



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

IN SESSION

"YOUR SEAT IN PARLIAMENT"

Vol. 9 ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY 2009



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SA ELECTION AMID GLOBAL WOES

FAREWELL DINNER FOR MPs

PARLIAMENT PREPARES FOR NEW MPs



**INSERT: INSESSION'S SPECIAL EDITION ON THE STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS
(REPORTS & PICTURES)**



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Black Rod National Council of Provinces

Vision Statement

To build an effective people's Parliament that is responsive to the needs of the people and that is driven by the ideal of realising a better quality of life for all the people of South Africa.

Mission Statement

As the freely elected representatives of the people of South Africa, our Mission is to represent, and to act as a voice of the people, in fulfilling our Constitutional functions of passing laws and overseeing executive action.

Strategic Objectives

1. Increasing oversight
2. Increasing public participation
3. Building an efficient, effective institution



Mace of the National Assembly

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Presiding Officers' Column:

Ms Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde, MP
and Mr Mninwa Mahlangu, MP

Editor-in-Chief: Luzuko Jacobs

Editor: Momelezi Kula

Production Editor: Kagisho Mamabolo

Copy Editor: Oswald Gibson

Writers: Abel Mputing and Sakhile Mokoena

Contributors: Shameela Seedat (Idasa), Kanyisa Ndyondya and Mava Lukani

Design and Layout: Lazola Zantsi

Photography: Parliamentary Communication Services

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EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

Telephone: (021) 403 8243, Fax (021) 403 8096

E-mail: insession@parliament.gov.za

Subscriptions: subscriptions@parliament.gov.za

Post: PO Box 15, Cape Town, 8000

OUR IDEALS**VISION**

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As the freely elected representatives of the people of South Africa, our mission is to represent, and act as a voice of the people, in fulfilling our Constitutional functions of passing laws and overseeing executive action.

VALUES

Our values guide the management of Parliament. Our values are formed by that which we treasure and hold dear. It forms the foundation that will give rise to policies, which provide guidance in the implementation of everyday services and projects. The values of Parliament are derived from the role that Parliament plays in the context of our democracy. Therefore our values are formed by the people of South Africa, the Constitution, our co-operation with other arms of government, and our will to act with professionalism and good institutional governance.

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Contact Details: Zelda Williams

Tel: 021-403-3341

e-mail: zwilliams@parliament.gov.za

e-mail: kgovender@parliament.gov.za

Editor's note

The month of February is a very important one in the Parliamentary calendar. Parliament gets to host two events that are closely watched nationally and internationally: the State of the Nation Address by the President of the Republic of South Africa, and the tabling of the Budget by the Minister of Finance.

-The State of the Nation Address is a state occasion. The President addresses the nation in his capacity as the Head of State and not as the head of Government. It is one of the rare occasions where the three arms of the state come together in one place, namely the Executive, represented by the President, Deputy President, Ministers and Deputy Ministers; the Judiciary, represented by Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice and Judge Presidents; and the Legislature, represented by the Presiding Officers and Members of Parliament.

People follow the address for a number of reasons. It is an opportunity to get an insight into our young democracy and take stock of the nation's state of affairs, and there is an extensive public participation programme that accompanies the event.

-The tabling of the budget is watched with interest by everyone because it affects us all in different ways. Young people and the unemployed watch it for funding of job creation programmes, companies and workers for tax breaks, senior citizens for old age social grants, departments and provincial and local governments for allocations, and the international community for foreign exchange policy and fiscal direction.

For Parliament, the two addresses form the basis for oversight of the Executive. The State of the Nation Address contains government's programme and gives an indication of its performance while the budget funds commitments and priorities as indicated in the State of the Nation Address. It becomes the responsibility of Parliament to ensure that the commitments are fulfilled and that the allocated resources are used accordingly.

This year being an election year, we are going to have another State of the Nation Address by the President of the Republic after the elections, informed by a new mandate from the electorate.

We know by now that the date for the national and provincial elections is 22 April 2009, and according to the Independent Electoral Commission over 23 million South Africans are registered to vote. The numbers show that South Africans are still as committed as ever to the consolidation of our young democracy.

In our guest column in this issue we have Ms Shameela Seedat, a Political Researcher based at Idasa's Political Information and Monitoring Service, who writes about the importance of the elections and what political parties have to offer.

The guest column provides a platform for debate on important issues. The column is commissioned and will therefore be prioritised over unsolicited articles. Articles for the Guest column must be between 500 – 800 words.



Momelezi Kula

ERRATUM:

In our January edition we referred to Ms Cheryllyn Dudley as a member of the DA, when she is in fact a member of the ACDP. Our apologies to all concerned.

Messages from National Assembly

The Speaker of the National Assembly Ms Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde MP welcomed all guests to the highly significant occasion of the 2009 State of the Nation Address at Parliament:

This year's address is significant for us in the following ways:

- It comes during the last few days of the term of our country's third Parliament
- It is also one of the two State of the Nation Addresses to be hosted by Parliament in the same year. The other one is expected to be delivered by a new President following the elections.

