



PARLIAMENT
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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES
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**OPENING AND WELCOME REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, HONOURABLE MR A. N.
MASONDO, DURING THE NCOP PROVINCIAL WEEK PROGRAMME**

PLACE: JOHANNESBURG **DATE:** 29 OCTOBER 2020 **TIME:** 10H00

Greetings!

Programme Director

Representation from Department of Transport

Representation of Ministry of Police

Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature,
Honourable Mr M. Kanyane

Members of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures

Representatives of the South African Local Government Association
(SALGA)

Ladies and gentlemen

Programme director, the National Council of Provinces has dedicated this week to undertake its Provincial Week programme. The programme is one

of the means that the NCOP uses to inform and enrich its mandate of representing the provinces to ensure that provincial interests are taken into account in the national sphere of government.

The historical purpose of the Provincial Week programme has been to give Permanent Delegates an opportunity to return to their provinces, as delegations, to deal with matters that affect their provinces.

The programme is being implemented in all the provinces through focusing on the following:

- Key interventions to improve the financial state of the municipalities;
- Plans to address governance challenges in the municipalities; and
- The state of service delivery.

The Provincial Week programme for the province of Gauteng incorporates oversight visits this afternoon to the railway stations in Katlehong, Kliptown and Maraisburg. This has been occasioned by the reports of vandalism and pillaging of the rail infrastructure in the province, especially during the period of the COVID-19 lockdown. The cost of the damage across the province is estimated at more than R170 million.

The NCOP is deeply concerned at the looting, vandalization and the destruction of public infrastructure, including the schools.

Programme Director,

These acts, take away the resources that are meant to render services to the people. They chip away at the foundation upon which we seek to build our democratic society.

In his reply to the question on the issue of vandalism of rail infrastructure on Tuesday this week in the NCOP, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated clearly that the continuous damage, sabotage, theft and vandalism of rail infrastructure is one of the worst forms of economic crime in this country. He said that vandalism has a direct impact on the lives of millions of South Africans who rely on commuter rail services to travel to work or to study.

We appreciate the commitment of the President, as stated during his interaction with the NCOP, to take decisive measures to improve the security of rail lines. Part of this plan, he said, is to immediately appoint security personnel and to deploy remotely piloted aircraft systems to conduct virtual patrols of high risk infrastructure. He added that this capability would work together with specialised investigations and armed response.

On behalf of the NCOP, I would like to urge communities to assist the government in securing public infrastructure through increased vigilance. We call on all law-abiding citizens in the province and across the country to alert the rail security and law enforcement agencies of any suspicious and illegal activity in the form of vandalism or theft of rail infrastructure. We urge

communities to volunteer any information they have on plans by criminal elements to deprive communities of these public assets.

Vandalism of rail and other public infrastructure is derailing government efforts to improve the quality of life of all citizens. It flies in the face of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, outlined recently by the President in Parliament, that is aimed at stimulating equitable and inclusive growth particularly in light of the economic devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the programme illustrates, we will use tomorrow to reflect on the outcome of the Provincial Week. This debriefing session will help us to process the actions we need to take in order to assist in ensuring that things change for the better.

Our focus on municipalities comes as a result of challenges of local identical challenges at local government level. It is part of our overall socio-economic transformation agenda. Local government is the closest sphere to the people

As we all are aware , our time , government has made key interventions in our communities. This include the District Development Model which seeks to improve the coherence and impact of government service delivery with the focus on 44 Districts and 8 Metros across the country. These development

spaces can be used as centres of service delivery and economic development.

In this context, the critical work of oversight institutions is, like the NCOP , is to oversee and help to promote the alignment of work of the different spheres of government.

A brief examination of the programme reveal the following:

- a. A visit to Katlehong, Kliptown and Maraisburg railway stations
- b. Engaging with stakeholders railway stations

With these few words, it is my pleasure to open this morning's briefing session on transport infrastructure and to welcome everybody in attendance.

I thank you