundation, implements two flagship projects targeted at young and emerging researchers, is the Thuthuka programme and Black Academics Advancement programme, that support emerging researchers holding research positions in South African public universities.

I would just like to point out that the Thuthuka programme, for instance, and the Black Academics Advancement programme have funded 1 849 emerging researchers, grants for South Africa and 61% of those went to women.

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So, increasing the number of black women in research and academia is a critical tool for promoting the participation of young women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, STEM fields. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Ms N T MKHATSHWA: Minister, after ensuring that young women have access to learning opportunities enhancing their skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It becomes important for them to find themselves active within the economy, therefore, ensuring that they are able to commercialize their innovations but also allowing them opportunities in terms of preparation for procurement opportunities so that they too can service our entities and our departments.

Can you give us an update on the framework of the department in terms of the agenda responsive budgeting in ensuring that young women are actively participating in science, technology, engineering, mathematics within the economy? Thank you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

House Chair, I want to point out that the Department of

Science and Innovation had developed a gender-responsive budgeting framework so that we are able to mainstream within the entire budget of the Department of Science and Innovation. One of the key things to be mentioned is indeed gender, in addition also to issue of racial integration and representation.

Such a framework that we have fed with our entities requires that a certain percentage of goods procured by those entities are from women-owned businesses so that charity begins at home; the very same entities must practice what they want their sectors to actually do.

We will now expect the entities also to report to the department on this, so that this is not just a policy guide but there is something concrete that's happening.

Secondly, in the decadal plan on science, technology and innovation for 2021 to 2031, we are also proposing that when intellectual property from publicly financed institutions is commercialized, women-owned businesses are also considered.

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In addition, we also monitor performance in terms of investment into research and development by the private sector. One of the things that we also track when it comes this, is the extent to which there is actually participation of women even when there are now researchers out in the workplace in order to ensure that we facilitate a smooth transition from research and research products into actual environment of innovation or commercial activity. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Ms C V KING: Minister, the Post School Education and Training, Pset, sector is cross cutting an agenda centric approach will ensure more women participation in the sector.

Movement from Technical, Vocational Education and Training, Tvet, colleges in to universities comes with its challenges of access.

How are female Tvet students in the STEM career paths assisted with course accreditation to gain access to universities for career path leading to postgraduate studies?

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The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon House Chair, the first thing we just need to say is that the participation ... we are very pleased to say now that in the Tvet sector in itself, women now constitute the majority of students who are registering here and increasingly also, we are passing greater numbers of artisans coming directly our public Tvet colleges.

We are having a policy to ensure affirming gender transformation, which in the main translates into promoting women in the Tvet college sector.

The second thing that we are doing in order to ensure or as part of the transition from learning to working in our Tvet college sector.

We have now made an agreement with all our Sector Education and Training Authorities, Setas, to take a certain number of Tvet graduates into workplaces so that they are able to get the important in-service training. And we are insisting that in this placement at least no less than 50% of students or learners that are placed for purposes of workplace exposure are actually women. And these are some of the things that we are actually doing in order to ensure gender representation, and

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in particular to ensure that the number of women in midlevel skills that are so vital in South Africa are actually promoted and advanced. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Ms N N CHIRWA: Minister, how has the department made means to identify girls and women in township, rural and informal settlements for the purposes of empowering them in STEM?

How many are these women and how exactly as the department provided support that is cognisant of socioeconomic and socio-political challenges of these women and girls?

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon House Chair, well, unfortunately the hon member may have to ask this question differently if she definitely wants numbers and also it's not very clear what numbers from what sectors or programmes because we have got a whole range of different programmes. And if the hon member wants to follow up at some other stage I can then be able, for instance, what the number of women in internships, what's the number of women learnerships, what's the number of women in apprentices and in different categories?

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But generally, the framework ... we as the department have adopted a framework for all our post school education and training institutions. Universities, Tvet colleges, community education and training colleges and the Setas, that in recruiting learnerships from townships, from the rural areas, we must make sure that no less than half, at least, of those trainees or interns or learners are actually women. That is the process that we are actually following.

In fact, already, in terms of the number of interns that are coming out of the system, there is significant participation of women, and in some instances women are even the majority. But as I have said, had I been asked the questions to give those numbers I would have actually prepared those numbers. But we are fairly satisfied that we are actually making huge progress in the post school education and training sector in terms of women, both in formal institutions as well as in informal institutions in terms of ordinary youth in particular that we recruit in townships for learnerships and internship programmes. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Ms N N CHIRWA: House Chair, sorry, this question is not answered, how it was asked because I made ... [Interjections.]

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

Setswana:

Moh N N CHIRWA: Ga le kgone go itshwara? Ga le kgone go itshwara?

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, can you give the member an opportunity so that I can make a ruling?

Ms N N CHIRWA: It's a very specific question. I asked for numbers because the question is in regard to the empowerment of women in STEM. So, I'm asking for tangible numbers. He can mention that in this programme there's 100 000 women that we've supported from township and rural areas, in the programme there's this much. But it's not answered at all.

And second to that ...

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

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Ms N N CHIRWA: Wait, Chairperson. I'm not with this. I want to give clarity ... [Inaudible.] ... and I also asked what kind of socioeconomic and socio-political support has the department given? Not just accepting the thank you programmes, it's a very specific question. He must answer this.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you. No, hon member. Just relax. You asked a follow up question to the root question, and in that root question it says clearly, it doesn't ask for numbers. So, if you want specific numbers, hon member, from the hon Minister, then you must submit a new question, either in writing or another oral question. But it would be unfair if in the primary question there's no numbers that are asked, to ask in the follow up question for those numbers. Because quite frankly, the Minister won't have it readily available because it was not part of the primary question that was asked.

Ms N N CHIRWA: Noted, Chairperson.

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

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Ms N N CHIRWA: But it still doesn't answer the question of the socioeconomic and socio-political support the department has given women in township, rural and informal settlements areas. [Inaudible.] ... still answered that part ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, the same apply. The same apply to that second part of your question. Please ask the question for oral or written response, and I'm quite sure the hon Minister will be able to respond to you.

Mr S S ZONDO: Hon Minister, how is your department collaborating with the Department of Basic Education to provide guidance related to refining applications and subject choices for the STEM courses and career to girls in schools, especially girls from the previously disadvantaged backgrounds? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon House Chair, we have a very close working relationship with the Department of Basic Education on a number of areas, some of which I can mention now. firstly, that we have a got a joint task team, for instance, that looks into teacher education in order to ensure that the teachers we produce are

in the same numbers and disciplines and fields, in as much as is possible that the department wants.

Secondly, National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, is also handling what is called the Fundza Lushaka bursary, which is particularly aimed at supporting financially students who want to train as teachers in the fields of maths and science. That Fundza Lushaka bursary is a dedicated bursary that is aimed at producing teachers, particularly in those fields so that we improve the outcomes of maths and science.

In addition, my Department of Science and Innovation also has a joint programme with the Department of Basic Education in order to support and strengthen the teaching of maths and the teaching of science in the schools so that we make sure that we have the pipeline of the production of students who are able, in future then, to actually be able to train in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Question 369:

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much hon House Chair, and thanks to the hon member. Hon members, the Department of

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Health administers the *Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act of 1972* as amended in 2007. There are a number of regulations published in terms of this Act to ensure that all food stuffs are safe for human consumption in the country.

There are regulations developed to deal with hygiene, salt reduction, transfects and ensuring use and labelling of correct ingredients in the food products. All these regulations are developed taking into consideration science based international standards and strategies provide by the World Health Organization, WHO, in terms of food safety, reduction and prevention of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, obesity, cancer, heart attacks and strokes.

The department has also developed new measures to ensure food products should be correctly labelled, in compliant with the legislations I have mentioned, in terms of the brevity in the use of harmful ingredients and also misleading the consumers. As well as to increase the awareness and understanding the importance of healthy diet and physical activity.

To clamp down on harmful products in the market, all food stuffs that are manufactured in the country are subjected to

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inspections by environmental health practitioners, who are deployed by municipalities and in rural areas ... municipalities it main lives through the district municipalities.

All important, products are inspected at a designated port of entry by port health officials. These measures are to ensure that we are not having unhealthy, non-compliant food in the market.

In acknowledging the importance of this as a department we have also developed strategies for the prevention of the obesity, which was developed in 2015. We have developed updated national food based guidelines, also collaborated with National Treasury and made extensive input into the Health Promotion Levy on sugar beverages of April 2018.

From time to time we also do promotion of the National Nutrition Week in the month, from the 15th October. We also commissioned National Dietary Intake Survey to look at the patterns of food and drinks consumption across the various living standard measures of all groups in the urban, in the rural, in the farm areas, so and this is being also concluded

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by the University of the Western Cape there would be a report issued in 2023. I thank you, hon House Chair.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Thank you House Chairperson and thank you, Minister for that. Minister, however with your interventions and measures in place, very little is being done on the ground, Minister. Businesses are opening every other day, particularly in the food sector.

I want just to give an example; the latest report says aspartame which is one of the sweeteners used extensively and you know South Africa has a massive problem with diabetes, is apparently according to the latest report there is now report that it causes type 2 diabetes.

What is also in the increase in the country is non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. Cardia arrest is on the rise in South Africa, people at young age are dying. Look at can of cold rink, 19 spoons of sugar Minister in can of one of these cold drinks. The question is; what oversight mechanism can we put and make ensure that there's greater compliance, that we create a healthier society than impact it's having currently with high levels of diseases and illnesses that we are picking

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up, resulting in people dying at a much younger age currently? Thank you. Including you know the dish washing liquid, there report that, that leads to cancer. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much to the hon member. We would welcome, you know the hon member and other members who are aware of some of the products which maybe escaping our environmental health practitioners' inspections and our food experts. Either in terms of the facts that, that particular product maybe wrongly labelled, as I have indicated here, we've passed legislations and regulations which compel producers of various food products to make sure that they label the content, whether it's salt, whether is sugar or fats or any other ingredients in the food. If the food misleadingly labelled, if it can be proven, the person who is selling that and those who produce a mislabel can be charged for that offence.

But, I also want to say that we do acknowledge that, especially in our rural municipalities, as I have said, the dependence is on the district authorities, because we know majority of our rural municipalities don't have all the various expertise and environmental health practitioners. I

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mean, if you look at the scope of pressures in terms of basic services, most of our rural municipalities do not afford on their own to hire environmental health practitioners, so they depend on district authorities. But I have been assured that, notwithstanding the fact that various districts do not have sufficient numbers. But all districts do have environmental health practitioners and they do random search on various food outlets.

But, we would like to encourage members of the public, if you are aware of something which is suspicious, report to the nearest local municipalities, so that it can be raised with our environmental health practitioners, so that it can be followed up. Thank you very much hon House Chair.

Dr K L JACOBS: House Chair, I will be asking the question in behalf of hon Gela. Understanding the extend of the impact of the food stuffs hon Minister, which are not in accordance with health standards, requires urgent intervention if we are to reduce our chronic disease burden. What role has the department play ... [Interjection.]

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Jacobs, the Minister can't be here you clearly. Thank you for standing, I suggest that you rather take your seat and speak to the mic.

Dr K L JACOBS: ... must I start from the scratch, hon Minister?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, you can start again.

Dr K L JACOBS: Thank you, hon Minister, understanding the extend the impact of the food stuffs hon Minister, which are not in accordance with health standards, requires urgent intervention if we are to reduce our chronic disease burden. What role does the department play in enforcing compliance and in isolating producers of such food stuffs particularly in the informal market? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: House Chairperson, thank you very to hon member. Hon members, as I indicated, I our role start from one; legislative, regulatory, providing the standards, making sure that those standards are all scientifically based. And from there onwards, working with both at provincial

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environmental health practitioners, maybe employed by provinces but largely at local authority level. Working with those structures.

Our offices provide those standards; they even provide training for the environmental health practitioners, who are employed by the local authorities. Update them on a regular basis, when there's new information, there are courses which are run for the environmental health practitioners, to update them in terms of what are the new threats, what are the new discoveries, so that they can be able to follow that.

And on a regular basis, there's also audits which are done the districts do reports, environmental health practitioners do provide reports. But if there are areas that still may be falling between the cracks because of maybe lack of capacity we would welcome those indications, so that working with our partners, we can be able to improve. Thank you.

Ms M O CLARKE: Thank you House Chairperson, thank you Minister. With the rising cases of diabetes and other life style diseases, how has government spent the R2,2 billion sugar tax collection to shift lifestyle behaviours amongst the

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population? If this government was sincere in addressing diabetes and other life style diseases, why is the sugar tax raise not bringing fence in terms of human placental lactogen, hpl? And can the Minister please provide us, if any what processes are put in place to monitor the outcomes of these safety programmes, meant to combat lifestyle diseases linked to the success rate? And in your earlier on, you did say that your department have been doing many surveys in terms of lifestyle diseases, what positive outcomes, coming from those surveys? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much hon Clarke. Hon members, as I have indicated, we do have an ongoing current national dietary intake survey, which is being led by the University of the Western Cape, but number of other role players. In March next year we will get a report, which will indicate, as I've indicated, we looking at the patterns in terms consumption of food, consumption of drinks and that survey which will be concluded and we get the report at the end of March next year, will be able to give us sufficient information.

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We do get from National Treasury; from the sugar tax we do get allocation through which we are able to do health promotion. I don't have the figure at the current moment, I can be able to provide the figure ... yes I can provide you, I mean, I don't carry figures in my head all the time. But, we would be able to provide you with the amount because it's clearly indicated. So, yah we can able to provide that hon House members, but I can assure you that we do these surveys in order to make sure that we can be able to see the patterns and see whether the messages which we are embarking on actually do make a difference. Thank you.

Mr W M THRING: Thanks hon House Chair, minister it know that South Africans have a high levels of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and other related illnesses due to high carbohydrate or sugar diet. So as consequence the health promotion levy or sugar tax has been introduced to reduce sugar intake and hopefully disease, however the beverage and other industries have admitted to reducing their sugar purchases and replacing it with sweetener like aspartame and others, which animal studies have proven to cause weight gain, brain tumours, bladder cancer amongst other diseases. So, how does the Minister plan to address the harmful effects of the

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sweeteners on the South African population which may inadvertently be more harmful than the sugar itself? Thank you House Chair.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much to the hon member. Indeed, as of now the intervention which was supported by whole of government and implemented as I mentioned earlier on with our input as well through the sugar levy was meant to make sure that ... because sugar is proven to be one of the consumables which substantially increases the risk of obesity.

Now, in terms of the other sweeteners and additives which are added as replacements, we will need to look at the one which the hon member has mentioned. We will need to look at the ones which the hon member has mentioned. We will need to look to get report from our researchers in terms of whether indeed those additives, which the sugar replacement additives do have particular risks. I can say to the hon member that at this stage the information which he is alluding to, I don't have off-hand to can verify that.

Indeed, the studies have confirmed that, but we will look at that and if it is confirmed that some of these sugar

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replacements, sweeteners are themselves risky not maybe in terms of obesity but predisposing people to other non-communicable diseases such as cancers, we will have to take steps. Working together not just as a country, but as I have mentioned earlier on, we also rely on studies not only in South Africa but also under the auspices of the World Health Organization. So, we will also corroborate in information together with our colleagues in the WHO to make sure that where there is such information we will be able to take the necessary action. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, I want to remind you that in terms of the rules, supplementary question is restricted to one question and not a number of sub questions. So, you run the risk that your question will not be answered and you give the member of the executive an option to decide which side of your sub question he or she will answer. But, please restrict it to one question as per the rules. Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon House Chairperson, let me thank the member for the question. Indeed, member, there were three provinces that we had to investigate. The first one was KwaZulu-Natal. In KwaZulu-Natal we identified ... or let me report on the progress. We divided the damaged schools in terms of three categories. Category A was 41 schools which had minor damages, and the progress to date is that 33 schools have completed the tender process, two are already at construction level and six are practically completed.

There were also other schools that had medium damages and those were 117. We have 32 of them at a design level, 72 have completed the tender process and 13 are at a construction level. The last category is of schools that had serious damages and these were 202, and 163 are at a planning phase, 27 are at a tender design and four are at construction.

We have also worked with the National Education Collaboration Trust, NECT, to finalise and confirm, to us and the province, the costs and verify all the details relating to the needs and the work that has to be done. The last category, as per the question, was around schools in the Eastern Cape. There was a total of 51 schools which were from Amathole, Chris Hani and

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OR Tambo. We visited 37 of these schools and we found that these are schools with leaking roofs. Twenty seven of them were found to have been damaged by the floods, and we are working with the NECT and the province on plans to repair them. However, not much work has been done in terms of finalising and costing those repairs.

In North West we also visited and found that there were no schools, according to our report, that were damaged by floods or along that description but there were school that had been destroyed by other disasters like storm and other natural disasters but not flood damages. Again we are working with the province to see with them what it is that we can do together to sort them out. Our main focus is in KwaZulu-Natal in particular and the Eastern Cape. Thank you very much for the question, hon member.

Mr P R MOROATSHEHLA: House Chairperson, thank you very much for the opportunity. Again let me say thank you, hon Minister, for responding in that manner. However, can I further say that from the flood disasters in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and the North West, what lessons has the department learned in responding to disasters such that schooling continues even

under those difficult circumstances, noting that we are prone to such future disasters? Thank you very much, House Chair.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Lots of lessons have been learned by the country and also by the sector. We were very lucky as a sector because we have a very big footprint, even in areas where children were displaced we were able to find them spaces in other areas and we were also able to quickly mobilise uniform, books and make sure that schooling continues. I think that having a big footprint is an advantage for our sector.