For me personally, it is the first State of the Nation address in my term as Speaker of this prestigious institution. It is also President Motlanthe's first experience as leader of the executive.

Therefore, I reflect on the work of this current term of Parliament with both a sense of pride as well as with the wisdom of hindsight. Amongst the highly successful programmes undertaken by Parliament in the last five years, we can proudly mention:

- The successful implementation of a new travel system for Members of Parliament and their dependants [2005-2006]
- The establishment of a Parliamentary Group on International Relations in 2006
- Parliament's participation in the African Peer Review Mechanism process, starting in 2006
- The review of the Chapter 9 and associated institutions by an ad hoc committee of the National Assembly [2006-2007]
- The setting up of Parliamentary Democracy Offices in three provinces [2008]
- The adoption of a new Governance Model for Parliament [2007]
- Graduation of Members from various learning opportunities, including the passing of a French language course by two members of Parliament (Ms Joan Fubbs and Ms Carol Johnson)
- Hosting sectoral parliaments

President Kgalema Motlanthe flanked by the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Mninwa Mahlangu (Left) and the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde (Right).



(People's Assembly, Women's Parliament and Youth Parliament) annually

- The Ten Year Review Publication celebrating Parliament's achievements and challenges since 1994 which was launched in 2007 (Institutional memory)
- Hosting the 118th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in April 2008
- Parliament's ongoing participation in international parliamentary structures (including the Pan-African Parliament and the South African Development Community)
- The production of a Report on the Legislative Process in Parliament by the Joint Task Team on the Legislative Process in Parliament (for consideration by the Fourth Parliament) [2008]
- The adoption by the Joint Rules Committee of the Oversight and

Accountability Model produced by the Task Team on Oversight and Accountability [2008]

- The adoption by both Houses of rules for the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence [2008]
- The processing of legislation (three bills) to end floor-crossing [2008]
- The processing of the Financial Administration of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Bill and the Financial Management of Parliament Bill [2008], and
- The establishment of the Multiparty Women's Caucus [2008].

It was also during this third Parliament that we were able to remove the symbols of the past as we successfully unveiled a new Emblem and Logo, and therefore, a new identity for Parliament.

and National Council of Provinces



In his message the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces Mr Mzinwa Mahlangu said the State of the Nation Address was an important occasion for the nation of South Africa:

The President has indicated what his government has been able to achieve over the past five years, and so we also reflect on the accomplishments of the current third Parliament, which will soon come to an end.

Our theme for this year is Parliament Entrenching People-Centred Democracy in Achieving Development Goals.

In other words, just as the President has reported on the work of the executive, Parliament has been engaged during the past five years in its own task of overseeing the work of

the executive.

So we are quite aware while we address our theme that we want Members of Parliament to be even more active and more vigilant in future, in the joint quest to improve the lives of all, even the poorest of the poor: the very people who elected us to be their voice in Parliament.

As we make laws, approved budgets and oversee programmes and policies, we will make sure these improve the lives of South Africans, especially the poor. That is critical for Parliament.

Another key issue for us is that the State of the Nation Address becomes a presentation not only to the people, but also by the people. Hence you have seen a lot of participation by

ordinary citizens in this event, which shows that we are serious about the issue of public participation in the programmes and processes of Parliament.

You have seen both the junior and civil guard of honour as a testimony to public participation. This year we had a Mooki, a Setswana Imbongi (Praise singer), the army band and other cultural performers as well as learners from schools across our land, all making important contributions to the programme. The involvement of the selected group of eminent people is another example of how we encourage members of the public to take part in the activities of Parliament.

In our midst on this important day are the Chapter Nine institutions, to further add weight to the occasion.

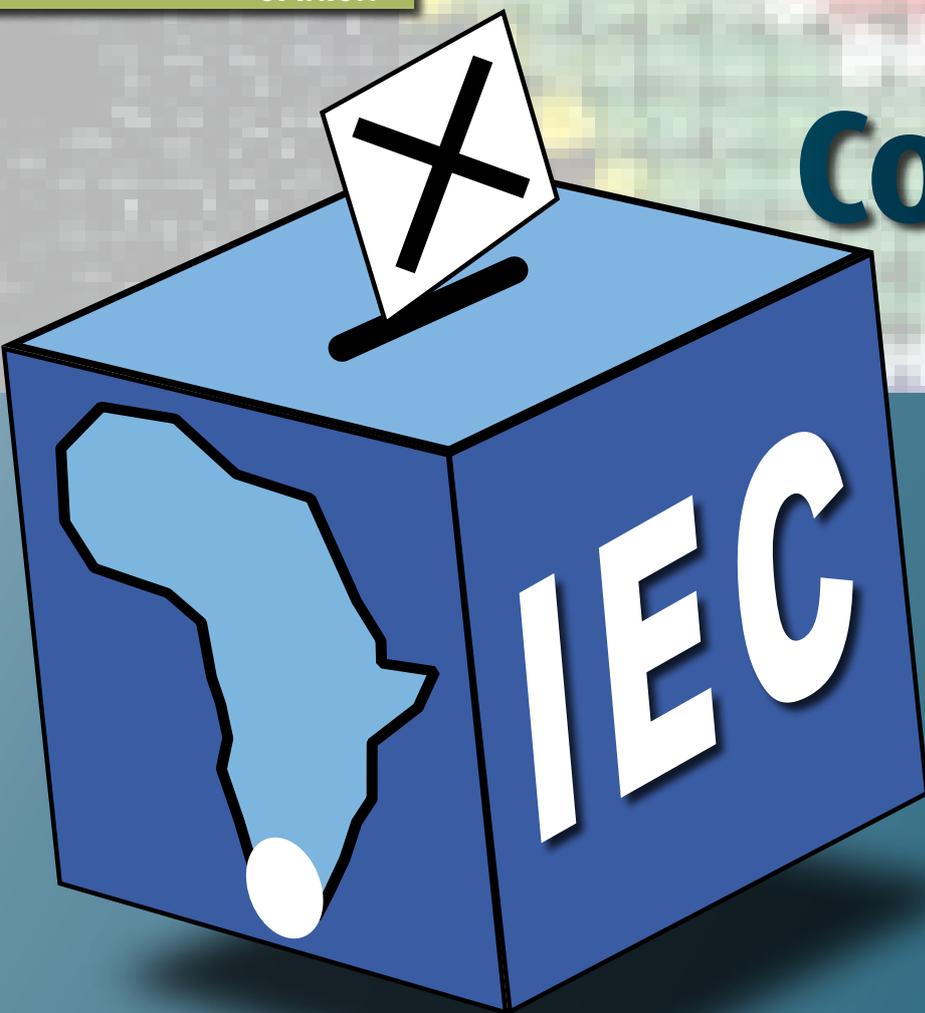
The inclusion of all these categories of people in our society tells us that becoming a Member of Parliament should not be the only way people can participate in matters that shape their country.

My message is that the government of South Africa, the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa and the judiciary with all its institutions, have all done sterling work in the past 15 years.

We have seen the enormous progress which has been achieved by all these stakeholders. I have not heard of any other developing country which has moved so fast in terms of service delivery, institution building, infrastructural development and economic growth in merely 14 years.

I want to assure the people of South Africa that we are addressing those areas where we admit that we are lagging behind. I want to encourage the people of South Africa to keep supporting these initiatives in order for us to become even stronger in the future.

Countdown



The views reflected by INSESSION's guest writers are not necessarily those of the publisher. The comments above reflect the views of the writer, Shameela Seedat, of Idasa.

South Africa will stage its fourth democratic elections on 22 April 2009 amidst a growing international financial crisis. To some extent, the impact of this crisis on South Africa has already been mitigated by a well-regulated domestic financial sector and strong fiscal policy framework. However, a decline in international demand for South African exports is likely to impact negatively on domestic growth. Recent statistics show a contraction in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 1.8% and over 100 000 job losses in the last quarter of 2008.

Facing this global economic downturn, South Africans may now be looking with greater urgency to leaders and political parties for far-reaching solutions to stave off poverty and rising unemployment. The enthusiasm around the election of Barack Obama as US President last November signaled to many the emergence of a more compassionate American leadership and possibly a new paradigm for engaging with citizens. Given South Africa's recent bumpy political ride, many too are hoping for a local leadership committed to healing rifts on a local front.

No doubt South Africans would like to vote into power a government that not only delivers social and economic improvements but that is also accessible and consultative. The upcoming elections give us a chance to ponder the policy direction and evolution of our maturing democracy.

In the run-up, political parties released election manifestos seeking to address key policy areas, including the economy, social spending, health and education, black economic empowerment, environment, land and crime - and it is important that citizens engage with these as fully as possible.

This article limits its discussion to the election manifestos of some of the larger parties currently represented in Parliament as well as that of the newly formed COPE, which could potentially emerge as a significant new opposition body. As is well documented, South Africa is faced with income and wealth inequality, significant unemployment and poverty, and the challenge of continuing growth in the face of a changing global economic landscape. In presenting their best solutions to our economic and social dilemmas, the ANC, COPE, and the DA in their respective manifestos appear to offer variations on a basic expansion of the current public works programs, with the primary aim of combating unemployment, specifically amongst youth.

The ANC emphasizes the need for a state-led transformation policy to tackle the economy and proposes new laws to regulate contract work and outsourcing. The DA and IFP want to spur growth among other means by improving the entrepreneurial environment and granting greater concessions to small business, the SMMEs. The UDM is concerned with reducing excess government spending and increasing infrastructure spending.

to elections in SA

in a time of global economic meltdown

The ACDP plans to reduce long-term dependency on social grants through programmes that encourage entrepreneurship, privatisation, labour-intensive initiatives and skills development. The Freedom Front+ says it wants to revisit the parameters of South African society, with a view to improved development models that can be sustained going forward.