There is quite a number of lessons that we have learned also in terms of the quality of infrastructure and where schools are located. I mean the schools I visited in KwaZulu-Natal have been built, not even on a riverbank, but inside the river because I think at some stage there was drought and then the school was built there. Also to make sure that when schools are built the environmental impact studies are done thoroughly so that people build schools at a right place and protect infrastructure. Some of them were just unfortunate that were built at wrong places. Thank you, House Chair.

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Mr B B NODADA: Minister, there have been promises to eradicate inappropriate infrastructure for 25 years now, yet to date there are still pit toilets in schools, hundreds of dilapidated asbestos and mud schools haven't been upgraded. I was doing oversight in Mncwati Comprehensive School just last month where learners are forced to use a rotational system because classrooms are falling apart. While in Mhlabi Secondary School, on the other side of the village, teachers and learners relieve themselves in an open field as pit toilets are life threatening.

Despite these schools being part of the Skill Enhancement Education and Development, SEED programme, they were never built. Furthermore, you and your department have proposed amendments to the Public School Infrastructure Act which will lead to accountability failures because you want to scrap provinces from reporting on infrastructure progress in schools.

Minister, please be specific. There have been many pronouncements on dealing with infrastructure backlog in schools, including the President's special purpose infrastructure vehicle, when will you eradicate the

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dilapidated infrastructure backlog, and how will your department ensure conducive learning environments without pit toilets and with access to water, electricity, safety and internet in schools? Thank you so much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, may I remind you that there is a primary question that has been asked. The Minister responds to that question. Your follow-up question must flow out of the response of the Minister to that primary question. Keep that in mind, please. Just relax, just relax. That is not my ruling but the Rules that I am simply putting to you. It is not a new rule that I am framing. So, let's conduct this session in that spirit that follow-up questions in fact come from the primary question and do not constitute a new question. Why is your hand up, hon member?

Mr D W MACPHERSON: House Chair, I am sure that that's just general commentary because the actual question deals with infrastructure damaged schools, and that is exactly where the follow-up question comes from. So, I am sure that you are just reminding the House as opposed to making a general reflection on that question.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, thank you, hon member, I am quite capable of interpreting the questions as well. I will allow the hon Minister to respond.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much for the guidance because the question was specific around KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and North West, but because I have information on what the member is asking about, I will therefore quickly answer what I can. In terms of sanitation the member knows that there were more than - I don't have the right figures in mind, but there were more than 3 280 schools identified that they needed to have pit latrines. We have done more than 2 800 with 1 000 remaining which means there will be because there are schools that have not been completed. We have given the committee reports to say that by end of this financial year we would have finished with the sanitation. The financial year has not come to an end, therefore there will still be those situations.

In terms of overcrowding in schools, yes, he is correct. Again we did an audit of where overcrowding in schools is because there is lots of migration in the country, the question of infrastructure becomes a moving target. So, we can't say that

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by 2020 everything will be honky-donkey in the sector because there are other dynamics and it is a moving target. Again, we can give information on where schools are being built.

He also adds on things about connectivity. House Chair, I promise if the member sends all those questions I will answer all of them systematically because we do have answers and information on all the matters he is raising. However, his concern is acknowledged and it is a concern that also bothers us as a sector that we have this ongoing challenge with infrastructure which negatively impacts on the quality of teaching and also on the rights and dignity of our children. We are ready to give him all the answers for all the questions that he has raised. Thank you very much, House Chair.

Ms N R MASHABELA: House Chair, to the Minister, the education infrastructure backlog continues because the state continues to depend heavily on third party service providers who inflate prices of tenders ... [Inaudible.] ... without necessary skills and capacity and do not deliver. Even in instances when the Government Technical Advisory Centre is involved we have not seen any improvement. Minister, my question is: Is it not time that government establishes a state owned construction

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company specifically to build and maintain school infrastructure like it was the case before tenders became the only way to source and deliver goods and services? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House Chair, indeed school infrastructure, as I have said also to member Nodada, is an ongoing problem. But as to why the state would want to outsource other functions is because the Department of Basic Education is a department of education and all we can do is to get a third party to build schools for us. All we do is to identify where schools should be built and do monitoring. The Department of Public Works, the President did announce that there is an entity that has been established, but I don't believe that you can address all the challenges that are facing us as a country and as a department without bringing in the services of the private sector.

The inflation of prices I think is a different issue and not necessarily related to the fact that we need third party assistance to be able to cope with the challenges of the infrastructure backlogs. You sometimes find that because of competition in the private sector you are able to negotiate

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better prices and you are also able to build your economic base from where you can transform the economic position of disadvantaged communities by giving them opportunities to participate in government.

I do agree with the previous member that infrastructure has actually become an albatross to the sector and different means and measures are being looked at by government centrally through Cabinet with the Department of Public Works, our different provinces and different service providers that are available. I can't see how we can cope with this big infrastructure. In the past, before tenders, government would build schools for a certain community. Hon member Mashabela knows that poor and rural communities had to build schools for themselves. The mud schools that we are dealing with are schools that were built by communities in the absence of government providing services, and this government has to provide services for 13 million children equally, without looking at a racial group. Therefore, there is a need to bring all the necessary capacities to ensure that the state copes with proving services for all the children that it's supposed to look after. Thank you very much, House Chair.

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Ms Z MAJOZI: Hon House Chair, to the hon Minister, I would like to know whether your department has measures in place to fully capacitate and train teachers who worked in schools that have been flood damaged to ensure that they can use all the tools necessary to continue with the school curriculum and that no learners are disadvantaged? If not, why not? If so, please provide a detailed explanation. Thank you, House Chair.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House Chair, again, if so and why not, in terms of how many teachers I think we can answer that. As I said in our response around KwaZulu-Natal, the advantage of the Department of Education is its footprint that when these communities get affected by floods we take those learners to a nearby school. So there is no need to retrain people because it would be the same teachers that teach other children. If our teachers have been displaced then we place them at another school and so there is no need to retrain.

As I said, what happened in KwaZulu-Natal is that we had to look at where the displaced learners were and work with those schools to place them there. Where we were not able to place them, there are temporary shelters like mobiles. It's the same teachers, so there would have been no need to retrain anybody

because it's really changing chairs; they were there yesterday and today they are here. I think that is what I'm trying to explain would have happened. There was nothing drastic except that we had to place children, make sure they have uniform, books and their schooling is not interrupted. Thank you, House Chair.

Question 438:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, thank you very much to member Nodada for the question around the BELA Bill, and I think the member as a member of the committee he is aware that the Bella Bill is out for public comments, but I will quickly run through some of the points that he a raised.

Yes, indeed, research in terms of what needs to be changed from the 1996 School Bella Bill, which was quite old. It is 2022 now. We use international law and international instruments to do research with objectives of enhancing the quality of education so that we can deal with our experiences of the past. Yes, since 1996 where there were gaps; but also where we needed to improve.

In terms of the areas specifically, on school governing bodies: One of the areas that we have had to change was around the language policy. We have cases, like the Ermelo case where we had to change the language policy so that it should not be the governing body which determines that this is strictly a Zulu-speaking school or not. It should be for any other language.

It should be a government policy to say a language policy of a different area will be determined by the number of learners at that school, not the governing body deciding that this is going to be a specific language policy because it was discriminating against other children who have a right to be at that school but was also used as a means of keeping other learners out. So, we did feel that in line with the Constitution, that had to be amended.

There were also areas like admission policies, for instance. An admission policy should not be a determination of the school governing body alone. The admission policy should be guided by government laws to say who goes into a school. This is so that the governing body cannot just decide who is coming

in and who is not. Again, from my experiences, there were matters that were being affected.

Also, in terms of the code of conduct, we also experience that the code of conduct sometimes infringes on the rights of children. It infringes on their religion; it infringes also on their cultural practices. So, there cannot be a governing body which says you can't ...

IsiZulu:

... ukugqoka isiphandla esikoleni ...

English:

... when we all know what isiphandla means. There cannot be a governing body that says it doesn't want children to cover their heads when everybody understands ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Minister, before you continue, may I request the Whips of the FF-Plus to inform their member, the hon Piet Mey, that his microphone is on and he is competing with the Minister to reply to the question.

The hon Minister, you may continue now.

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The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: So, I am giving examples of areas that there was no intention at all hon Nodada, to make life difficult for SGBs, but it was to enable us and the schooling committee to be aligned to the spirit and the values of the Constitutions, and the powers that need to be devolved at different stages. If you devolve powers, powers are not devolved absolutely. In some areas, member Nodada, there was a lacuna to say if you remove this power, who has to take responsibility.

Again, those are the recommendations that we have sent to you as Parliament. Now, that there are public hearings, we will hear from you. However, the explanation that indeed the areas that we changed were informed by court decision, by research and by our experiences in areas there are presenting difficulties for the sector to run properly and protect the right of everybody in terms of access to school, in terms of their religion and also in terms of their cultural practices. Thank you.

Mr B B NODADA: Thank you Chair. Minister, I am glad you mention that there are countries that you researched on, one

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of them being the Seychelles, then there is Finland. I know they use different education systems, but there is no successful country around the world, when it comes to education, that has a centralised control of schooling.

That is why it is precisely important to ensure that school governing bodies are empowered, because it is in that community – it cannot be an HOD that decide for a school in Qumbu to study IsiXhosa, or an HOD to decide in the Northern Cape, that they are going to use a particular language. It needs to be decentralised to a point where they can be able to make a decision for themselves.

The reality is that Basic Education department can't be both a player and a referee in this instance. They need to intervene when those particular policies are utilised to discriminate against specific learners.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, hon members. Don't interrupt the member. The rules are clear. The hon member is allowed to make a statement before he asked his follow-up question, and he is well within his time. Continue, hon member!

Mr B B NODADA: Again, Minister, the challenge is going to be this: Today it is going to be powers that are taken away from governing bodies, on admissions and language; tomorrow, it is going to be the department deciding which principals are appointed; and the next day it is going to be who gets the tender for text books or providing material in schools. That decentralises to a point of school capture.

That is why it is important that we actually ensure that we empower school governing bodies. So, Minister, why do you want more power for politicians and less power for parents? That is the main question. Is this particular Bill designed to make sure that people, like MEC Lesufi in Gauteng, actually attained power to try and centralise control of all schools in terms of their language and admissions policy?

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Member Nodada, you say I want to take powers of authority. What do I do with those powers as a politician? I have just explained, Chair, that the changes to Bella Bill were informed by the necessary changes that had to come since 1996. Now, if we talk about decentralisation, we

are one of the most decentralised systems, if you think about it.

As the Minister, I don't implement anything, I just put policies. It can't be correct for us, even as a country, to give powers to governing bodies knowing where we come from historically, where a governing body can decide that this is an Afrikaans-speaking school in an area where there would be children who have the right, who are nearby and who want to study in English.

It can't be correct and think we can sit here as people and break the Constitution which we are supposed to uphold and have governing bodies deciding or infringing on the cultural and religious rights of people. You get people from different religious groups who say these schools are not allowing our girls to cover their heads and it is our religion that girls have to cover their heads.

So, you can't allow it because it breaks the Constitution. As a politician or as a Minister, I have the responsibility to ensure that the Constitution and the rights of people are upheld. The changes that are there are real changes that were

necessitated by even the courts. This means courts cannot tell us what not to do. Some of the decisions came because of the court matters.

Some of the changes had to come because of situations where the court made decisions. The very communities have come to us themselves to say that school cannot admit our children because of language. They expel our children for cultural practices. It is against the law and it is against the rights of children. Now, to conflate education policies to tenders ...

IsiXhosa:

... uyayibaxa lungu elihloniphekileyo uNodada.

English:

We are not talking about tenders. We are talking about principles, about policies and about the law and the Constitution ... [Time expired.]

Ms N G ADOONS: Thank you very much hon Chair and Minister for the response, even though we understand the position of hon Nodada as a shadow minister. He must impress his masters. He

was all over the place, but let's go back to the original question. Hon Minister, SGBs are our critical bodies as organs of people's power in education. It epitomises creating collective responsibility for the governance of our schools. Minister, how is the department addressing the problems of dysfunctional or disruptive school governing bodies which hamper the effective functioning of schools?

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much hon member. Indeed, we do experience in some instances where governing bodies sometimes make the life of schools and of principals difficult. However, I think to be honest, we have very good school governing bodies that we work very closely with. We have national bodies and they are extremely helpful in terms of ready-to-do school governance - in terms of policy, so that when we have difficulties we engage.

Even when we were doing the Bella Bill, there was no step I was taking without bringing governing bodies on board. So, where we would have differed, we would have differed after engaging. All of them are very co-operative and very supportive, but sometimes, ...

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Sesotho:

... ntwà ke ya madula mmoho!

English:

You may not agree if your principles or your interest don't come together, but we work with them. We do lots of training through governing bodies and we also get lots of support from them. As I say, we don't agree on matters of principles, and you find that principles clash. However, we work with them and there is a lot of comprehensive training that we do with them. They support us a lot. Thank you very much.

Dr W J BOSHOFF: Hon Chair, I ask permission not to open my camera due to connection problems.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Please proceed!

Dr W J BOSHOFF: Thank you. I want to ask the hon Minister if she would acknowledge that there are school communities which are not exactly geographical communities, like the Afrikaanse Hoër Seunskool and Afrikaanse Hoër Meisieskool – two schools

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in Pretoria - who have a community which actually extends over the whole of the northern provinces.

The decision in the Schools Act of 1996, where school governing bodies were established, acknowledge that such communities - school communities - not necessarily geographical communities have the right to maintain their own schools, even public schools.

It is one of the basic fundamentals of the 1996 Constitutional dispensation that is broken by taking away the powers of school governing bodies to actually maintain their culture and their ethos., provided there is no more money from the state ... [Time expired.] No, I will leave it at that. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, that is exactly what Bella Bill is trying to do. Between 1994 and now, there has been lots of geographical movement of people from different places, and you can't continue to really work on the basis of settlements which were there before 1994. There are communities which have moved in around those areas of those schools.

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It is not going to be correct to say someone who is opposite that school in terms of the geographical space cannot have access to that school because it belongs to a community which is 10km away from the school. Meaning, that this child has to leave a school just in front of their gate to go to look for a school 10km away.

There are a number of discussions that we are engage in with schools to make sure that, first we do preserve or protect language preference for instance, but again we have to intervene and make sure that those language or cultural preferences don't discriminate against other South African children who have a right to access that school.

So, you can't close a school. There is a school in Gauteng. It is in the Vaal. It admits children from the Free State because it is an Afrikaans school, while children in the Vaal can't have access to that school in Gauteng because the community believes that it belongs to a certain community.

These amendments are meant to address some of those problems.
Thank you, Chair.

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Mr S N SWART: House Chair, I ask this question of behalf of Ms Sukers. Hon Minister, school governing bodies in rural low income and marginalised communities struggle to access the skills and training required to engage in school management effectively. This means that tens, if not hundreds, of millions of rands are wasted. This also makes the research that goes into effective school governing bodies' training as key priority for the department.

Is the Minister willing to conduct research to assist the effectiveness of current programmes and share the results with those willing to implement the recommendations of researchers in this regard, where practically possible? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, hon member. If indeed there is a need to do it, I don't think there is any difficulty with agreeing with that. However, I also want to break this myth that rural equals to backwardness and ignorance, purely. I have been to schools deep in the Eastern Cape, in areas where you get into a meeting and you find extremely brilliant contributions coming from members of the community.

When you ask who this person is that really seems to be so knowledgeable, you find that it a retired professor who has come back to stay in their rural areas. So, rural is not necessarily equal to ignorance. People in rural areas know what they want for themselves and what they want for their children. Sometimes the difficulties are in the very urban areas where you find very difficult attitudes that are extremely backward and reactionary, in that themselves need to be worked on.

As I say, I don't have any difficulty with ready-do on assessment of the impact of the trainings that we have, both in urban and rural, and in different communities. The trainings are not only around the running of schools, but even the values that we need in our schools, like values of patriotism, values of unity, values of nationalism, etc.

Those are the things that we expect also for school governing bodies to inculcate in the schools where they govern. So, both sides, we find that there are a lot of things that we need to engage on as South African, especially the parents and the values that they teach to their children when they come to school.

Question 421:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Mme Mashabela and thanks for the question, the total number of schools that we have closed since 2021 are 1 503. The member wants to know what support we give. We check if the school is viable. In some instance you find that the school is not viable. It makes no educational sense to keep functional even for the sake of the children themselves. We will support those schools to make sure that they can find spaces nearby.

The member will also agree with me that there will be situations especially with schools in farming areas which you can't close unless you don't want kids to go to school. That's where we provide opportunities or training for multigrade teaching. Some of these multigrade schools perform much better than the single grade teaching. We work with teachers to give them skills for multigrading. We improve their management systems because sometimes we give them more teachers than it is allowed by law, for instance, in the Western Cape, they are providing information and communications technologies, ICTs, that's why all the farm schools ... and that's the programme we are rolling out or are taking out as lessons from the

Western Cape to make sure that where you can't provide any other means, use ICTs to compensate. Those schools sometimes tend to be much better than even single grade schools. We look at different things, whether viable or unviable or if it is possible to close or not close. Thank you, House Chair.

Dr S S THEMBEKWAYO: I will make the follow up question if she has a connection problem. It is hon Thembekwayo. Minister in 2019, the department announced that more than 3 000 schools with fewer than 135 pupils at primary and 220 pupils at secondary school level being targeted at the time. Most of these schools were in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West and Eastern Cape, with the Eastern Cape in particular, accounting for more than 1 300 schools. What impact will this have on the learning abilities of children some of whom would have to be transported to faraway places to get education? What impact will this have on local economies of the affected areas? Thank you, House Chair.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: What we look at is whether it makes educational sense to run the school because our business is teaching and learning, not what economies will do. I think

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it will be unfortunate if we affect the economy. Our fundamental principle is about learning and teaching.

As the member correctly says that there are a number of these schools ... we have only done 1 500 because there are lots of considerations that we have to do with regard to the learners' abilities to go to other areas, for example, Mpumalanga is rolling out a programme of boarding schools so that when we close the schools, all those children are put in mega schools. It has improved the quality of life, the quality of education and the impact thereof.

The member will also know that we also don't want to institutionalise small children. We don't want to take a Grade R or a Grade 1 to a boarding school. That's where we get softer. We have multigrades schooling to make sure that we can manage the impact of those changes to learners. We have a programme of rolling out boarding schools. The fact of the matter is, it is cruel and it is unviable. I have been to a school in Limpopo. Seventy-five kids from Grade 1 to Grade 12. It is completely unworkable. There is no way you can have 75 kids from Grade 1 to 12 in one place and think you can teach them effectively. It is not viable. That school got zero pass

rate. What guides us is also what the rights of the children are, protecting them and making sure that they are safer and get what is rightfully theirs.

Some other things are consequential either advantages or accidental but the bottom line is whether it makes educational to have that school. Thank you, House Chair.

Ms B P MBINQO-GIGABA: Thank you very much, House Chair, hon Minister, the conditions in urban and rural areas are different and both have varying strengths and weaknesses. When comparing urban and rural schooling, what is the difference in learner and teacher performance? Thank you very much, House Chair.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: It is quite interesting to do that because ... it always strike me when you find schools in the same conditions of perhaps poverty performing different. Today, the head of department has gone to KwaZulu-Natal - I know he is going to visit a school called Bizimali. It is one of the mega schools with the best result in the country. It is in deep rural. What makes the difference is the way the leadership of the school, the determination of learners ...

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and some of the kids who are at the school come from urban areas because parents know that there is effective teaching.

We have schools that have everything in urban areas that are not performing. For me it is not only about the rurality or the poverty but about the leadership, resources, and parents who have given me hope.

If you go to schools in Vhembe, they are in deep rural areas. They outperform schools in urban areas, poor as they are and rural as they are. The schools in urban areas that have everything and good infrastructure are not performing the way they should be performing. It boils down to leadership and what happens within the school more than where the ... [Interjections.]

Dr M Q NDLOZI: Give schools resources. Why do you say it is leadership? Give schools resources.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, hon Ndlozi, you can't interrupt the hon Minister. Stick to the Rules, please.

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Ms D VAN DER WALT: Thank you, House Chairperson - House Chair, sorry, am I audible?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, you are audible, hon member.

Ms D VAN DER WALT: Thank you. The Minister has just replied that since 2021, one thousand five hundred schools closed or merged. Yesterday, in the presentation it was stated that since the start of the programme 1 924 schools were closed. For this year alone, 1 237 schools were identified. It is clear that the legislative framework of the Department of Basic Education is ineffective as thousands of schools which are supposed to have been closed by now to ensure quality teaching and learning are still open. What are the reasons for the department's framework not being effective for the sake of teaching and learning? Whether the Minister will take steps and what steps will you take to make sure that for the sake of teaching and learning and the quality of learning that the framework will be effective? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, hon member, by acknowledging that the school closures are informed

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by our pursuance to have quality learning and teaching. I am glad that you put it as the reason why we are doing. The delays are due to laws around how you close schools. You have to consult, get parents ... sometimes it takes up to a year to reach that agreement. You don't want to close schools and fight with communities but you want to make sure that by the time you reach that stage, there is agreement.

The 1 500 is from 2021, it is not like when we started five years back. We have closed several schools in townships. Member Thembekwayo will know that even in her own area, in Soweto, there were schools that we closed because they were no longer viable. We had to merge schools. In merging schools, we have to involve communities around. In some instances, it is not possible to do it abruptly.

We have a boarding school process in Mpumalanga in motion but we can't institutionalise small children. In the Western Cape, they also had the boarding schools programme. Communities resist saying they don't want their kids to be mixed with kids who come from certain areas because they are going to contaminate their kids to become gangsters. That says we have to go back and plan what to do if parents are not happy with

keeping their kids in boarding schools. There are backwards and forwards because we are dealing with parents and people's lives and we have to be very careful how we move around it. That's why in the meantime, we are trying to negotiate our way around it. Parents in the Western Cape said they don't want their kids in boarding schools because they will be recruited by gangsters. What else do we put in place which also sometimes delays mergers and closures? We then have multigrades schools, we use ICTs. We are doing all we can as provinces by being sensitive to the people we are serving to make sure that they are not disadvantaged by what we finally think it's their advantage, which is quality teaching and learning.

Mr S N SWART: Thank you, House Chair, and again, I ask this question on behalf of hon Sukers. Hon Minister, the ACDP appreciates the concerns that you take into consideration when it comes to boarding schools and consulting the parents particularly when it comes to young children.

Yesterday, in the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, the Department of Basic Education highlighted the changes the sector phases with public micro schools in rural areas. Yes,

we do admit that there are some excellent schools in rural areas. However, is the Minister aware of the positive impact independent micro schools are having in rural towns and throughout the country? If so, is the Minister willing to research micro schooling so that officials can learn how these schools deliver quality education in small multigrades settings to deal with the issues and to assist those parents that don't want their young children to go to boarding schools? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much member, as I have just explained that it is such a very sensitive area which sometimes as the sector we tend to have blind spots. As I said, the blind spot in the Western Cape of taking kids to school and parents turning around to say our kids are going to be recruited into gangsters, which is something we perhaps could not have seen, and therefore we have to go back to the drawing board.

I have also said, in the Western Cape, because they have lots of small rural areas, they are using ICTs. We don't only need to research independent schools. There are schools in the public sector that are doing very well with multigrade

schooling. There are schools in the deep Eastern Cape that are using ICT as a tool for improving. We do find some of the small schools doing exceptionally well. You teach a foundation phase together. Those in Grade 1 can hear what is being said in Grade 2 and find that they can merge. Those that are remaining or have gaps, they gain by also being in the same space. We are investing and investigating that area because ... unfortunately 25% of our schools are multigrade schooling and that's why we are paying attention as to what more do we do. In instances where we can't consolidate to run a small school, what more do we do to enhance. Looking at independent schools, I don't think it is harmful. But I am saying, even in the public sector there are pockets of excellence in Western Cape and Eastern Cape which we are following quite close and taking lessons from. Thank you very much, House Chair.

Question 386:

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Hon Chair, thank you to hon Dlulane for the question. The answer is that SA Football Association, Sifa is a custodian of football in the country. The department works and support Sifa in the implementation of football programmes. Since the inception of the National Football League in 2019, the department has been

providing an amount of R 5million per annum to ensure that the league reaches a level at which it can attract some sponsorship.

Safa's partnership with Hollywood Bets is an indication that this investment is beginning to bear fruits. The department also provides Safa with additional funds for other women's programmes such as capacity and talent identification. It should be noted that we also add funds to provide for this intervention in the financial year 2022/23. This is purely for the development and professionalization of the women's game. It is the intention of the department to continue fund Safa with the objection of ensuring that their products are bankable and able to attract sponsorship as government has limited resources. More investment by the private sector would enable the formation of more clubs for women and the creation of stronger women's football leagues at all levels as the private sector would do in other sporting codes.

In addition, hon Chair, the annual school sport programme had taken a resolution together with the Department of Basic Education to cater for women football. These are the Under 15 and Under 17 age groups and persons with disabilities. The

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school sport programme, especially football is geared towards ensuring that girls are given equal opportunities in all respect, playing opportunities in technical, officiating, coaching and managing the provincial football teams.

In March 2022, we took the Under 15 girls team from Edenvale Technical School in KwaZulu-Natal who were the national winners of the schools' championships to the inaugural Fifa initiated School Football Championship in the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC. They did us proud, Chair, I must say. They only came second and were defeated in the final by Morocco. So, the win by the Banyana Banyana against Morocco was if I say, a sweet revenge Chair.

Let me also say that this very team has also won the Winter National Schools Sports Championships and they are going also representing us at Cosafa Schools Football Tournament to be held in Malawi in October. Preparations are currently underway to ensure that they are fully prepared to represent us. In this regard, there is no doubt of our commitment to support the development of women's football and the support provided to ensure its growth. Thank you, Chair.

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Ms B N DLULANE: Hon House Chair, let me thank the hon Minister for the answer. Hon Minister, we recognise the role which has to be played by the Safa in promoting women's soccer as you have just said. Sports for women are supported by the private sector making them lucrative to have the capacity to sustain livelihoods of sports persons. Hon Minister, we must position women sports to be financially sustainable to support the wellbeing and livelihoods of the players, as you have just said. We do appreciate what the department and the Presidency have done for Banyana Banyana. What is the role of the department in encouraging sponsorships and partnerships with the private sector to create gender equity in women's football? Maybe your contribution to assist even Safa, if you can. I suppose maybe you can do that. Thank you, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Chair, if I may, the network is not stable from where I am, switch off my camera? Hon Chair, I think that hon Dlulane is spot on. I think that we need to see the private sector supporting women in sport generally. But what is it that we are doing, as your question goes, is that we have advanced in consultation with the national federations, with provinces and everybody in coming up with the women in sport policy which is aimed primarily to

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ensure that there is equity, be it on gender, salary and so on. These would come before your portfolio committee in Parliament for you to scrutinize because we are determined and we are going to ensure that this policy is passed so that fairness is realised particularly for women sport. Thank you, Chair.

Mr B S MADLINGOZI: Hon Chair, Mr Minister, it has been recorded that most if not all Banyana Banyana are playing for our country as if it is one of their hobbies because they have to juggle between their 9-to-5 daily jobs. This means they will not have 100% attention to their national call. What plans have you got to make them totally focusing their energies and concentration towards football? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Hon Chair, thank you, hon Madlingozi. You will be pleasantly surprised that with Banyana Banyana you have the most dedicated squad to their country and their people and they are not playing football as a hobby. I can tell you now, hon member that almost 50% of them play in the Safa Football League and the rest are playing and remunerated in dollars, in international football. So, it is not a hobby for them.

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Now, the emphasis from our party is to ensure that we strengthen Safa Women's Football League, we strengthen our work with the Department of Basic Education on national school system. This system is working because almost 50% of the current squad of the Banyana Banyana come from this very school system. You can talk of Kaylin Swarts, Refiloe Jane, the captain, Thembi Kgatlana, Hildah Magaia and I can name all of them. So, what I am saying hon member is that we are very much focused and we have placed ourselves at a disposal of Safa to further engage the private sector, which we have started in some different areas of women sport in this country. Thank you, Chair.

Mrs M D HLENGWA: Hon Minister, considering the display of excellency showcased in South Africa women sports from soccer, swimming, rugby to golf especially over the past years, I would like to know how the funding framework for women in sports have been adjusted to equal that of men's sports? How has the department capacitated sports federations to address gender parity? I thank you.

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The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, hon member for your question. In fact, if you look at what is happening now, is part of this pipeline of investing mainly in development of youth in sport. When we do that, we do it from the school level to the university level and in that way you are able to identify at an early age of some of the players who are playing at the national team today. You see, for instance, take the example of Linda Motlhalo who started at the age of 14 years. That tells you that this part of investment particularly on developing sport at the lower level is and will continue to pay dividends.

With the federations, for instance, all the national federations, with the allocation we give to them we emphasise the ring fencing of women's sport in different sporting codes and that is happening and we know that as we move forward, it is going to continue show results. What seems to be a major challenge now is to get the partnership with the private sector as they are supporting other sporting codes, particularly of men in the country. We really want - as I said earlier on that we must commend Hollywood Bets and Sasol who believe in women in sport, especially women in football and we call upon many more to support women.

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Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon Chair, Minister, as much as I might agree with you that there is some work being done at grassroots at school level but certainly it is not enough. Now, let me give you an example of Caitlin Rooskrantz and if you remember that she won the gold medal. The first South African female to win artistic gymnastic gold for South Africa. There is very little facilities and things available. Why are you not suggesting to your colleagues and other departments to do what they do abroad in many countries where they develop sport from a local government level, employ sport coaches from the municipality councils so that they can develop those with quality talents in that specific community. This would make it easier for you to identify those with the talent and skills to develop in sport. Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: We are not doing enough. Yes, hon member, I would agree with you, we would want to do more. Let us start on facilities. As you know that the provision of facilities for sporting activities is the primary responsibility of local government. That is where it is and it is a constitutional matter as it were but over and above that we have what we call the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, Mig.

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We have enforced to municipalities for the grant to be ring fenced so that it does sport. You would perhaps know hon members, that if you go different spheres of government especially at a local level, people have not even with their resources at their disposal have not taken issues on board for sport and ensuring that they concentrate on sport. So, that is what we do especially this relates to your district municipality, meaning mostly in rural areas and so on because when it comes to metropolitan municipalities, the grant comes from the Department of the Human Settlements working with the metropolitan municipalities at that level.

So, we would - and I am glad hon Emam I had somebody is going to be with me here in engaging our local governments to ensure that they understand that sport is as important as any other aspect of human matter. Thank you.

Question 371:

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, Chair. The funding of athletes and teams participating at continental and international events is managed through two processes.

Firstly, individual continental and international

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championships are funded through national federations. To this end, the department funds the activities of national sport and recreation bodies for domestic continental and international events, amongst others.

This is dependent on bodies or being complaint to requirements, amongst others, recommendations and findings of the eminent persons group, all transformation in sport, financial accountability. And we have recently added a requirement that federations must submit to the department safeguarding policy. I must commend the portfolio committee as this has been really much pushing on this, and we have made this one of the conditions. Secondly, the SA Sports Confederation and Olympic committee, Sascoc, is tasked with the delivery of Team SA at major multisport events such as olympics, African Games, paralympics, etc. The department fund Sascoc to deliver Team SA in major international sporting events, like the recent Tokyo Olympics, Region 5 Games 2021-22 and the commonwealth games held in August 2022 - that was last month.

Lastly, the department acknowledges that some sport and recreation bodies do not apply for funding or do not comply

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with requirements, and we are working with Sascoc to address such challenges as this has a bearing on athletes' participation at national, continental and international level. Further, some competitions are organised independently outside of the jurisdiction of the national sport and recreation bodies as individual talks, etc. In such cases, the department is unable to support these programmes as these fall outside of the jurisdiction and programme of the national sport recreation bodies. Thank you, Chair.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Thank you very much, hon House Chair. Thank you very much hon Minister for that comprehensive explanation. Hon Minister, you know that South Africa is hosting the world cup in Netball and you can get all hon members T-shirts to promote world cup that will take place in Cape Town in June or July next year.

Netball is one of the few sports that is a woman's domain. There are no men competing in netball. I am just worried as I am seeing that netball is a women sport. I would like to know whether your department is doing enough to fund infrastructure all over the country, especially in villages. Our constituency office has been approached for assistance and for information

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about the netball tournament because I am aware, hon Minister, you gave us. We want to know in the run up to the world cup in July if you can repeat to make special efforts so that there are more interests in netball and you show support to the one sport that women dominate. Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, hon member and thank you for your question. You are correct, hon member. The whole world is descending to our shores next year 2023 for the very first time on African soil since the first Netball World Cup in 1963. So, it would be 60 years since its inception. We work with the City of Cape Town, the metro, which is going to be the host city. We work with the province of culture and sports department in Cape Town and we co-ordinate this through the interministerial committee to ensure that everything is put in place for such.

What seems to be the challenge currently, as you pointed out hon member, is reaching out to all the communities for people to understand and this necessary support like we would give him other instances as it were. On the issue of the facilities, part of the programme has ... because you know that with netball you have a special floor and it is very

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critical for netball. As part of the legacy programmes, together with the organising committee led by Ms Patience Shikwambana – who is the chairperson of the Local Organising Committee, LOC, in this country, we have already identified all the provinces to ensure that we give facilities of this nature and the courts themselves in some instances. So, that work is happening, and as I said, the work of getting everybody and galvanising everybody behind the netball world cup in South Africa is really needed. Thank you very much.

Sepedi:

Mr J B MAMABOLO: Ke a leboga Modulasetulo, ke leboge le Tona ya Dipapadi, Bokgabo le Setšo. Potšišo e no ba fela gore naa ...

English:

... our sporting codes that are used to compete internationally, how are we going to make sure that next time we give them proper allocation of money because sometimes you find Bafana Bafana being given too much money, Cricket SA given little money, Boxing SA and Sascoc and so forth. Minister, going forward, how are you going to make sure that you are able to balance the allocations? Thank you very much.