The ID proposes wage subsidies to work seekers between the ages of 18 and 25, as well as a minimum income grant funded through taxation on luxury goods. COPE will amongst other plans be considering the creation of new industrial development zones through various business incentives.

But even if good economic growth is achieved over the ensuing years, South Africa is likely to continue being afflicted by the mismatch between skills and available jobs. Proposals from the major parties thus aptly centre on addressing prevailing skill shortages and improving early childhood education. Educational reform and skills development is essential for the future of the country, both in terms of preserving a vibrant civil society and a skilled workforce.

The ANC proposes a system that will give a head-start on literacy and numeracy as well as the streamlining of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which have thus far largely been ineffective, to properly predict and address skill shortages. The IFP and UDM propose free education up to grade 12, and COPE wants to investigate the possibility of a parastatal role in artisan

training as well an extension of the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programme. Early childhood education initiatives are a key ID strategy, while the DA wants to eliminate SETAs, increase the variety of language instruction schools, provide further incentive funding to well-functioning schools and establish satellite teacher training colleges.

Another key national concern is health. This has become a pivotal electoral issue given unsatisfactory average life expectancy rates in South Africa and given the lack of comprehensive solutions to managing the HIV/AIDS crisis. While all parties promise to focus on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, they adopt varying overall solutions to general healthcare provision. These include the provision of free public healthcare to everyone under a National Health Insurance System (ANC and UDM), extending links with private sector with a bigger focus on primary health (COPE and DA) and filling vacancies in the health sector (ID).

Other issues that have perhaps received less attention than warranted include public accountability and the environment. When it comes to green issues, the ID's manifesto is most vocal and favours an end to Eskom's monopoly. The ID also plans to resurrect the Scorpions. However, any attempt to properly evaluate party manifestos must take into account the fact that policy priorities are constrained by pre-existing domestic political and economic conditions, a rapidly changing global economic environment, as well

as difficulties associated with translating policies into effective undertakings. It would be wise for voters to weigh up different parties' election promises against the realistic potential for delivery.

After the election dust has settled Parliament, as the country's pivotal deliberative institution, has a crucial role to play in debating various policy options and how best they respond to South African realities. At stake is the need for Parliament to be more actively involved than it has been in the past in the process of determining and achieving national priorities and goals relating to poverty eradication, achieving quality education, improving health care and securing a safe and healthy environment in meaningful ways.

Parliament faces challenges in increasing public participation, establishing a culture of oversight and in affirming its significance against the backdrop of ever-increasing levels of inequality in South Africa. For good results, new Members of Parliament will need to emphasize the development of a political culture that brings all citizens - and not only economic or political elites - closer to political processes, so that laws, even if driven by the executive, accurately respond to the needs of South African society as a whole. 

**by Shameela Seedat,
Political Information and Monitoring
Service at Idasa**

TREVOR'S

'TIGHTROPE' BUDGET

Minister of Finance issues a warning

Staff writer

Accelerating economic growth and job creation, broadening economic participation and reducing poverty, remain central goals of economic policy said the Minister of Finance Mr Trevor Manuel, while delivering the 2009 annual Budget speech in the National Assembly on 11 February. Mr Manuel said that government was still committed to these goals in spite of the world economic crisis, but because of the economic crisis he anticipated difficulty in making meaningful progress any time soon. In the context of a deteriorating international environment, policy adjustments were needed to reinforce macroeconomic stability, in order to provide a "temporary cushion" to the domestic economy.

"Under leadership of President Kgalema Motlanthe, a task team comprising of business, organized labour, community organizations and government, has been convened to agree on an appropriate South African response to the current crisis," Minister Manuel said

This year's Budget focused on five principles: protecting the poor, sustaining employment growth and expanding training opportunities, building economic capacity and promoting investment. The largest adjustments to spending were for

poverty reduction. "R25 billion is added to the budgets of provinces, mainly for education and healthcare and R13 billion for social assistance grants and administration."

School nutrition programmes and allocations to municipalities for basic services constituted large slices of the budget cake. But the quantity of rand and cents allocated was not the most important aspect of the relief package: "We can only be satisfied when we know that the quality of life of the poor is improving, that children are being properly educated," he said.

"We can be satisfied when learners have access to food in schools, mothers visiting clinics get proper and dignified treatment, [and] the criminal justice system is putting those who rob and thief behind bars."

'It's what the money buys that matters' -Trevor Manuel

The Finance Minister emphasized that government's contribution to public education remains a single largest investment "because we know that it is the key to reducing poverty and accelerating long-term economic growth".

He said education spending had grown by 14 percent over the past three years, and

BUDGET

protecting the poor meant significantly more schools with zero school fees: up from 40% of all schools, to 60%.

More good news for the poor was the reduction of the average class sizes in schools serving lower income communities, increasing expenditure on school buildings and the recapitalisation of technical schools.