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The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Hon member, as much as we have, we are actually giving to different ... We have not so far had anything to do with funding of Bafana Bafana, but it has been with the recent win of Banyana Banyana. How it goes is that we give allocation - the budget of the department - almost 80% thereof is transferred to the national federations on specific instances, like the international tournaments like the olympics, the paralympic and so on to the confederation, which is Sascoc. But as a general working of the department, it gets transferred to provinces because this is where activities happen. This is where sporting activities need support, and we will continue on that reason thereof. It will depend on the kind of budget we have because as I said, almost 80% if that goes to the transfers. Thank you very much, hon member.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Thank you, hon Minister, the third supplementary question will be asked by the hon Mhlongo.

Mr T W MHLONGO: Thank you Chairperson. [Interjections.]
Chairperson ...

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Could IT mute the hon Judith.

Mr T W MHLONGO: Thank you very much, Chairperson. Since motorsport is not a priority in your department Minister, especially emakazi [township], there is gentleman named Pule Motlounge, he started motorsport in Soweto and moved it to Orange Farm. He is independent, he is doing it for himself. He has paid for everything even the infrastructure while government has not been supportive. He has hosted a motorsport showpiece in Orange Farm.

Minister, what are you going to do because emakazi [township] motorsport is a concern? What measures are you going to take to support different communities in motorsport? Do you practically know disadvantaged communities that run their own sporting code without any financial support from the department? What are you going to do to target and promote different sporting codes that are not getting support from your department, especially in the rural areas? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, hon member Mhlongo and thank you Chair. Hon member, you know that the 18 sporting codes which we are doing oversight as Parliament - so far as the budget structure of government of government are catered for. There are many sporting codes which are not part and parcel of the priority. Motorsport is not a priority of the department and of government currently. As I say, with the budget structure we have, we are not adequately funding the ones like football, rugby - and all of them you see in the townships.

For instance, football is the most loved and supported sporting code in the country. So, we will see because these things have to be linked to policies. If policy doesn't cater for that, maybe it's the canvassing of the change of policy to take on board motorsport. That is something which we will have to engage as we go forward. Thank you very much, Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): The last supplementary question will be asked by the hon Madlingozi.

Mr B S MADLINGOZI: Thank you, Chairperson. Mr Minister, the reality is that rugby and cricket are well funded because

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South African corporate are racists. They are controlled by white people who are not interested in the development of sports that represent South African demographics. Government must just step in and make commitment, fund preparations and participation of all sporting codes. The problem is not disadvantaged communities, it is discrimination. Should we not make all corporates to contribute to a centralised pool of funds wherein an independent, partial and transparent body can allocate the same way the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, collect donations for the promotion of democracy so that we can promote equality. Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, Chair and thank you hon Madlingozi. We really would want to make a point that we need support of the private sector to go beyond your traditional sporting codes which are there. As the name suggest, it is a private sector, and all what we need to do is to engage them. Coming up with a law to force them, I am not sure, but I think that is something which ... Private sector and the private sector people are engaged in commercial interests. They have their own commercial interests and they have supported those they want to support.

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What we are doing as government and the department is to ensure that the kind of product we are producing ourselves – I have made an example on the situation in women football, for instance, it's that they become bankable products which will attract sponsorship. We solely need sponsorship in different sporting codes. Indeed, you are correct, hon member, when you say that some of the sporting codes from the private sector are well funded and well supported as it were. We engage them as I said earlier on that we are working with different national federations. We make our contribution by engaging different companies and so on to come on board to support sport generally, but specifically women in sport. Thank you very much, Chair.

Question 387:

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much, hon Chair and hon members. Thanks also to hon Munyai. In April 2022, the World Health Organisation, WHO, reported 10 cases of severe hepatitis amongst previously healthy children in the UK. It should be noted that hepatitis occurs relatively common in children, although the majority of cases are mild and the cause can be readily identified. The majority of cases are due to identifiable infections known as hepatitis A to hepatitis

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E, as well as other viruses, whilst a small number of cases are due to some of the medicines or toxins.

The cases identified in the UK were unusually severe and no cause, or in medical terms, no etiology could be identified. Between 5 April and 8 July 2022, 35 countries in five of the six WHO regions reported just over a thousand – 1 010 – probable cases, and this also included retrospective ... where they had not been identified as this hepatitis of unknown cause or unknown etiology. The retrospective analysis of specimens and reports was taken as far back as October 2021. Out of this, just over 1 000 were identified. Of the probable cases, 46 out of the over 1 000 – five per cent of the total – children required liver transplants and two per cent, which is 22, were reported to have passed away, as reported to the WHO.

As of July 2022, no cases have been identified in our region, which is the Afro-region, which constitutes 47 member countries in the African Region, because the other countries in the African Region would belong to the Mediterranean Region in the north of the continent.

The WHO also reported a decreasing trend in cases over the last month of August, although this trend should be interpreted carefully as there are reporting delays and limited surveillance in some of our countries. Ongoing investigations suggest that acute hepatitis may be linked to the adenovirus infection. However, the exact cause or etiology ... causative organism remains to be determined.

Adenovirus is a very common infection, which usually causes minor diseases such as upper respiratory infection. However, it can also cause severe respiratory infections such as pneumonia, and it can also cause hepatitis in children who are immunosuppressed.

In light of the above, our National Institute for Communicable Diseases, NICD, has developed and disseminated a quick reference for clinical health care workers, which alerts clinicians to the condition and advises them to consider adenovirus testing in paediatric cases of this condition ... of childhood hepatitis.

Information on any suspected cases will be collected through our standard investigations. So while cases, especially mild

cases, may be missed, the majority of children with acute liver failure would be referred to a tertiary hospital or even a central hospital.

The WHO has indicated that epidemiological, clinical, laboratory and toxicological investigations of the possible cause of this is underway by several authorities ... research networks across different groups within the WHO's partners. This includes detailed epidemiological investigations identified, where there may be common exposures, common risk factors or links between the various cases in these children. The WHO recommends that we should up our surveillance. So, as advised, we are busy with that.

Mr T B MUNYAI: Thank you, hon Chairperson and hon Minister. Given that the global community is making strides in this area by countries that have an antipandemic policy, what is the circumstances that would be suitable for a considered programme towards mitigating risks regarding the issue of acute hepatitis of unknown etiology? Therefore, how do we as a country have an agile surveillance and response capability?

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The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much, hon Munyai and hon Chair. Hon members, as I've indicated, in this particular case, as it is with various infectious and noninfectious diseases and in terms of any emerging diseases, we work under the auspices of the WHO. So, there are standard guidelines in terms of how we communicate and manage this, and how we monitor. I have already indicated that as of now, the African Region has not identified a single case, but working together with all other regions under the auspices of the WHO, we continue to monitor. So, there is a high alert amongst our laboratories. As I said, the NICD has already circulated ...

So, in terms of surveillance and in terms of making sure that, if it does happen, we don't miss it, we do have the necessary systems in place. Even our standard guidelines in terms of hepatitis for adults, but also especially in this case for children ... The standard guidelines, which all our health facilities know they need to undertake ... if they are properly followed, we will be able to identify such cases and we will be able to intervene. So, at this stage it's more ... of upping our alertness and making sure that our surveillance is in place so that when it does emerge we are able to nip it in the bud. However, there is no need for alarm at this stage.

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Thank you. The next supplementary question will be asked by hon Wilson. Hon Wilson, are you forfeiting your ...

Mr D W MACPHERSON: Chair?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Oh, from the House.

[Inaudible.]

Mr D W MACPHERSON: Chair, she is online but she says that the host needs to unmute her as they have disabled unmuting.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Okay, IT can you assist with that? I'm sure that she is ... now. Hon members, we shall pass.

Mr D W MACPHERSON: Chair, she is definitely online. She just needs to be unmuted. She's saying to me that the system is muted.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): But she can try to unmute herself first.

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Ms H O MKHALIPHI: The Whip must take over.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon members, we shall proceed and then we will allow her ... when she is in the system as well ... [Inaudible.]

Mr D W MACPHERSON: Okay, Chair, so will you just ...
[Inaudible.] ... and come back to her at the end?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Yes, we can do that. Thank you. The third supplementary question will be asked by hon Chirwa.

Ms N N CHIRWA: Thank you very much, Chairperson. Minister, symptoms associated with acute hepatitis also include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, pale stools, joint pain and jaundice, amongst others, right?

However, with this knowledge being known to the department as per your communiqué on 5 May by government, there hasn't been mainstreaming of testing as per your response, regarding

surveillance to ensure possible early treatment, as currently the public sector isn't even capable of facilitating the most basic of vaccinations, like Bacille Calmette-Guérin, BCG, which is no longer available for children in clinics. Another clinic that is an example is Standerton and all the local clinics in Dipaleseng in Mpumalanga.

Noting this threat out there, as per your admission as well, because the NICD is now also involved, and noting the commonality of the symptoms I have just given you in children already as is, that are associated with the possibility of acute hepatitis in children, what has the department done that is geared towards strengthening response tools in local clinics that have health care worker shortages that affect distinct surveillance? I'm asking this because today ...

[Inaudible.] ... took her child to Mamelodi West Clinic and noted all these particular symptoms. They gave her Grandpa. So, I want to know which NICD surveillance tools you are referring to because they are currently not a reality in the clinics you are speaking about.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much, hon member. As I indicated in my response, and I can also say from my own

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practical experience, there are a host of infectious diseases which on face value present the same ... fever, body aches, and a number of symptoms which, basically, you know, for instance, whether it's malaria, whether it's COVID, whether it's hepatitis or whether it's flu. So, there are a lot of infectious diseases which basically, in terms of basic science and symptoms, will be the same. However, in each of them you will find ... In medicine we call this differential diagnosis. So, you have the same presentation but if it's flu you will be able to distinguish because of a particular feature which tells you that this is mild ... it is flu. If it's gastroenteritis, you will be able to differentiate. As a clinician, you are going to ask very specific questions and look for particular signs if it's an adult, if it's a child, if it's, you know ... depending on the age.

Ms N N CHIRWA: Chairperson, on a point of order. I'm so sorry. Point of order.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon Minister, let's hear the point of order. What is the point of order? The Minister ... [Inaudible.]

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Ms N N CHIRWA: Thank you very much, Chairperson. I'm sorry but the Minister is digressing. We are referring to this particular issue, and he made mention of the NICD releasing a high alert communiqué. I'm asking how is this implemented because in our local clinics people are currently being given Grandpa when they have these symptoms. So, where does the high alert work? [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Thank you, hon Chirwa. The Minister is responding. Minister, you may proceed. Hon Minister, you may proceed. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Maybe I should just say to the hon member that we don't give Grandpa to babies.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Ms P Tshwete): There's no Grandpa in clinics. [Interjections.] There's no Grandpa.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: We don't. Nowhere do we give Grandpa to babies.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon members, order!

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Mr T B MUNYAI: Order, Chair!

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon Munyai, what's your point of order? Sit down, hon Minister. Hon Minister, just take your seat please. There's a point of order. Take your seat. Hon Munyai?

Mr T B MUNYAI: Hon Chair, when the speaker is on the platform and you have asked a question, you don't disrupt the speaker. May that please be ... [Inaudible.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon members, order! The Minister is responding. I think whether you are satisfied or not ... to the question is another issue. For now, the Minister will be allowed to continue with his response. You may proceed, hon Minister. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Hon Chair, let me just round it up by saying that all I am trying to give is an understanding of the approach. This is how a clinical manifestation presents.

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Now, the NICD is composed of people who are highly specialised in infectious diseases. So, they pick up ... to alert clinicians in a circular that they send, which says please be aware that, over and above the other normal presentations, there is this particular new disease which is somewhere around. Even though as yet it has not been picked up in our region, it has been picked up in five other regions. This is the distinct manner in which this one presents. So, please be on alert, and when you find this make sure that you check this and that, and do further tests, including testing for the adenovirus. So, that is basically what I'm trying to explain to the hon member. That's how the system works.

[Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon member Wilson, are you ready to ask your question or will you ask with a follow-up question? That's the second supplementary question.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: Yes, thank you very much, Chairperson. Minister, in light of the current primary health care crisis in the country where there is chronic underresourcing, staff shortages and the like, how are we ensuring that we are capacitating, particularly primary health

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care facilities which are at the forefront and at the coalface of responding to a crisis like this, in order to make sure that we've got our finger on the pulse?

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much for the follow-up ... hon Gwarube. We have never denied the fact that our health services are under a lot of pressure, including right across the spectrum right up to the primary health care level.

However, we must also say that there are continuous efforts to beef up that capacity in terms of more training, and as already mentioned here, to also support in terms of additional information and to also try by all means to beef up staffing.

So, notwithstanding those shortcomings, there is a lot of sterling work that is being done. What is key here, from the primary health care nurses to the general practitioners, GPs, is the ability ... to be assisted and supported so that when there is a risk, you ... know that in this particular case there might be something more than normally meets the eye ... therefore I need to be able to refer. So, that support and clinical guidance at all times helps our primary health care staff and practitioners to be able to differentiate across ... It happens every day, whether ... Even in the course of the

four and five waves of COVID, our primary health care practitioners were able, on the basis of clinical presentation, to know that this presentation now ... They will miss a few cases but in most cases they will be able to, you know, with experience, clinical assistance and additional information, know that in this case I need to refer to a higher level or I need to refer this patient for further testing.

So, notwithstanding that pressure ... that's the continuous, you know, medical education which is provided and which helps our staff to be able to differentiate different conditions and take appropriate action ... [Interjections.]

Ms M D HLENGWA: Thank you, hon Chairperson. Hon Minister, is the risk more exaggerated in rural or township communities? What is the department's plan to take these measures mentioned particularly to rural communities?

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much, hon Hlengwa. I must hasten to say that almost ... I listened to my colleague, Minister Motshekga, earlier on indicating that some of the best performing schools are in the very rural areas where

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there are a minimum of resources. I can assure you that some of our best performing clinics are in the very rural areas and even in the townships. All that it takes is to just ensure that our frontline staff are supported, they are given the necessary relevant resources and at every given time they are also given additional information whenever there are risks like this. So, we need to make sure that all this information, including ... from our expert bodies like the WHO and the NICD ... I think we must ensure that the alert, with this information that they are bringing to us, reaches the nursing sister at the very rural *KwaNongoma* ... Ulundi ... [Inaudible.] ... village clinic sister. They must get that information so that they will not miss ... So, we accept the advice that we must ensure that we check that all this information reaches them and that they have the necessary tools to be able to make the diagnosis and refer that child to a higher level so that, that child can be treated.

Question 388:

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much Chairperson and I wish to thank the hon Mvana for the question. I must say that looking at her today she really represents the heritage month and I am hoping that all of us

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can represent the heritage month for the entire month and at all times.

Chairperson, let me start by indicating that as the DSD, Department of Social Development, portfolio we are actively implementing the National Strategic Plan on gender based violence and femicide working with NGOs, government departments in all three spheres of government and other relevant stakeholders especially in implementing pillar 4 of the National Strategic Plan which deals with response care, support and healing.

Chairperson I'm adding that it is not only that but as well as the empowerment of women because the empowerment of women must be at the centre of supporting them. In terms of healing which encompasses sheltering but of course we are contributing to other pillars as well.

The reason why we started from that point is because we want an appreciation of the fact that gender based violence is not something that can only be responded to by government but it is something that we all have to contribute towards.

In prevention and rebuilding of social cohesion and integrated campaigns implemented at all institutions of higher learning are quite important for us and that is Pillar 2 which is prevention and rebuilding of social cohesion.

Pillar 3 which is justice, safety and protection, we have developed and presented to Cabinet the Victim Support Bill.

Pillar 4 which response, care, support and healing. A number of services by DSD in line with the mandate of providing psycho social services such as sheltering, gender based violence command centre and the national emergency response team.

We also refer to Pillar 5 which is also very important on economic empowerment. We have in the process of establishing partnership with Setas for the support of victims and shelters and Pillar 6 is with regard to research and information management.

It will be recalled that Cabinet adopted the overall government programme for the entire month of August and as it is also said that it's not only for the August month. We also

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think that we should be able to deal with this issue 365 days of the year.

In the current financial year, the department has taken a number of steps to address scourge embarked on community dialogues, deployed additional social workers in 100 gender based violence and fermicide youth ambassadors and volunteers to intensify the integrated outreach programme.

We have also established partnership with NPOs, non-profit organisations, and again this is the time where I need to thank the NPOs in particular who wake up every day and deal with these issues.

In my view, it is not only the NPOs but the members in this House as well. I'm aware of the work that is done by these members throughout the different political parties because again gender based violence has got no political affiliation. It affects everybody.

We establish partnerships with NPOs to provide a basket of services to victims of GBV, Thuthuzela Care Centres who are providing financial support to NPOs and shelters and I want to

indicate like I always do that we spend R82,2 billion per year in supporting NPOs. I therefore believe that we must see the value of the amount of money which is given to NPOs and those NPOs that we are supporting must be an extension of the services that we provide as a department.

Chairperson, finally, we have also up scaled the social behavioural change programmes because if we are unable to change behaviour, not only that of ours in the House but in our homes, streets and communities, we will never be able to deal with gender based violence.

We have every day heroes, Ke Moja, men as positive role models, Chomee, YOLO, you only live once, and trauma informed interventions amongst others.