The Minister also promised aggressive strategies to deal with complex challenges facing the health sector. Three new child vaccines that had proved effective in preventing infant and child deaths would be introduced in the coming budget year, and both TB and HIV-Aids programmes would be better funded.

“We are budgeting to extend screening of pregnant mothers coming into the public health system and to phase in an improved drug regimen to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission. Our anti-retroviral (ARV) programme now covers 630 000 people.”

There was also more for crime fighting, especially interventions to improve the criminal justice service, to create an integrated fingerprint and DNA database, and to improve the capacity to do detective work. The Minister said the number of police officers would increase by about

18 000 in the next three years.

To reduce unemployment, Mr Manuel said greater effort was needed to accelerate employment growth. “The government will work with business and organized labour to protect work opportunities and accelerate skills development over the period ahead.”

In the medium term, there will be more for the Working for Water and Working on Fire programmes as well as the Umsobomvu Youth Fund.

Referring to the Expanded Public Works Programme, Mr Manuel said those government departments, provinces and municipalities that participated in the programme, should be challenged to exceed their job-creation targets.

Key points in the Budget Speech

- **R13,4-billion in personal tax relief**
- **More help for the poor**
- **Pensioners get R50 more per month**
- **Assistance to the crisis-hit economy.** 



'Help others to access Budget'



Main photo & below left: NA Speaker Ms Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde addresses members of the International Women's Forum of South Africa during a pre-budget workshop session at Parliament



Speaker drums up support for poor women

by Mava Lukani

Fortunate women who have nice titles such as Speaker, Doctor and Chief Executive Officer should ask themselves what they can do to help less fortunate grandmothers, mothers, aunts and sisters, to translate the budget speech

into something tangible in their lives. That was the appeal by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde, to members of the International Women's Forum of South Africa during a pre-budget workshop session at Parliament. The workshop was held a few hours before the Minister of Finance, Mr Trevor Manuel, delivered his Budget speech in the National Assembly in February.

The Speaker said successful businesswomen could use their advantaged position to help lift millions of impoverished women from conditions of poverty and misery. "We need to ensure that as we gather again in 2010 we are able to report tangible progress in changing for the better lives of ordinary women on the ground."

"They are probably not even aware that there is such a gathering which will, for instance, affect the social grants many of them collect for needy children."

Ms Mahlangu-Nkabinde said successful women were a small, blessed component in South Africa. The majority of women still lived in crowded and

poor conditions, and were still "fetchers of water and gatherers of wood, for sustainability. This is probably a group that cannot even afford a portable radio to listen to what we are going to hear directly from the Minister of Finance, Mr. Trevor Manuel."

Judging from the calibre of the women in the International Women's Forum of South Africa, the Speaker said her predecessors had done well to initiate and sustain the tradition of hosting a pre-budget workshop, and the tradition should "continue with pride".

Reminding the women about the fact that the day in which the workshop took place was the day former President Nelson Mandela was released from prison, Ms Mahlangu-Nkabinde said without the former President, perhaps their opportunity to meet would not have existed.

"On a serious note, let us use our influential positions, in boardrooms, chambers and lecture halls as foot soldiers for peace, hope and prosperity in our country. Your organisation has the profile and record, since its inception in 2000, to achieve this objective," said the Speaker. 

Khutsong returns to Gauteng

The Egoli connection

by Kanyisa Ndyondya

Residents of Khutsong in Merafong have told Parliament that they want to share in the continued economic growth of Johannesburg, which remains the closest city for them to do business.

The Committees on Provincial and Local Government, Justice and Constitutional Development, and Security and Constitutional Affairs heard their testimony in Parliament in February, when it conducted public hearings on the Constitution Sixteenth Amendment Bill, and Cross-Boundary Municipality Laws Repeal and Related Matters Amendment Bill.

The hearings heard that the earlier incorporation into North West had largely been opposed by residents who feared its impact on business in the community. Representing Khutsong, Isaac Langa of Merafong Construction Forum told Parliament that the lack of service delivery in the North West province had taken them a step backwards.

In 2005, former President Thabo Mbeki signed the Constitution Twelfth Amendment Act of 2005 and the Cross-boundary Municipalities Laws and Related Matters Act. The Constitution Twelfth Amendment Act provided for the re-determination of the geographic areas of provinces. As a result, the Merafong cross-boundary Municipality was incorporated into the North West Province.

Eventually, the residents of Khutsong took their case to the Constitutional Court.

Residents asked the Court to declare that the Gauteng Provincial Legislature had failed to comply with its constitutional obligation of facilitating public involvement in its processes. This included the approval of the Twelfth Amendment Bill by the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). "In the alternative", the affidavit read, "they seek a declaration that the Legislature failed to exercise its legislative powers rationally when it voted in support of the relevant parts of the Twelfth Amendment Bill in the NCOP."

The move could also have serious implications for the Independent Electoral Commission on the eve of national elections, because if the Cross-Boundary Bill, and the Constitution Sixteenth Amendment Bill were to be signed into law before the 2009 election date, the voting districts in the Merafong City Local Municipality would become part of the Gauteng provincial segment of the voters' roll.