In effort to enhance services to assist victims of GBVF ...

[Time expired.]

Ms N Q MVANA: Thank you Chairperson. Let me first thank the Minister for appreciating my traditional attire and yes I will be like this through the heritage month.

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Minister I hear you pointing an amount of money that you are allocating for the social sector society, but what I would like to know is how will the department secure enough funding for those social partners that you have identified and could you also tell us about the private sector? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much Chairperson. I think we need to make a statement as I indicated earlier on that in order for us to be able to deal with the gender based violence, we need to mobilise society overall including the private sector.

I want to indicate that we also receive support from outside the country. The European Union in partnership with the department we were able to get R41 million which is supposed to be used in response to gender equality and women empowerment. This is very important.

Also, with the health and welfare sector, we have the 100 ambassadors whom I spoke to earlier on who are supposed to focus on the hotspots of where gender based violence occurs.

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We also have SANAC Global Fund, South African National AIDS Council, where we have managed to get about R36 million which is supposed to assist us in psycho social support.

We also have the CARA Fund, Criminal Assets Recovery Account, which is money that is ill gotten, it is given to us and we use that for emerging organisations because we might be able to give these NPOs money but the fact is that it's difficult for many of these NPOs and NGOs, non-governmental organisations, particularly the ones in rural areas to qualify for this money because we want to ensure that people are accountable.

We do not only register them but ensure that there is training for them so that the previously disadvantaged NPOs that never had an opportunity of running these NPOs are supported by the department. I thank you.

Ms B S MASANGO: Thank you Chairperson. Hon Minister, your department is one of the leading departments in fighting GBVF. The collaborative work done by your department and among others the Department of Police is to fight GBVF and not fuel it. Do you think the recent unfortunate comments attributed to

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your colleague in Cabinet the hon Mr Cele served to ruin your efforts, if so why? Thank you Minister.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much Chairperson and thank you hon Masango for that question.

Firstly, I think the Minister himself has been able to respond to this question and I can tell you that the work that we do not only with the Minister of Police but along with the women and men in blue is a contribution towards ending gender based violence.

I want to say that we need to be able to be positive towards them because if we consistently become negative and meet pick on what we want to use for political purpose might not serve the interests of South Africans.

As a matter of fact, I know that the Minister is almost always the first one to arrive at places where there has been gender based violence and disasters. He also the first one to communicate to me when he arrives to the places to say here is the situation in this place.

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Myself and the Minister of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities and the entire government know that and must respond. So I think the Minister himself having been asked the question has adequately responded and I also want to make it a point to say the Minister of Police, Minister Bheki Cele is very supportive of the work that we do. We are also very supportive of the work that he does but he does not work as an individual. He works with the police, both men and women in blue whom we must also salute because in the middle of those men and women in blue, we do accept that there are those that do not do the right thing but the majority of them wake up in the morning to protect the citizens of South Africa.

Ms P MARAIS: Thank you Chairperson. Hon Minister, looking at the number of women who leave abusive relationships often return due to lack of financial standing.

It is often announced by the fact that the abuser often has all of the economic and financial standing and complete control of the family finances. Which programme, if any has the Minister put in place to incorporate women who have stayed in shelters for a prolonged period to sustain themselves financially in order to avoid going back to the same abusive situation? Thank you Chair.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you Chairperson and thank you hon member for that question.

Firstly, as South Africa overall, the fact that we have so many shelters should be a shame on us because that money that we keep spending on shelters is part of the money that we should be spending on empowering these women.

However, the reality of the situation is exactly what the hon member is indicating that many of these women run away from abusive environments and therefore as government and people, we are forced to have these shelters very close to where the women live but also create a conducive environment for the women in those shelters.

As the Department of Social Development, we encourage training within those shelters, we encourage support for the families and in some instances have extended the time that these victims have to stay in the shelters.

So, in short, my point of view is that we need to work towards reducing shelters and work towards ensuring that women that

women are safe in their homes. Safety in their homes starts with the programmes that we have as a department that is related to families.

What do we do as the Department of Social Development to support families so that women are protected in their families? One of the programmes that I thought is very important for the department is to ensure that we have house to house, street to street and community to community support hence the need for us to ensure that we have as many social workers as we possibly can.

I know that the issue of social workers is a thorny issue at the moment in terms of how many can be absorbed by government and how many can be absorbed by the private sector.

But I fully agree with you, we need upscale the programmes that we have so that we can cover as many women and children as possible.

Finally, we need to stop this violence against women and children then we will not have to build all these shelters. We will build institutions of training for women. I thank you.

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Mr B N HERRON: Thank you House Chair. Thank you Minister. The Minister has largely covered my supplementary question with her detailed response with regard to the national strategic plan.

The only outstanding question is, in terms of Pillar 4 and the department's responsibilities in the strategic plan, are there any outputs that have not yet been implemented by the Minister's department? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you Chairperson and hon member for that question.

I think it is unfortunate that it has to be in the long term and we can only talk about outputs and impact when we see the difference and the impact in our communities.

I go back to the fact that outputs that we set out for ourselves and the impact thereof will not necessarily depend on pillar 4 alone. It also depends on what government overall does to create a conducive environment for women and children.

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And I keep going back to say what government does, whether it's health, education, transport, it must all contribute towards ensuring that we create a conducive environment for women and children.

Question 436:

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Chairperson, I wish to thank the hon member for the question. However, before I even respond to the question, one of the things that I think would be important for us as South Africans in general is to appreciate the manner in which we operate and that is one how Parliament itself operates and how government operate, because if we do then we reduce a whole lot of unnecessary tensions that exist between ourselves.

Therefore, this question for instance I will be answering and I thank the hon member for asking the question. All the same, but to indicate to the member that the unfortunate part we never got the report ourselves which by the way I must say to the member that I raised the issue with our department to say some reports might come to us directly, because the person who has drafted the report makes it available to us. We also need as a department to be proactive because some reports you will

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find them along the way when there is either a media query or something.

This particular one did not come to our office until the time that we received the parliamentary question on 31 August; my office therefore made enquiries and obtained the copy of the report which was received from Parliament on 2 September. I so wished that the authors would have at least written to us and given the report so that we can then have an opportunity of answering almost each and every of the issues that they raised at that time. For this report I now learned only after receiving the report that it was sometime in May that the report was done. So, I appreciate the contents and the findings emanating from the investigation as it highlights pertinent issues which impact on the implementation of the Social Service Professions Act of 1978 as amended; the Children's Act and sector funding policy.

This report will have to be processed by the department and we will have to respond to it. I have a preliminary response to almost all the areas which they raised, but I would rather we give them a fully fledged report that gives all the answers in accordance to the questions that they are raising here.

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Finally, Chairperson, I do want to indicate that while the report represents what the researchers found out there, in as far as I am concerned, I want to make the statement that firstly, the majority of our social workers and the people who are out there, including the department they do the best that they can and if there are witnesses along that line let us be informed so that we can be able to respond adequately. Thank you, Chairperson.

Ms A L A ABRAHAMS: Hon Chairperson and hon Minister, so perhaps you and your office need to check your emails because I have on good authority that solidarity wrote to you on 28 March and 14 April and because you failed to complain on two complains about the social workers ignoring the plight of social workers that this research undertaken. It was undertaken with a group of social workers that are predominately at NGOs and 42% work in child care. Yet these social workers face daily challenges and obstacles by the Department of Social Development with no co-operation and support, poor service delivery, terrible communication cannot get hold of the Department of Social Services, poor handling of cases, problems regarding placement of children,

incompetence, acting in their own interests and having political agendas.

These are but some of the findings. Now Minister you literally but answered in another question that NGOs are important in the fight against you know everything in the social welfare. That the Department of Social Development is heavily reliant on them to fulfil its mandate. Yet this report shows the breakdown in the partnership in the Department of Social Development and NGOs.

To show your commitment hon Minister to the hardworking social workers and in the best interest of children, will you commit to tabling these findings of the report at your next Minmec to ensure that you do not only hold your department and assistant director-general, ADG, accountable, but the provincial MECs and the head of the departments, HODs as well?

Minister I believe the social development only has one Minmec this year in March, so I do hope the next one will be soon because this is urgent Minister and as I said before, this pertains the child care and we have all seen the latest crime

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statistics which have shown significant increases in the crimes against children. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Abrahams, thank you very much and it is always a pleasure to listen to you and having you in the committee. There is one thing I can assure hon members; these are the members that hold us accountable in the committee without any fear or favour. You can smile, but it is a fact and the truth. It is the truth and one of the things I have said all the time whenever and by the way I never miss the committee meetings and the time for answering questions, because I have absolute confidence in the majority of the members, will always raise issues related to the pain of our people. So, your request right now to say that you would want us to present this report, for me it is immaterial the scope with which they had and who did they ask. That for me is irrelevant. What is important is that there is a section of people who believe in what they wrote in the report and there is a section of people who were interviewed and that was their response. What is relevant for me is what am I going to do about and I can assure you.

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Firstly, we will respond to questions that are here. Secondly, we will take it to wherever where it is necessary for it to be taken. For when all is said and done it is not about me, it is not about anybody, it is about the people that are a sample who actually raised the concerns. That is what I will do. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): The second supplementary question will be asked by the hon M k Bilankulu. The hon Bilankulu. For now, we shall pass while the party Whip checks on her.

The third supplementary question will be asked by the hon L H Arries.

Ms P MARAIS: Hon House Chairperson, I will take the question on behalf of hon Arries.

Hon Minister, noting the shockingly high number of orphans in our country, what measures have been put in place to absorb the equally high number of unemployed social workers so as to deal with the shortcomings experienced by children in accessing foster care service such as the foster care grant?

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The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Chairperson, excuse me. I cannot hear the hon member there is an echo in the House.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Alright. Hon Member, if you kindly just sit down. You are probably tall for the mic.

Ms P MARAIS: It is the ANC members making the noise, Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Excuse me?

Ms P MARAIS: It is the ANC members making the noise, behind the Minister.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon member, can you just come closer to the mic, that would assist. Thank you.

Ms P MARAIS: Thank you, hon House Chairperson.

[Interjections.]

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No, we are very disciplined.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon members, Order! Can you allow the hon member to ask the question. Hon Minister you will listen if you do not hear you will respond either way.

Ms P MARAIS: Thank you, hon House Chairperson and hon Minister, I really appreciate the hon Minister's effort that she is doing. I am in the committee and working with her. It is always a pleasure working with her.

Hon Minister, noting the shockingly high number of orphans in our country, what measures have been put in place to absolve the equally high number of unemployed social workers so as to deal with the shortcomings experienced by children in accessing foster care service such as the foster care grant? Thank you, House Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon member for that question. Again allow me to generalise from a point of view of dealing with why do we have so many orphans? Why is it that people and children who are supposed to be in

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homes and in an environment that is conducive for them is not the case?

Hon House Chairperson, I do want to indicate that the current economic conditions, social ills and social challenges that we have we end up in the situation that we find ourselves in. By the way it reminds me also, hon member that the Minister of Health is here. One of the issues that sometimes we begin to lose is the HIV and Aids and its impact and the loss of parents thereof. I think we need to bring that because it will help us again to make sure that whatever programmes we have in place are responsive to that challenge. That is the first approach for me as the Minister of Social Development: What are the preventative measures that we can have in place to have less orphans. But sometimes parents die off accidents and a whole range of things and therefore as a Department of Social Development the placement of these orphans firstly within the communities is of utmost important because when you place them within the communities and I like what the North West is doing and brought for you find that they have some of the orphans are placed in homes within the community.

So, when the children have to go to school or go and play they are not placed in isolation or in places it is said to have been for orphans. We want to encourage that as the department, but also remember that we have even increased the amount of money to caregivers so that they can at least have adequate financial support which therefore add to the basket where children have to be fed.

Lastly, we would like to encourage those who can to actually adopt some of these children. I know that sometimes even the adoption processes are very difficult. We need to try and make them as easy as possible.

Finally, we would like to see more and more children in proper homes. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Thank you, hon Minister.

Hon Bilankulu are you ready to ask your supplementary question or is there somebody standing in ohon her behalf?

Ms A S HLONGO: Hon House Chairperson, I will take it for the hon Bilankulu.

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Hon Minister, what interventions are being made by the department in this financial year, to ensure that social workers and NGOs are well resourced to perform their duties noting the impact of COVID-19 on their capacity to respond to the issues in communities? Thanks.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much hon member for that question. Let me start by saying that the question of social workers and the long endless disputes and discussions let me make this very clear. A few weeks ago it was said the department of Social Development is being discriminatory because it is only looking at the social workers who have been trained by the Department of Social Development. That is not true. We cannot discriminate against any social worker trained by the department or trained outside the department. We have to do everything we can to absorb the social workers.

The next step that we also took was to engage with the Department of Finance who finally requested us to submit a proposal that indicates exactly because we have been saying so many times we need about 55 000 or more social workers in South Africa because again I go back to the issue that I feel

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if we are to make an impact on the social ills that are facing South Africa we need more social workers in schools and communities. I mean we go to difficult schools where there is violence, bullying and all that and you find that there is only one social worker. How does one social worker deal with that difficult situation.

Therefore, the absorption must not be understood to be something that has to be done by the Department of Social Development alone. The Police, health, education need social workers. So, the strategy we are developing now is to say who else to we go out to and request that they absorb the social workers.

The Free State did a very good job because, during the time of COVID-19 and beyond, they had social workers whom they absorbed and ultimately hired them fulltime. We hoping that most of the provinces would do exactly the same thing, but also we call on the private sector to come on board on this because social work is not only about people who are in poor places. We must never make that mistake. We ourselves sometimes need the social workers because the psychosocial support is need by everybody in society. I thank you.

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Mrs L L VAN DER MERWE: Hon House Chairperson and hon Minister, thank you very much for raising the plight of social workers. Their plight was recently again brought to the fore when unemployed social workers marched to the Union Buildings. I thank you for outlining your plan to absorb more social workers however, this plan that you just spoke about now is the same plan that your department presented to our portfolio committee on Wednesday 21 October 2020, when they reported that and I quote:

Despite Cabinet resolution in 2018, government departments have not been employing so many social worker graduates and the department has engaged Treasury for additional funds.

Would you therefore agree that the plan that you are alluding to now is the same plan that you tabled to us in 2020 and why has nothing being done to see to it that government departments the one that you have just outlined like home affairs, Police, justice or health: Why have they not complied with the government's directive to employ social workers?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Are you done?

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Mrs L L VAN DER MERWE: Yes.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon House Chairperson, I wish to thank the hon Van der Merwe for the question. Yes, we as the department are not really happy with the fact that the absorption of the social workers throughout the departments that have to absorb them has not been done.

However, I do want to indicate to the hon member and hon members in this House that without the budget it will be very difficult for any of the departments to absorb them, but I think what has also happened is that the conditions and the times and everyone appreciating the fact that the social ills that we are facing is something that all of us need to make an input into it. The fact that the Department OF Finance has asked us to present a strategy to them with a purpose to then ensuring that we look at the budget is the difference. For you can have a plan and if it is a good plan and is not implemented we need them to go out and see why is it not being implemented. Now we know partly why is not implemented and the fact that we have been asked to present the strategy right up to Treasury itself. Members of the executive know. The President himself has spoken about this matter and said to us

all relevant departments this must be done also on the basis that if it is done, it will reduce the numbers of unemployed people.

Therefore, the strategy towards ensuring that we increase the number of people to be employed, also include the social workers.

To the social workers out there who are doing the best that they can, we thank you for it and we say to you we will keep doing the best that we can to make sure that everybody who is a social worker is covered without any form of discrimination. I thank you.

Question 422:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: thank you very much, hon Chair, and thanks for the question. Unfortunately, the question cannot be fully responded to now because, the restrictions were dropped in May 2022, and we don't do the returns anytime of the year. So, we would be only be able to compare 2022 with 2023. So, what I can be bale to do for the member, is to give her statistics for 2021 because, we will only have the returns for 2022 in 2023.

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In terms of the returns in 2020-21, because we only do them in January after 10 days count. In 2021, we had almost 46 000 less learners, especially in the primary schools, and our understanding was that parents delay sending kids to school in 2021 because the pandemic was still very aggressive. But we then also experienced declines in Grade 9 which are sometimes a general problem because, we do lose a number of learners when they move from basic to further education and training.

So, all in all, if you compare what we had in 2020 and 2021, it is clear that the pandemic didn't have a major impact in learner drop out because, those learners that delayed coming back to school in 2021, were sent in 2022. This means that, some of them are a year later, and they were sent back to school in 2022. Therefore, we don't have statistics for 2022-23 at this stage, Chair. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma) The next follow-up question will be posed by Mr A M Van Zyl. Originally, it was supposed to be Ms Siwela, and now it is written, hon Van Zyl.

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Ms A M VAN ZYL: Thank you. Minister, the education system of South Africa has been failing learners long before the pandemic hit. Although dropout rates and poor performance can be linked to the after effects of Covid in South Africa, when you were asked today to speak to the school enrolments, of greater concern, is the number of children who are dropping out of school. We know that, approximately 50% of children who start Grade 1, finish Grade 12 and much of this is attributed to the high dropout rates.

We need urgent action from this government to put education of this country and its children as the highest priority.

Education provides opportunity in a country where the majority of young people have no prospect, it is a worthy investment.