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial and Local Government, Mr Lechesa Tsenoli said the processing of the legislation raised several issues that required early attention. Various government departments, including the Treasury, should play a vital role in the re-incorporation process, said Mr. Tsenoli.

The Bill to re-incorporate Merafong into Gauteng has to be tabled in the National Assembly and if passed, it will be sent to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) for approval. 



LESSONS FROM PI

The recent removal of Adv. Vusi Pikoli from office as the National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) was the first time Parliament and the Executive have had to deal with such a case. We summarise the annexure of the report by the ad hoc committee appointed to deal with the removal of Adv. Vusi Pikoli.

The committee's work was informed by the Ginwala Enquiry report and the President's letter to Parliament. The ad hoc Committee feels "that the relevant legislative framework is not sufficiently clear. Although the Enquiry found that there was no irretrievable breakdown in the relationship between

the Minister and the NDPP, this was clearly an area with significant potential for tension, as the principles of prosecutorial independence and political accountability had to appropriately balanced. The Committee notes with approval the Enquiry's recommendations that there be collegial discussions, as well as ongoing structured engagement and interface between the Minister and the NDPP to clarify their respective functions and responsibilities and lines of communication."

Next Parliament to assist

The Committee recommends that the Ministry and the National Prosecuting

Authority look into how to best manage this relationship, and that the incoming Parliament assists and oversees this. Is there a need for greater clarity on what is meant in section 179 (6) of the Constitution, that the Minister of Justice has "final responsibility" for the NPA, for example?

The need for clarity on the relationship between the Minister of Justice and the NPA has also been raised by the 18 September 2007 letter sent by the Minister to the NDPP. The relevant part reads: "In order for me to exercise my responsibilities as required by the constitution, I require all of the information on which you relied to take

KOLI

the legal steps to effect the arrest of and the preference of charges against the National Commissioner of the Police Service. This includes but is not limited to specific information or evidence indicating the direct involvement of the National Commissioner in any activity that constitutes a crime in terms of the laws of South Africa ... In pursuing your intended course of action and any prosecution, the NPA must do so in the public interest notwithstanding a prima facie case. Such exercise of discretion requires that all factors be taken into account, including the public interest.

"Therefore, I must be satisfied that indeed the public interest would be served should you go ahead with your intended course of action.

Until I have satisfied myself that sufficient information and evidence does exist for the arrest of and preference of charges against the National Commissioner of the Police Service, you shall not pursue the route that you have taken steps to pursue."

The Committee says the last sentence, in particular, has aroused controversy. The Ginwala Enquiry Report notes: "Adv Pikoli maintains that the letter constitutes an unlawful and unconstitutional instruction. Government has not put forward any cogent argument to dissuade me from a literal interpretation of the Minister's letter, which was an attempt to unlawfully interfere with Adv Pikoli's prosecutorial independence" (paragraph 289).

The Committee is of the view that the Ginwala Enquiry Report conclusion in this regard is reasonable, and there is a need to review the legislation and practice to better clarify the relationship between the Minister and NDPP.

The definition of "fit and proper" contained in the National Prosecuting Authority Act may need to be expanded to take account of other relevant criteria in ensuring that the NDPP discharges his or her responsibilities adequately and effectively.

No guidance

The ad hoc Committee added: "There may also be a need to provide greater legal clarity on the relationship between the outcome of an enquiry into fitness for office of the National Director of Public Prosecutions and the

President's decision on whether or not to remove the NDPP."

The Committee notes that the Ginwala Enquiry reported that the statutory framework did not provide it with any guidance, and that it had to devise its own rules and procedures. The Committee believes that it would be useful for the executive and Parliament to consider whether it is necessary to provide guidance on this process.

The Committee is of the view that it may be an anomaly that Parliament plays no role in appointing the NDPP, but has the final say in his or her removal. The review of the legislation should also consider whether Parliament should play any role in the appointment of the NDPP.

The Committee notes with disapproval "the role of the strained relationship between the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) in the events that unfolded. It recommends that the relevant incoming Parliamentary Committees should monitor this on a regular basis, as do the relevant co-ordinating structures within the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster." 

From the report by Mr OE Monareng and Kgoshi Mokoena, co-chairpersons of the ad hoc Joint Committee to Consider Matters in Terms of Section 12 of the National Prosecuting Authority Act, 1998 (Act 32 of 1998)



From left: Kgoshi Mokoena and Mr OE Monareng, co-chairpersons and (top left) members of the ad hoc Joint Committee

BYE FOR NOW!

FAREWELL DINNER FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

by Sakhile Mokoena

As the 3rd Democratic Parliament prepared to wrap up its business for the year and end its five year term, Parliament hosted an emotional farewell dinner at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC).

Dancing and dining were the order of the evening as Members of Parliament put aside their political differences and hugged, kissed and said goodbye to each other.

Dressed for a warm summer evening the MPs, accompanied by spouses and in some cases by their children, filled Hall 3 of the CTICC for their "last supper" to mark the end of a successful term of making laws.

With well-known radio talk show host Eric Miyeni at the mic, Judith Sephuma's Thobela Rea Locha played quietly in the background when the arrival of the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) was announced.

Good music continued as the MPs and their guests helped themselves to starters, along with liquid

refreshments while the Speaker Ms. Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde and Mr. Mninwa Mahlangu NCOP Chairperson, handed out gifts and certificates of excellence to leaders of the political parties represented in Parliament.

"As we exit we can look back with pride and say we have served the nation exceptionally well during our time in Parliament", said the Speaker, to considerable applause from the MPs.

NCOP Chairperson Mr. Mahlangu said there had been both mistakes and good decisions by the Presiding Officers but that "was part of leadership". He quoted the Bible injunction to remind members that there was a time for everything. "It's our time to go."

For some, the real party started after the main course was served and members joined musician Sylvia Mdunyelwa on stage as she sang Miriam Makeba's Phata Phata.

The more youthful MPs wrapped up with Thapelo Mofokeng and the Ngcukana Brothers. The "house" partied on until midnight. 



LONG LIVE PARLIAMENT

Table staff hard at work as Parliament changes hands

by Abel Mputing

After an end-of-session flurry for Parliament to conclude its legislative mandate, a lull has ensued.

But Parliamentary staff are already seized with preparations for the 4th Parliament, to ensure a seamless ushering in of the new members. And the Table staff of the National Assembly (NA) is hard at work preparing all of the 3rd Parliament's house committees reports, as well as institutional memory projects such as the publication of the Procedural Developments in the National Assembly.

One of the most important guides at this time is the Handbook for Members of Parliament, a concise and detailed document on procedural and administrative matters concerning the outgoing members, those who will return to Parliament after the elections and the first-timers.

"This handbook is intended to inform Members of administrative procedures they have to follow when Parliament adjourns for the 2009 elections. In a nutshell, this Handbook provides information and contact details on matters ranging from a Member's pension, relocation, clearing of their offices, travel claims and travel facilities for former members. It is a procedural undertaking that precedes the ushering in of new members of any new Parliamentary term," says Mr Masibulele Xaso, Undersecretary of the NA Table.

The NA table staff, in conjunction with NCOP table staff, must also assist in developing proposals for the framework of the 4th Parliament.

"We have to provide administrative and procedural support to the process that will come up with a programme framework that will, among other things, determine the first sittings of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces. But also we have to participate in the institutional project on the induction of new MPs, and make inputs in the process of determining how the budgetary process will be resumed by the 4th Parliament. We think that the idea would be to ensure that the process is not unnecessarily drawn out," Mr. Xaso said.

"Extended Public Committees: mini-National Assemblies that sit concurrently: could be one of the preferred ways of dealing with the budget debates, however such a decision could only be taken by the Programme Committee," he said.

Despite the National Assembly being adjourned, two ad hoc committees, one, on the Criminal Law (forensic procedures) Amendment Bill and the other on the appointment of the National Youth Development Agency Board are still sitting. "The outcome of the latter is expected by 19 March and if the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) proposed amendments to the Criminal Law (Forensic Procedures) Amendment Bill, that may be a reason for the National

Assembly to be reconvened. However, such decisions are not taken by officials but by the programming structures," he said.

Although the date of the general elections was announced by President Kgalema Motlanthe during his reply to the State of the Nation Address debate in February and the business of the National Assembly of the 3rd Parliament has been concluded, as recently as the second half of February some parties swore in new Members of Parliament.

Mr Xaso says parties could have done so at this late stage for various reasons. "If, say, a given party loses three of its members, then that party is effectively three members weaker, and that might affect it when it has to, for instance in this case, vote on the outstanding Criminal Law Amendment Bill or the appointment of the board of the newly formed National Youth Development Agency," he said.

The NA Table's preparatory work for the 4th Parliament will culminate in them being represented at the IEC centre after the elections, during the counting process. "During the counting of votes some of our staff members will be at the IEC (offices) because Parliament is a major stakeholder in the election process. While there, they'll receive information from the IEC on who from all the parties' lists qualify to be Members of Parliament and they will relay the information to their colleagues, who'll be at Parliament charged with the task of compiling the data," Mr Xaso said. 

INSERT: Special Report

INSESSION at the State of the Nation Address 2009 (Reports and pictures)

"YOUR SEAT IN PARLIAMENT"

SPECIAL ISSUE 06 FEBRUARY



FROM LEFT: Mr Kgalema Motlanthe President of South Africa, Ms Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde, Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Mninwa Mahlangu, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Ms Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Baleka Mbete, Deputy President and Ms Peggy Hollander, Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces



Ms Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly



Ms Peggy Hollander, Deputy Chairperson
of the National Council of Provinces

All eyes on **Parliament**

Ms Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

The State of the Nation Address is a very important annual event when we have the whole nation focusing on this institution. We are actually very honoured that there has been so much interest shown by a cross-section of our population.