Education is a best possible vehicle to empower South Africans and to develop our country. What is the government's plan to address the declining school enrolments and dropouts?

Minister, let the children learn. Thank you.

Mrs N R MASHABELA: Chair, I am standing on a point of order.

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Just one second, hon Mashabela, you will come back. Let me allow the Minister to respond.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon Chair, let me thank the member for the self-righteousness she has displayed, but at the same time agree with the principles that we have all agreed on that, even as the governing party, it was not a mistake to say that education is a priority. We are where we are with major problems because, there is a majority of people in this country who were denied education. So, I don't want to get there.

But, we fully agree with what she's repeating in a tone of self-righteousness. Chair, what I'm saying is that, the question wanted to check if there were impacts of dropout rates in term of when the restrictions were dropped? I then said that, the statistics for 2022 will only come in 2023, and that's the answer I have. But, thanks for the self-righteousness which I agree with on principle.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon Mashabela, please accept my apology. It is now your turn.

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Mrs N R MASHABELA: Apology accepted, Chair. Through you, House Chair, Minister, over the past 10 years, there has been a consistently high level of school dropouts, such that, while we consistently register more than a million learners for Grade 1 each year, almost half of these numbers write their Grade 12 exams. Well, Covid must have impacted on these numbers, but we have general problem of the learners dropping out of school.

Minister, what are the underlying causes of this problem, and what have you done to address this? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair...

Setswana:

... ka Setswana ra re, ngwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa.

English:

The underlying causes that the member raises are valid, because there are statistics that I give out every year to the public. But, some of the underlying causes which I think that the members are aware of would be parental and societal pressures. The trends differ in different communities. It is

levels of class, poverty and the curriculum challenges that we are addressing because, that one is facing us now. Also, it would be issues of teenage pregnancy that are not in our control, they are societal issues. Even the question of youth criminality, which again is a societal issue.

So, instead of asking the Minister what is she doing about these problems, we rather ask ourselves this question: What are we doing as a nation to protect our children because, some of the factors that affects them in their schooling, especially when they become teenagers and are becoming bigger, from Grade 9 to 10, are secondary issues? That's why we should hold hands together because, as I say, teenage pregnancy and youth criminality are not educational issues. But I agree that, curriculum challenges are educational issue. So, all in all...

Setswana:

... Mme Mashabela, ngwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa. A re tlhakanele go mo tshwaraganela.

English:

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I shouldn't be education alone, as if it is only education that has a responsibility for the development and the growth of our children. Thank you, Chair.

Mr E K SIWELA: Thank you, House Chairperson. Minister, the family plays an important role in supporting and raising children, while other children can be in a nonsupporting family environment. How does the department work with the parent or guardians of learners who are identified to have not enrolled or those reported to have dropped out? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, basic education is compulsory up to Grade 10. The Further Education and Training, FET, is not compulsory by law. But what schools do, out of violation of law, or out of their own sense of responsibility, they visit homes to trace why learners are not at school. But that is a stage when it is really a community issue. So, from Grade 1 to Grade 9, schools have a responsibility to follow up on their learners, work with social development and all the different agencies, to make sure that indeed kids are enrolled at school.

But, it is sometimes without saying that, when it is the issue of teenage pregnancy, and their families are holding them

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back, all we can do is to have a policy which allows them to return. If it is youth criminality, what we do is that, we take them from those schools to prison. But basically ...

[Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Please hold, hon Minister, IT, please remove that member. Just remove her. Thank you. Hon Minister, you may proceed.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: So, in short, Chair, I'm saying, depending on what the circumstances are, schools and communities do intervene. Even governing bodies sometimes assist us in terms of tracing learners who seems not to be coming to school. So most of the times when we visit schools, we are being told about which children have dropped out, what have they done, and what have been their difficulties in doing so?

Therefore, we don't just fold our arms and leave everything to be the responsibility of their parents, we do whatever is possible to bring them back to school, especially, in the basic education which is compulsory up to Grade 10, and that's

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where we have a legal obligation to do something about it.

Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): The last follow-up question will be asked by hon Ngcobo.

Ms Z MAJOZI: Thank you, Chairperson, I will take that follow-up question for hon Ngcobo. Hon Minister, are there any mechanisms or measures that have been put in place by your department to address and engage learners post-Covid, to ensure that their extended absenteeism from school due to the pandemic has not affected their ability to learn in the classroom, and if that is not the case, what is the position of the department? If you have done that, what have these measures been, and how effective are they?

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, Chair. We have gone public about what our strategy is, post-Covid, and it has different pillars. But the basic principle is to acknowledge that, indeed in 2020, especially in poorer communities, there is an average of 70% time loss. In 2021, we have an average of 50% loss. That has forced us to check, what is our recovery

programme? So, we've got a recovery programme which we are looking at.

We have a build back programme that we are working on, and there is a re-boot programme which is a consolidation. So, the first starting point is to note that indeed, Covid has impacted negatively on learning in different areas, in different levels and in different, and therefore, we have developed strategies, as I say, with five pillars. So, it is assessment strategies, teaching strategies, rolling out the resources, to make sure that we can plough back what was lost in 2020-21.

So, there are strategies in place and we are working on them. We can't pretend that we did not have serious learning losses during the period of Covid. Therefore, that's what guides our work now. Thank you very much, Chair.

Question 389:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: Thank you very much, Chairperson. I will be responding the question on behalf of Minister Mchunu. The root cause of the Nelson Mandela water crisis has several challenges and combinations that we have identified. The inconsistent rainfall within the Algoa Water

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Supply System into the major dams is one of the things which actually makes water to be scarce in that particular area. Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Metro is also unable to reduce the demand within the restricted levels required allocated for domestic use. The unforeseen delay and slow ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon Minister, one second, please. My apologies for that! You are disappearing slightly. Just face the cameras so that we can see the whole face.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: Thank you, I'll do that.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon Minister, we want to see your whole face, and not half of it. Just sort out that part.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is unable to reduce the demand for domestic use. Therefore, this is one of the things we see as a challenge. There has been delays in the implementation of the drought intervention projects which would see the restricted volumes put in place because of the high demand. The Metro was

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unable to deal with that. We also need to indicate that there are challenges of governance in the municipality in the water functioning services. Therefore, these are some of the issues which we have seen.

Let me indicate that the department has implemented an intervention to avoid day zero. The Minister has made sure that there are communication strategies that have been put forward for the communities to be able to deal with the issues of political and technical - issues that have been dealt with by the Minister.

We have also implemented section 63 of the Water Act of 1997 so that the council can be able to deal with these issues including the support to the metro. As we are dealing with this we are also involving the Amatola Water Board to can be able to assist in this.

Chairperson, let me also indicate that the Nooitgedacht Dam has since March been able to continue towards the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality by bringing in 70 megalitres of water into the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and we believe that going forward there will be additional which water which will

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be able to come in. we are also making sure that we are providing ground water to augment what the we are doing at Nooitgedacht Dam. Also, we are making sure that the municipality deals with the challenges of the leaks. There is a number of infrastructures that is being repaired. I can indicate that over 9 000 leakages have been dealt with. I can also indicate that last week 88 of the households have received assistance with respect to the leakages and the infrastructure so that we can be able to sustain and maintain water in that particular area.

Chairperson, let me indicate that we are working very closely with the municipality in terms of making sure that the engineers are there. We are working also working very close with the National Treasury to make sure that the underspending which has been there we augment it. We are working with the Treasury so that they can be able to spend properly and in the end we believe that we can be able to reduce the underspending that is there.

Finally, I need to indicate that with regard to the challenges that have been there, working with other organisations, we have been able to bring in tankers for emergency delivery of

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water in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. We believe that from time to time we will be able to look in to what the issues are and where we can make interventions. I thank you, Chairperson.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION (Ms D M Magadzi): Hon members, the time of questions has expired. However, we will take the first supplementary question and we will request members to do the other questions in writing for the Minister to respond.

Ms S GWARUBE: Chairperson, this has been a topic of discussion many times in the House that when a question has been put that we follow through with the question. There are four follow-ups questions, but you are indicating that there will only be one follow-up question.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms R M M Lesoma): Hon members, we said we are going to finish the question. The Deputy Minister has responded and now I am calling for the first supplementary question. I am still in line. Yes, we will complete the whole question. I was just notifying the House that the time for questions has expired.

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Ms N N SIHLWAYI: Thank you, House Chair for the follow-up question on the question that has been raised and well answered by the Deputy Minister. Climate change is a reality in our society and it is a global phenomenon that has been demonstrated by the long droughts and exacerbated water scarcity which has a negative impact on the availability of fresh water in our towns. Having made the interventions that the Deputy Minister has raised in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, what are the sustainable lessons that the department has drawn from such experience to ensure that water security to a water mix is established? Thank you, House Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: Thank you very much, Chair. Let me indicate that as the Department of Water and Sanitation climate change is here with us. We need to indicate that in the Nelson Mandel Bay Municipality it is to work together particularly with the communities. We are looking into other new issues to be able to infuse like desalination and making sure that we have boreholes. But of importance is to work with the communities in dealing with the challenges of loss of water. There has been almost 45% of loss

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of water in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality where water has been lost. Now we are fixing the mix. We definitely believe that those water will be augmented. But education, education and education is a very important thing. We must make our communities understand that there is demand and supply. Therefore, the more they demand the more we should be able to say that people should not be wasteful. As we educate our people about preservation and conservation of water we must also make sure that we work and make our water resources. We clean our rivers, we go around our springs, our wells and everywhere we make sure that we are able to deal with these things so that we can be able to contribute towards setting the challenges that we are seeing of climate change. In some areas there is flooding and in some other areas there is drought and we need to work together to be able to deal with these challenges. Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr N G MYBURGH: Thank you, Chair. Minister, the corrupt and incompetent government of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality receive the princely sum of R58 million from the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Cogta, in February this year to upgrade pump stations in order to increase the transfer of water from 90 to 120 megalitres per

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day. Unsurprisingly and predictably, this project is still incomplete and water crisis is far from over. What will your department do to assist in averting day zero? What meaningful, practical and sustainable steps will you do to help this clearly incompetent and inept municipality specifically which you, for instance, consider implementing not only Nooitgedacht Dam Phase 4, but which you look at the more affordable desalination of sea water or you offer for the most cost-effective solutions, namely, waste water reclamation? Please, tell us Minister. Which of these options would you employ to provide the much-needed help to the patently inept management in that municipality? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: Thank you very much, hon member. I have already indicated that we are looking at every aspect where we can be able to say we deal with the challenges of water including dealing with the challenges of grey water that we are able to reduce. Also, I have indicated that there is desalination and other ideas that we can implement and be able to put into use. Hon member, we are definitely dealing with ... I think hon member, the Minister of Water and Sanitation plus the Minister of the National Treasury are looking into several things. Amongst other things

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that we are looking in is to make sure that we implement and monitor everything.

Let me indicate, hon member, that I assure that at this stage you should be aware of the fact that we have already implemented section 63 of the National Water Act of 1997 so that we can be able to make intervention where it is necessary. Critically, we need to ensure that the public fund is not used in a manner that is not befitting. That is why we are working with the National Treasury, and that is why we are working with the Minister of Cogta to make sure that in the end we can be able to bring proper governance in all the municipalities that are having challenges. I thank you, Chairperson.

Mr B N HERRON: Thank you, House Chair. Thank you, Deputy Minister. I think the Deputy Minister has broadly addressed the climate change events like flooding and droughts that our country is experiencing in the Eastern Cape and Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, as we know it is the recent one that has prominence. The Deputy Minister could address one of the last remaining dam opportunities that has been talked about and considered for the last 60 years but not yet implemented

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despite announced twice as an important water project, Umzimvubu Dam project in the Eastern Cape? Where is that project, Deputy Minister, and when will we start to see some real progress being made with regard to that dam project? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: Thank you, Chairperson. This is a work in progress. I need to indicate that there is work that has already started and probably we should be able to come and report to Parliament on how far we have progressed. One of the things that has started is to make sure that there are access roads that go into where the dam will be situated. I need to also indicate to the hon member that the Minister, together with the Premier of the Eastern Cape, is hard at work to make sure that in the end we are able to see progress. I can indicate that there is work which is going on. We have started with the access roads which can be able to contribute towards the Umzimvubu Dam. We are paving to be able to make construction of that dam. We need to indicate that this is one of the things that is highly challenging particularly for the people of the Eastern Cape and the government of the Eastern Cape and also the government of the

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Republic of South Africa. There is work that is going on.

Thank you very much.

Mr M G E HEDRICKS: Thank you very much, hon House Chair. Thank you, Deputy Minister, for standing in for the Minister, and thanks to the Minister for the special efforts in what he is doing to prevent day zero. However, we have visited there three times - once as the portfolio committee. The Deputy Minister is quite correct about the poor governance. It is not only from the officials of the metro, but it is also from the councillors of all political parties which are there. There is no proper oversight. They don't hold anyone one accountable. The portfolio committee visited and they didn't have a decency to meet us although we were there two days. This includes the mayor.

There is enough water. The river supply enough water to the dams and it has the capacity to reach water treatment plants. The problem is that 60% of the water is stolen by the farmers for oranges. [Time expired.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: Thank you, Chairperson. We are working very close with the law

enforcement agencies. One of the things that is throughout the country is that when people are using more than they are expected. There are water use licenses which are given to people. If you are harvesting or using more water than expected, we are working with the law enforcement agencies and definitely the user-pay principle will be there. But one of the things we make sure is that we institute and work with the law enforcement agencies so that people do not abuse. Indeed, as the hon has indicated, water is there, but there is abuse and theft of water in many areas. Therefore, let me indicate and assure members that throughout the country where we find that there is abuse of the resource we make sure that we work with the enforcement agencies so that they are able to curb that.

One of the things that I can indicate is that municipalities also have by-laws. We insist that municipalities should use their by-laws to be able to work together with us so that we could be able to know where we are finding challenges with respect to the utilisation of water. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT - CHILDREN'S AMENDMENT BILL**

There was no debate.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE MAJORITY PARTY: Thank you very much
Chairperson, I move that the Report be adopted. Thank you.

Question put: The motion is that the Report be adopted.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): The motion is that
the Report be adopted. Are there any objections?

Motion agreed to (Democratic Alliance, Freedom Front Plus,
Inkatha Freedom Party, Economic Freedom Fighters and African
Christian Democratic Party dissenting).

Report accordingly adopted.

CHILDREN'S AMENDMENT BILL

(Second Reading debate)

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much
Chairperson, ...

IsiZulu:

... ngibonge kakhulu ithuba lokwethula kule Ndlu le ehloniphekileyo. Angazi ukuthi ngesizulu kuyaye kuthiweni uma kukhulunywa nge-second reading. Ngabe kuthiwa ukufundwa kwesibili kwenkulumo-mpikiswano ...

English:

... On the Children Amendment Bill.

IsiZulu:

Sihlalo kuyafuneka ukuthi izilimi zethu sithi ukuzinyusa ngoba kuyafuneka ukuthi uma silapha phambi kwale Ndlu sikwazi ukufunda lo Mthethosivivinywa njengoba ubhaliwe ngesizulu, singahumushi ngokushesha nje la.

English:

By the way, may I say ...

IsiZulu:

... uma besikhuluma isiSwahili, abanalo lolu lwimi. Sekukhona iSayensi, nobuChwepheshe, konke. Nathi kufuneka siye lapho, Sihlalo.

English:

It was exactly two years ago on 31 August 2020, when I introduced the comprehensive the Children's Amendment Bill [B 18B - 2020] pursuant of amending the Children's Act of 2005. The strategic intents of the amendments are:

Firstly, strengthen the protective measures that are designed to protect the interest of the vulnerable children through the co-ordinated provision of care and protective services;

Secondly, address the gaps and the challenges in the child care and protection systems by identifying the strategies with which these challenges can be addressed; and

Thirdly, respond to 2017 North High Court order in which the Minister of Social Development was directed to prepare and introduce before Parliament "a comprehensive and legal solution regarding the foster care system" - and we went through a tough time on this one and members of the committee will tell you that.

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An economic rendition of these strategic objectives is that the rich formulation of the Amendment Bill flows from the children themselves, parents, caregivers, public representatives who are members of the hon House, practitioners and experts as well as the researchers. While their combined immediate effect has been to nudge resources, inefficiencies at the level of government as well as where partnerships are concerned. These inputs are strongly informed by the spirit that seeks to manifest the safety of each child and provide a sense of belonging and prompt a common prosperity for all South Africans, particularly children as our society is restructuring our economy towards recovery and sustain growth following the series of economic health and climate shocks that we are grappling with. Through this understanding for today's children the Amendment Bill is the embodiment of their imminent economic productivity.

Hon Chair of the House and members, please be reminded that the Bill that I introduced in 2020 contained 147 clauses. The Bill that is before you, today comprise only of 14 clauses. The hon House, will be requested to consider debate and deliberate many clauses at a later date.

Now the Bill focuses exclusively on foster care related clause and direct itself towards addressing the North Gauteng High Court in so far as the provisions and administration of foster care are concerned. The Bill that is before you fast-tracks the foster care related clauses in order to meet the November 2022 deadline that was set by the North Gauteng High Court. To this end the relevant amendments to the Children's Act 38 of 2005 and the Social Assistance Act of 2005 and the Social Assistance Act of 2004 have either been finalised or promulgated. Relevant to today's debate is that following the 2019 state of the nation address, in his address, President Cyril Ramaphosa earlier on 1 April of this year, I migrated the early childhood development function to the Minister of Basic Education.

Another of the matters of relevance is that majority of orphans are cared for by relatives, who are often willing to adopt them or become their guardians than being restricted to seek guardianship from the high court, the Bill makes provision for guardianship matters to be heard and adjudicated by the children's court as well. This Amendment will ensure accessibility and promote equitable access to justice. My gratitude goes to the Portfolio Committee on Social

Development and the committee support staff for their ongoing engagement and guidance on the matters that are relevant to the Bill. I'm grateful for their tireless work and personal sacrifices and expertise that they invested towards the public hearings and internal meetings that brought the Bill thus far. I commend you for being the true representatives of the people. I support this Bill as it is, together with the Social Assistance Amendment Acts serve to address the challenges facing the foster care. The department will be very happy when this happens because through a very lot of pain, but it was a necessary pain. I thank you, Chair and hon members.

IsiZulu:

USIHLALO WENDLU (Mnu M L D Ntombela): Lokhu ukufunda kwesibili kwenkulumo-mpikiswano.

Ms N Q MVANA: Thank you very much Chairperson, ...

IsiXhosa:

... nam ndingena kule ngxoxo-mpikiswano

English:

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The Children's Act of 2005 is a legislative framework for child protection serious in the country. It was thus crucial for the committee to exercise the diligence as it processed the Amendment Bill. It conducted an extensive legislative process.

Let me first give you Adult Basic Education and Training, Abet for mahala (free) in terms of what this Bill that we are talking about is. It is the temporary placement of a child who is in need of care and protection with foster parents or guardians of children, in terms of the court order issued by the presiding officers of the Children's Act of 2005, thus ensures that these children are taken care of. The state provides a Foster Child Grant. It is essentially a child welfare grant - thank you very much. However, due to the devastating effects of HIV and Aids in early 20s, it was extended to accommodate children orphaned by HIV/Aids. This reached the threshold, and it increased in terms of the children that have to qualify for this Foster Care Grant.

With the aforementioned, it can be seen that the Foster Care Grant System in the country has not been implemented in accordance with the purpose, that we understand and fully

aware of it, which is to provide financial support to the foster parent to care for the child up to 21 years. It has been provided to all children including orphans, children whose whereabouts or of their parents are not known, not necessarily to children in need of care and of protection only.

The high number of children in the system created administrative challenges for both the department and the courts, due to the shortage of the capacity especially social workers. Social workers were overwhelmed with very high caseloads for foster care, limiting those time to provide protection service for the children that are in need of foster care. As a result, for two-yearly court orders that were there due to receive for each court placement could not be processed and this created a backlog. This put to the children at task of having these grants terminated. You know when they are expired, the court sometimes has to terminate that foster care.

However, with the 2011 North Gauteng High Court Order, this was averted. The court required the Minister of Social Development to design and implement a comprehensive legal

action to the crisis in foster care system, and until solution is designed foster care court orders would continue being valid. With a backlog both in court rules or in court orders that need to be reviewed, the new application as well as work oversized offering social workers and delays in the courts, the Children's Amendment Bill together with the Social Assistance Amendment of 2020, which the committee passed in 2020 seeks to provide a comprehensive legal solution that the court required.

The Amendment Act empowers a Minister of Social Development to attend to an additional payment. That is a top that we are talking about ...

IsiXhosa:

... ufakelelelo phezu kwale mali ibikade ikhona. Siphethe loo mcimbi ngoku.

English:

This aims to alleviate the pressure of the foster care system by diverting orphaned children who are not in need of care. The Bill also provides for the court to extend court orders that have lapsed to make an interim order for a period not

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exceeding six months. You know this question came up timeously and time and again in the committee that, what is it that is going to happen when the foster care has lapsed and expired.

The Bill emanated from a legislation by the Centre of Child Law versus the Minister of Social Development, the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa and Others of the North Gauteng. The Minister has already said that, we only focus on phase one of the Bill, then we will follow with the phase two of the Bill.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon member, thank you very much.

Ms N Q MVANA: But because the court has given us the order ...
[Time expired.] Thank you very much.

Ms B S MASANGO: Hon Chairperson, the Children's Amendment Bill we are debating today is an 11-year-old opportunity, to bring the best interests of the South African child back to the centre of government services. It is a result of the agency by civil society who, horrified by no less than 120 vulnerable children losing their foster grants and 300 000 at imminent

risks of also losing their grants, sought intervention from the courts.

The North Gauteng High Court ordered the Minister of Social Development and Department of Social Development MECs to solve the crisis, by producing a comprehensive legal solution by the end of 2014, and to create necessary mechanisms, structures and resources to ensure that the foster care system operates in a sustainable and effective manner. Eleven years, four Ministers and for reluctant extensions by the court later, we have yet again rushed a piece of legislation not to change the situation of children for the better, but to meet a deadline and prevent embarrassment for the ANC.

Hon Chairperson, the Bill was an opportunity to change the environment within which foster care grants are paid. The reasons for that, that puts children in that environment and to come up with a solution that ensures vulnerable orphaned children can get a social grant quickly, and children in need of protection have access to quality services by social workers and courts.

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This committee recently prioritised the Social Assistance Amendment Bill, which now allows the Minister to provide a higher value Child Support Grant of R720 to these children quickly. The Children Amendment Bill was supposed to focus on the other part of the comprehensive legal solution, by reducing the backlog in foster care order extensions. That opportunity has been lost in this Amendment Bill.

The Department of Social Development ANC Portfolio Committee Members seem to think that by making an amendment that allows children for foster care orders to expire, and then authorising children's courts to extend them retrospectively, they have enacted a comprehensive legal solution. While this ensures children's courts eventually extend orders, it does not ensure Sassa will continue paying Foster Care Child Grants after expiration of court orders as the Social Assistance Act of 2004 does not allow Sassa to pay foster child grants if a court order has expired, as this is against audit requirements.

So, the solution the Department of Social Development has come up with, happily rubberstamped by the ANC Portfolio Committee members, only protects the department but not the orphaned

children who will now be at risk of losing ... [Inaudible] ... when the North Gauteng High Court Order ends in November 2022. Just recently, the Department of Social development reported a backlog of over 60 000 expired order through the High Court that need extension in the next two months. Add to that, a further 10 000 backlog each month that passes.

It is likely that, the High Court Order will have to be extended for a fifth time because the Minister, the department and ANC Portfolio Committee Members did not put the children's best interests ahead of their own. Claims have been made in this room that, there has been a Committee Bill to be processed to deal with a 100 sections of the Children's Amendment Bill, that we had to temporarily reject to enable the 12 clauses to be rushed to meet the poor deadline.

Hon Chair, if this straightforward Bill has taken 11 years to come before this Parliament, and four years to be passed by the National Assembly, who knows when the Committee Bill with no court order pressure will see the light of day. History does not paint a promising future. Hon Chairperson, the objectives of the Bill are noble. They are what the DA as a caring organisation would hope will be actually implemented.

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They are to strengthen protection of vulnerable children, address gaps and challenges in the childcare and protection system and to respond to the High Court order relating to the foster care challenges.

While we profusely want to thank the committee and Parliament officials for a job well done under immense pressure and COVID-19 restrictions, the civil society and interested individuals for making eye-opening submissions, as the DA we will not be supporting this Bill, as doing so we would be complicit ... [Interjections]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Thank you hon member, your time is up.

Ms B S MASANGO: ... [Inaudible] ... over the best interests of the child ... [Time expired.] Thank you Chair.

Ms P MARAIS: Chairperson, the fight with a comprehensive legal solution to this problem, a foster care or orphan or abandoned children those ways back many decades. It was back in 2002 when the late Dr Beyers Naude announced that the foster care grant will be made available for relatives providing care for

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the orphaned children. This was considered devastation caused by the HIV/Aids pandemic at the time. What the decision basically did was to create an underwriting policy for the Department of Social Development in relation in foster care relative of orphaned children.

While there we have various irritation of policies we need to provide a comprehensive legal solution for this problem has always been there. Judgement of recent presiding officer of the South Africa High Court ruled back in 2012, per the child who have been orphaned or abandoned and who is living with the caregiver who does not have a common law due to support towards the child may be placed in foster care with that caregiver. That judgement further served approved that comprehensive changes are made to the entire system they will be continued to be inconsistency in the development of our common law.

We are grateful to many of those places which fall have brought us closer to the solution particularly the safety for the child law which the Minister of Social Development implemented in 2017

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We condemned the failure by the Department of Social development to meet many of the deadlines before the amendment of this legislation to provide for the comprehensive solution to child care problems in this country since 2017 judgement.

In the latest extension, Parliament is given until the end of November to have passed this amendment. This is now clearly impossible because there is no way the NCOP will have completed its work by November. Secondly, it is impossible to be done so because irregular process through which a Bill was run through the portfolio committee.

Chairperson, what ANC members did in the committee is the condemnation from this Parliament from those who concern for the plight of the children in the country.

Firstly, the Bill that was there obviously bloated because the committee chose not to confine itself with the question of foster care, abandoned and orphaned children as directed by the court. At the end the Bill had 146 clauses. The week leading to adoption of the Bill the ANC together with the legal office of Parliament decided to adjourned 134 of these

clauses without any substantiation only focus on float clauses.

The ignorance thousands of submissions by an activist displaced and further provided assertion that the legal office of Parliament, it is an extension of the ANC. More critically, we object to the decision of the committee to re-enact on initial agreement of amended section 21 of the Act which is in relation to the right of the unmarried fathers. The amendment was already proved by the Cabinet and accepted by activists for the rights of children.

We are equally upheld by the committee decision to decide against amendment of section 24 which has allowed the children's court jurisdiction to hear issues relating to guardianship. That would have mitigated against the enormous and expensive route of High Court. The committee has also failed to deal with the illegible of the quest to comprehensive legal solution to the problem of foster care. That is whether or not orphans in the care of families can be automatically assumed to be in need of foster care grant or should nearly qualify with the child support grant.

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The premier of the committee to deal with these issues rendered the whole process a futile, baseless and a wasteful expenditure. The legal challenges of the basis of the irregular procedures, it is serving us therefore, that we must reject the Bill. The plight over 700 children under the care of relative maintain undecided. So, the legal certainty required by more than 400 000 children with full care grant in this country. The ANC has failed children, the most vulnerable people of this country. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon members, you kindly requested to approach the podium on time so that you don't lose your seconds there and be economical about it. So, once you are aware that you are going to take the podium, you can approach the podium on either side there are chairs that are arranged for you.

Ms L L VAN DER MERWE: House Chairperson, the Children's Amendment Bill before us today was born out of the sad reality that South Africa foster care system had collapsed. In 2011, the North Gauteng High Court intervened and foster then

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Minister of Social Development to find a legal solution to this crisis.

Today, 11 years on a multiply court order extension later, we find ourselves to be asked agree to a Children's Amendment Bill which was subject to a fraud process. But how did we get here? The Bill on its original form riddled with unworkable proposals was referred to the portfolio committee in August 2020. Its aim was to address gaps in the child care system. With this Bill in hand the committee embarked on nationwide hearings.

In every community we had a uniform cry for help of social workers in distress, of children suffering abuse because there is no system to protect them, of underfunded NGOs, of a department and country in crisis. This picture of a wealthy system in distress led the committee to resolve to come back to these issues in a second amendment process and saw with the court deadline looming, we opted to only deal with South Africa's foster care crisis and closes pertaining thereto. However, what transpired after this decision can only be liable a betrayal.

During the course we were closer to liberation we realised that we were working from old documents. Because we said we needed to start afresh having made not working from old document, the ruling party component now surprisingly knew nothing about the agreement we have previously made. At that point we had already agreed as a committee to include and amend some clauses. And so, our joint amendments were rejected after we agreed to them. And even more bazaar minutes with its own the recordings of our agreements are available. Amongst the significant amendments that they would have now rejected was section 21. Section 21 was widely supported by the public during hearings. It clarifies the parental right to unmarried fathers by allowing them to fulfil the joint parental responsibilities in respect of their children.

Another significant amendment that was not actions put all children in alternative care address as it allows the two-year placement orders to expire. This will negatively affect children and child and youth care centre and in foster care. You need social workers to check on them every two years in order to stabilise the placement or to reunite them with their families.

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Now many children might languish in institutions rendering them more vulnerable. Equally of concern, Chairperson, as the fact little to know attention was given to the right of fathers while it is clear that we making laws in the absence of resources. We need these 70 000 social workers yet South Africa currently only has 17 500 social workers.

Chairperson, today, the assertion of this House and in particular the Speaker must be drawn to the fact that during this process Parliament constitutional mandate to craft legislation and come up with solution were undermined. In the end, we simply rubberstamp something that was already given to us. We were reduced to spectators and our vulnerable children, Chairperson, needed us to speak for them through this amendment Bill. They needed us to put their wellbeing first.

We needed justice to our vulnerable children instead misguided interests prevailed. Our committee should never be one way personal, political or the executive preferences prevail. It will always be South Africa first, our children first and the most vulnerable first. We thank the committee, civil society and our support staff for guiding us and supporting us on this difficult journey. With all of these concerns as recorded, we

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cannot support what is before us. Hopefully, the second amendment Bill will provide us an opportunity to do better. I thank you, Chair.

Ms T BREEDT: Chairperson, not to be a "Preachy Penelope" once again, but I am extremely worried about this Parliament, the manner in which we conduct ourselves and the way refuse to see one another's point of view. I am worried about the way everything has become an ANC versus opposition's struggle instead of a fight for the people.

This amendment should have been for the children, for the most vulnerable that cannot speak for the themselves. Those that have entrusted us to be their voice, instead it was a battle of semantics. A battle between the ANC and the opposition, a battle that would turn out to be a battle against the children.

Although I am not the permanent member of this portfolio committee I try to attend the best I could, give inputs and support where necessary and possible. The ANC however, instead of welcoming an extra input continually spoke condescendingly

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of my attendance. This does not speak of a healthy committee or atmosphere.

The ANC members in this committee further abuse their power, victimise members of the opposition, silence them, misquoted them, put them down to such a point where there was no other option but to walk out of meetings because if words failed us, maybe actions would speak louder. This unfortunately only made the ANC more stringent in trying to spin the process and the Bill their way. You will hear and have heard of the opposition's disdain for this committee or whatever excuse they will gather today.

Chairperson, we are on a dangerous terrain when a very good suggestion that would lead to the betterment of the Act is rejected because it was not an ANC member that made the suggestion. One example of such is clause 10, that deals with section 21 of the Act that speaks of the right of unmarried fathers. It was in a full Bill and submissions agreed to this section even this Bill. It should have been included because many children often or abandoned by their mothers are living with unmarried fathers.

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The amendment in section 21 will help prevent these children from ending up in a foster care system and 90% of submissions supported section 21 as tabled. Yet, the ANC bullied the committee into rejecting it. The committee received over a thousand pages of submissions, hundreds of organisations had proposed improvements. Meaningful suggestions that spoke of practical implications of the Act were made to try and address these matters, but to no avail.

The Bill, as it is here today is flawed, and does not speak to the actual challenges being faced within the foster care space. This Bill has been pending since 2011, 11-years and four court order extensions later. Only two-months away from its latest deadline, and this Bill has still not received the necessary attention and work. It has been such a long time coming but instead of focusing on what the court had ordered, this whole Bill should have been revised by now.

It took only half an hour for the committee to decide on these amendments. It was done without clause by clause analysis and without reference to public contributions. The committee did not strive for excellence with this amendment, in fact, they did not even achieve mediocrity. They achieved nothing. These

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amendments are not in the best interest of the child. Section 28(2) of the Constitution says "In all matters concerning a child the best interests of a child are of paramount importance". This committee did not do that. This process failed the constitutional mandate. The ANC has once again failed the children and we will not support this amendment Bill.

Mr W M THRING: Thank you, hon Chair. As I present this on behalf of hon Suckers, the ACDP views the Children Amendment Bill as a critical response to the on-going crisis in foster care which has been placing vulnerable children at risk for more than a decade. Precipitating the 2011 North Gauteng High Court ruling, the instructing government to develop a comprehensive legal solution to the crisis.

The ACDP believes that this Bill is flawed and chief amongst the failures has be the Department of Social Development's unjustifiable tardiness in creating this legislative solution some eleven year in the making. And as the latest court deadline approaches in November, pressure was brought to bare on Parliament to push the Bill through regardless of whether

or not it solves the crisis and regardless of its impact on the vulnerable.

Parliamentarians must develop legislation which creates meaningful change to those affected. In this case, the affected are our most defenceless citizens, the orphaned and vulnerable children. However, confusion around which clauses solve the problems in foster care. An unwillingness to accept that other clauses in the original Bill are critically important and should have been included in the final version. And interference from the executive resulted in the Bill being pushed through with what some have called in decent haste.

Despite extensive public consultation, political expediency led this Bill being approved without clause by clause debate and without the committee considering all options for keeping children out of foster care, including allowing family care where there is a capable father. This can only be viewed as a failure to honour the democratic process that allows for every input to be duly considered. And when political parties protested they were accused of politicking or delaying the Bill.

The resultant decision to exclude the amendments to section 21 from the Bill would have a significant impact. Though approved by Cabinet and widely accepted by civil society, the clause was considered too controversial and needing more consultation. However, by excluding it, the Bill now fails to provide legal recognition and certification for unmarried fathers living with maternal orphans. Which would enable them to protect and care for their children. And act as their legal guardian. The consequence is that many maternal orphans will remain in the foster care system despite having a committed father eager to raise them.

As the minority report shows, the parliamentary process has produced a Bill that only partially delivers on its promise to solve the foster care crisis. A Bill that still fails to enable unmarried fathers to keep their children out of foster care. And a Bill that could potentially make obtaining assistance harder for some vulnerable children. As such, the ACDP considers this Bill to be a missed opportunity and will not support it. Thank you, Chair.

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Ms A S HLONGO: Hon Chairperson, before I begin, I should say that the mistake done by opposition parties is that they leave in the middle of the meeting and come to this platform and address issues they were supposed to address in portfolio committees.

Hon members, it is sad that many children in South Africa are physically and sexually abused by those close to them. Most children witness gender-based violence in their homes, where perpetrators are often people who they look up to and respect. We need to fight this together with society. Everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abusers so that their emotional health and development is not endangered.

The ANC-led government is doing its best in ensuring that abused and abandoned children are safe and are taken care of. That is why through social development and basic education the government is making sure that abandoned children are in homes and centres where they are safe and take care of and early childhood development, ECDs, are there in helping with the development of a child at an early age. According to the children's institute based at the University of Cape Town, there were about 55000 children living in a total of 33000

child-headed households across South Africa in 2018. Factoring in the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years, this statistic has certainly increased. Additionally, in 2022, Stats SA has presented the reality that nuclear household which are households that consists of spouses, partners with or without biological children comprise of 41,5% of all households. This suggesting that over 50% of households in South Africa are led by individuals of which 42,1% are headed by women.

These facts are worth noting as they provide a perspective that we can use to better understand the state of children's vulnerability in South Africa. In a world that is characterised by the preying on children by criminals, perpetrators of violence and human trafficking networks, it is critical that children are protected from such danger and harm. The scourge of alcohol and substance abuse it is equally problematic and children who are not properly cared for and protected are more at risk to pressure to participate in these behaviours which condemn them to futures of further vulnerability such as a reliance on crime and other illegal practices as a form of survival.

It is important to note the importance of extended families and adoptions of children in our country. The Children's Act has over the years provided a framework of enabling and providing vulnerable children with families and individuals who can adequately take care of them. The multiple in roads that have been made to this end are noteworthy and have served as an avenue to protect vulnerable children from these various social ills that plague our society. It is important to mention that the practice of adoption is not a foreign phenomenon but a practice that has for over the years created a safe haven for children whose parents were unable to take care of them as a result of many circumstances including death.

Extended families and the process of adoption therefore plays a fundamental role in building a cohesive safe and integrated future that we want for our children and our country. It is in the extended family where children would ordinarily remain abandoned and uncared for can be provided with a chance of a better life and a future.

Adoption also plays an important role in assisting families and individuals who would ordinarily not have children of

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their own with the opportunity to raise and provide for vulnerable children.

We have had many stories about children who have grown to be influential people in our society because they had the opportunity to be taken care of in the context of foster care. This should not be a privilege for some but should be a possibility for all the children who need such support.

Considering that women are at the helm of responding to the issues of children care, institutions that support women in civil in society are important and play a critical role in ensuring that children are protected from all sorts of vulnerabilities.

The Department of Social Development, over the years, in this administration led by Minister Zulu provided support to women in civil society towards ensuring that children's rights are protected. Noting the limitations that have existed previously, women in our communities and through various organisations have intervened to protect children who have been subject to abandonment for many reasons.

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Hon Chairperson, the process that our Parliament has gone through towards the amendment of the Children's Act is one that should not be undermined. It goes without saying that resolving the complexity of the protection of vulnerable children requires a joint effort. It is of the said that "It takes a village to raise a child." In line with this thinking, it is crucial that the Department of Social Development strengthens its efforts both through policy enhancement and implementation.

The amendment of this Children's Bill is a step in the right direction towards the improvement of foster care processes. A number of issues have been raised and considered through the process of the Bill's amendment. The general consensus is that the adoption of this Bill embodies a concern for both the vulnerable children of South Africa and the caregivers.

Siswati:

Malunga lahloniphekile, sengigcina, kute sakhe lelikusasa lebantfwana lesilifunako lapho bantfwana bavikelekile nalapho batfola ematfuba ekuphumelela emphilweni, kubalulekile kutsi sivume siphindze sivumelane kutsi lomsebenti lowo awusiye wahulumende noma umndeni kuphela. Kwakheka kwalelikusasa

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lesilifunako kufuneka kutsi sihlanganise tandla singuhulumende, tinhlango tesive, imindeni kanye nemiphakatsi yonkhe kute siphumelele ekufinyeleleni lapho sitakwakha indzawo lephephile nalevikelekile nalapho bantfwana betfu bahlala khona. Kutsi kube yindzawo levumela intfutfuko nenchubekela phambili. Ngokwenta njalo sitawube sicinisa lesisekelo salelive.

Angiboni akhona longete avumelana nami kutsi live lelime kusisekelo lesicinile live lelitawuphumelela nalelinelikusasa lelichakatile. Ngiyabonga.

Mr S M JAFTA: House Chair, we are extremely concerned with the pace in which this Bill has gone about. The North Gauteng High Court issued its judgement in 2011, ordering the Department of Social Development to introduce a comprehensive plan in dealing with the backlog of foster care orders. The court granted the department successive extensions. And despite this, we are still debating this matter. The Western Cape government seems to be the only province managing the backlog of foster care orders. For example, its foster care backlog at the end of May 2022, stood at 2 251, compared to the national

backlog of foster care cases which stood at 28 246 at the end of March 2022.

We have also noted that there were differences in the committee on the particularity of certain amendments. Including the amendment of clause 10 of the Bill amending section 21 of the Children's Act. The main contention as we understand it, is the role of unmarried fathers in the foster care value chain. Whatever differences, our hope is that the best interest of foster care children are promoted. We will, nonetheless, support both the report and the Bill. I thank you.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: House Chair, parents, legal guardians, caregivers have a responsibility to care for their children physically, emotionally, moral values and discipline with much love and care. This was shown by President Mandela soon as he became President and he made sure that even the unborn child and children up to seven had free medical care. We also need to reflect on Nobel Peace Prize winner, Chief Albert Luthuli who emphasise the importance of fatherhood. The children have rights to be protected from harm and to be provided with services for their wellbeing by their parents and caregivers,

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and government is secondary to deliver on ... [Inaudible.] ... rights.

I was shocked to hear the criticism of the amendments by members of the opposition parties and some of these members of the opposition parties are respected hon members in Parliament. Members who are known to care for children and who very strong on humanitarian values. I am shocked that the portfolio committee could not reach consensus on several issues as we have heard. Unfortunately, I am not a member of that portfolio committee. We should have been. But this is possibly ... the criticism that has been levelled is so severe that the nation must be shocked. And the portfolio committee, with due all respect, opposition and the governing members of the committee must hang their heads in shame because they let South Africa down. So if this Bill is going to go forward because of the numbers, like the Zondo Commission stated, Al Jama-ah is going to write to the President, not to sign the Bill and to refer it back to the portfolio committee. So I just hope that members will have a free vote today and that in fact, more time is spent on this Bill because you can't mess with the rights of children. They are not pawns between politicians. Thank you very much.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Order, hon members.
Go ahead hon Ganief.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Thank you for protecting me, House Chair.
Yes, it is a shame that ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon members ...

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: ... that we have heard from very respected
hon members that there are problems. So please ...

[Interjections.] ... we are appealing that the portfolio
committee must do much more to reach consensus on issues that
affects children. Children are not pawns of politicians, which
seems to be the case here. This is very serious, House Chair.
You know Al Jama-ah, we don't easily criticise and condemn
motions on this floor and reports. But I cannot ignore the
criticism of the members of the opposition parties. Thank you.
[Time expired.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Thank you. Hon
Herron, if you are still there you can come back. He is not
there. Hon members, please. It is shocking how you try to

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drown the speaker on the platform. It's really shocking.

Please! From the DA, hon A L A Abrahams.

Ms A L A ABRAHAMS: House Chairperson, after 3 530 submissions on over 200 original amendments to the Children's Act, the committee would later learn that the Department of Social Development failed to consult Salga, did not factor in the Early Childhood Development, ECD migration, and the most obvious, the committee would never get through all the amendments in time before the National Assembly and NCOP process and still meet the court deadline. On legal advice, the committee prioritized 12 foster care clauses. It became evident the ANC members were given marching orders. Stick to the 12 clauses and hurry up so the Minister does not default on the court order. All credible submissions received from stakeholders, many experts in their field, seemed to have dissipated.

On 18 May, the committee agreed, and video recording will confirm, clause 10 amending section 21 would be included as this would ensure children who live with their unmarried fathers, will not end up in an already overburdened foster care system. Empowering the children's court to issue the

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relevant certificates and apply due diligence in the best interest of the child. Why would Parliament deny fathers their right and opportunity to father their children, if they wanted to? Do we not constantly hear the phrase, "the fatherless generation"? Imagine our surprise at our next meeting, when the legal advisor presented all the changes previously agreed to, with the exception of this clause which was deliberately left out. Minutes by the impartial Parliamentary Monitoring Group were also discredited, as it not fit the ANC's agenda of the day.

The ANC's attempt to gaslight opposition members led to all opposition parties leaving the meeting on a matter of ethics and principle. In the weeks thereafter, attempts to rewrite history, journalists attacked, mansplaining by the solo male member all went unchecked. Even a circus has more order because there is only one ringmaster. Disregarding its own Child Care and Protection Policy, clause 86 section 150, will now see orphaned or abandoned children found on their own with no caregiver, informally placed without a court order. This section will also contradict the new Child Support Grant Top Up regulations with regard to before and after screening, which the Department of Social Development indicated they'll

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just change once the Act is promulgated which will only lead to confusion, bottle necks and backlogs at Sassa offices. Self-sabotage if you ask me.

Time will tell, whether the court accepts the Minister's incomplete Comprehensive Legal Solutions and if the foster care crisis has been averted or simply diverted. Contra to the Minister's mantra of Leaving No Child Behind, tens of thousands of children in the foster care system, may very well be. The DA cannot support this version of the Children's Amendment Bill. Thank you.

Mr D M STOCK: Thank you very much, hon House Chair. The process of the public hearings that has been undertaken towards the amendment of the Children's Amendment Bill highlighted the areas of conflict that exist in the area of misunderstanding by some members of the opposition party combined. It is correct to say that in the main our communities still and correctly uphold certain cultural beliefs and norms about what is acceptable and also unacceptable in the childcare, especially in the context outside of the institution of marriage, appreciating that not all South Africans subscribe to the religious and traditional

values that are linked to marriage and raising children. It is worthwhile to appreciate that these values remain important and should not be ignored in processing legislation through the parliamentary process.

The notion that has been pushed thus far regarding the access of fathers who should have a right to their children is at all cost a problematic to a large extent in a sense that it neglects the reality that processes such as ihlawulo continue to play an important role in the South African cultural beliefs. It is also important that in making a case for fathers' accessibility to their children, it is noted that certain abuse of rights that may ultimately ... [Inaudible.] ... the wellness of the child needs to be also taken into consideration. Unfortunately, some members of the opposition, I'm not sure for whatever reason, but I can conclude or maybe assume that due to political desperation, have chosen to ignore some of this important aspects.

Policy remains an integral role in ensuring that people's lives are transformed effectively. Having said that this is, however, also one of the most important aspects of the policy process in the implementation of the policy. Thus require

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joint and co-ordinated efforts within and across the sectors. It is, therefore, important, hon members, that when we are doing our oversight responsibility or we are busy with legislative process through our different portfolio committees, we also take into consideration some of the inputs that are raised by the minority groups in our public hearings and we also take into consideration the issue of cultural connotations that also being widely expressed throughout our public hearings.

Hon House Chairperson, it is, therefore, important that we also have the end in sight in this case, the end being the protection and the caring of the children of South Africa. Thus requiring that will consistently respond to the issues in the interest of our children. Hon House Chair, we do recognise that some members of the opposition out of political desperation have missed an important opportunity to strengthen an important piece of legislation which deals for the protection of rights of ordinary and vulnerable children. Some of these members of the opposition what they are not telling us today is that they were part of this process from the inception. They went to public hearings, they sat in the portfolio committee meetings and the only time where they

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started to embark on a foreign tendencies and thuggish behaviour is when their views did not find expression in the portfolio committee meeting. They started with this thuggish behaviour in the portfolio committee when their views could not find expression ... around section 21 ... [Interjections.]

Ms L L VAN DER MERWE: House Chairperson, on the point of order, is it parliamentary to call fellow Members of Parliament "thugs"?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon member, you are interrupting. Hon Stock, can you please take a sit. Hon members, hon members, hon members, could you please give a member on the podium chance, don't try to drown him, and the hon members from the visual platform do not interrupt. You can go ahead, hon Stock.

Mr D M STOCK: Thank you very much, hon House Chairperson. Therefore, these members of the opposition started to embark on that, they started to name-callers and label us in the portfolio committee only because their views could not find expression for the inclusion of section 21 as part of the amendment that we are considering as a portfolio committee. It

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is also important to mention, hon House Chairperson, that throughout the public hearings and when we concluded the public hearings we came back to the portfolio committee and then we agreed because there was a court deadline, and we needed to separate the issues and deal first with the 12 classes that were surviving.

Therefore, it is also important to mention that these other inputs that we've received from the early childhood development, ECD, inputs and all other inputs including this one of section 21, those particular views will be considered as part of the second amendment which would be considered through ... [Interjections.]

Mr N SINGH: Thank you very much, hon House Chairperson. I rise on a point of order and I would like you to rule whether it is proper for a member on the podium to say that the other members of the committee "behaved in a thuggish manner". No one does "behave in a thuggish manner", they are hon Members of Parliament who might have expressed their views. Therefore, I think that requires a withdrawal from the hon member, hon House Chair. Thank you.

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Mr D M STOCK: Okay, hon House Chairperson, I would like to withdraw the word "thuggish". These hon members started to threaten us with a court action only because their views did not emerge. They ended up calling us names and also these members of the portfolio committee embarked on some level of desperation and even led to members of the opposition combined to even go to the extent of mobilising some alternate members of the portfolio committee who will only come to the portfolio committee when there are problems. However, when there is work to be done by the portfolio committee they were never there to do the work.

Hon House Chairperson, we refuse to be bullied into submission by some of these members of the opposition because they knew very well that they failed to persuade us in the portfolio committee. Therefore, some of us in the committee we actually rejected their views because we felt that they just wanted to politically to grandstand and also played into the public gathering. We are extremely also, hon House Chairperson, that it is not in the interest of the vulnerable children of South Africa to be ... [Inaudible.] ... and risk missing opportunity, to adequately deal with the state of vulnerability and care of the majority of children.

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As the African National Congress, our commitment rest with protecting the rights of the children of this country. It is also our view that the future of our country lies with them and all children deserve and should be provided for the requisite support love and care in order for them to live full and happy lives and make a contribution to the South Africa of our dreams. Hon House Chairperson, as the ANC, we support this particular Bill and we are of the view that all the process ... [Inaudible.] ... we support this Bills. I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Thank you, hon member. Hon Singh, the member has withdrawn voluntarily, and I will, therefore, not rule on that.

Mr N SINGH: Thank you, House Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, House Chairperson. If I may sometimes it is important to go back to history because history is what always will absolve us.

Therefore, in this particular case, hon Chair and hon members, I don't want to go into the semantics or the dramas that happened at the portfolio committee because sometimes I was at

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the portfolio committee, and sometime I did not attend. However, whenever I did attend I took it that all of us in that committee had nothing else, but the interest of the children of South Africa. Secondly, House Chairperson, I think at the centre of everything from the point of view of the African National Congress, we can assure the South African children and we can assure the South African mothers and fathers that every time we step into any platform, be it related to developing policy or writing legislation, it's never about our interests, it always about the interests of the people of South Africa.

Therefore, in this particular case I can assure you, House Chairperson, that as the African National Congress nothing is difficult for us, you will never find us walking out of any meeting whatsoever because our commitment is about ensuring that the work that we have to do we complete it. We have been completing our work in as far as legislation and regulations since 1994. Quite frankly, we didn't start in 1994, we started long before 1994, when we started developing the reconstruction and development of this country. Therefore, to the hon members, we will continue doing what we have to do and do it in the best way that we can. The rest shall go back and

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be debated at the committee itself, and I'm confident that the members of the committee will always rise to the occasion, especially from the side of the ANC. However, I also know that even from the side of the opposition, there are those who rise to the occasion and when they rise to the occasion, they will meet us along the way because we've got work to do. I thank you very much, and thank the members who supported the Bill.

[Time expired.]

Bill read a second time (Inkatha Freedom Party, Economic Freedom Fighters, Democratic Alliance, African Christian Democratic Party and Freedom Front Plus dissenting).

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: House Chairperson, could we please call for a division.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon members, hon members, hon members, we follow the guidelines to the latter. Therefore, the objection came a little bit too late, hon member, so I would not accept it. That concludes the business for the day, and the House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 19:26.