We are aware that all the people that came here today were actually keen to hear what the president was going to say and thereafter evaluate for themselves. As Parliament we are just so pleased that it is all happening at our institution.

We have also been highly encouraged by the level of participation and involvement of the general public in today's event. This shows that our democracy has indeed deepened in line with Parliament's theme for this year.

This is also a culmination of weeks of earnest preparation that was jointly overseen by the Office of the Secretary together with Presiding Officers of Parliament. It is indeed heartwarming to see all the hard work bearing such fruit as we have seen today.

While fun was a significant element of today's programme, we have not lost sight of the fact that this is an important reminder to us as elected representatives that people are actually expecting Parliament to deliver on the promise of a better life for all.

Our message to all our guests today and the rest of the South African public is that they should continue to support our Parliament and to make our democracy a living democracy, that exists for the sole purpose of improving the lives of the people.

Ms Peggy Hollander, Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces,

This is one of the most important days in the history of South Africa and of Parliament and I must say that staff and the Presiding Officers have worked very closely with each other, and very hard, to make this day a big success.

Luckily the State President also delivered a generally very good message.

For me the best part of the day, which is undoubtedly my favourite, was when I accompanied the President and esteemed guests inside Parliament.

We wish every one of our guests "all of the best".



Ms Baleka Mbete, Deputy President and Ms Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Doing it together

South Africans who have made outstanding contributions to socio-economic developments through working with communities were invited guests at the 2009 State of the Nation Address. We talked to some of them.



Reverend Benjamin Mzamo of Gauteng.

I must say that I am overwhelmed to be invited to attend an occasion such as the State of the Nation Address. I have never imagined myself being part of the joint sitting of the democratic Parliament. It's a historic day. There are many selfless people in Gauteng who made and continue to make remarkable contributions in building the South African nation, so to be chosen to represent them at the 2009 State of the Nation Address is unbelievable and can't be expressed in words. I am very delighted.

This day deepens my commitment to the people beyond Gauteng's boundaries. I did not realise that what I have been doing for the people has been recognised to that extent. Certainly I am going to do more.



Mr Godfrey Motshwane of North West.

I'm very excited to be in the national Parliament and sit among great leaders of South Africa and dignitaries from other countries. It is a great day for me and the people I am representing here today. The day means that I should mobilize others to be part of the community and make our lives together, and fight crime together.

I feel humbled to be invited to be here at the State of the Nation Address. I am going to continue to be part of the community and make our lives together, better lives.



Mrs Esther Mabuza - Mpumalanga.

I am very excited to be in Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. I feel that I am part of the South African nation.

It commits me to doing more for my country. For the first time I had an opportunity to hear the president addressing the nation, not listening to the radio. I am clear about the achievements of our government and the challenges that still lie ahead, and I am going to increase my contributions in pushing back the frontiers of poverty.



Mr Ralegae 'Coosta' Kitsa of Free State.

I have been looking forward to this day because I knew that one day I would mingle with great leaders in this Parliament, because this is a democratic people's Parliament. I am happy that the dream has come true. Being part of

very important people who are here today, raises my spirit. I am going out to my province and will ensure that I tell others to contribute more than I have done, so that they too get the opportunity to attend the next State of the Nation Address or other important national events.

It has convinced me to remain in the revolution!



Jameson Njenesane from Musina, Limpopo.

I'm here to represent my province and the city of Musina. I'm passionate about farming and have been in this field since 1952. I'm delighted that my farming work has been recognised and wish that my colleagues in farming, especially the developing farmers, could also have this kind of opportunity. I am more interested in the State of the Nation from the agricultural point of view. So, I think that Parliament should strengthen its ties with developing farmers, and particularly those in deep rural areas.



Eminent South Africans at Parliament today were (FROM LEFT) Ms. Magretha Macdonald, Ms. Sarah Coangae, Mr Godfrey Motshwane, Ms Esther Mabuza, Mr Jameson Njenesane, Dr Farooq Meer, Rev. Benjamin Mzamo, Mr Ralegae Kitsa, Ms Nondumiso Mantanga

'Honoured to be your Guard, Sir!'

The Junior Guard of Honour looked spick and span as they stood to attention for President Motlanthe. We got in a quick word with four of them...



Saabirah Achmat (12), Grade 7, St Paul's Primary School.

"I feel very honoured to have been part of the Junior Guard of Honour, because it was once in a

life-time opportunity. I was also excited because I have never been to Parliament before, so it was an opportunity to see Parliament, and experience first hand what it's all about. I also saw face-to-face the President of the country for the first time.

"Before coming to Parliament, I went to the Library and read about Parliament. Parliament makes all the laws that rule our country."



Asisipho Skweyiya (18), Grade 12, The Settlers High School.

"It's a privilege to most of us be chosen as the Junior Guards

because we never thought we would get the chance to personally see the President, as well as the people in Parliament. This opportunity will most probably never come again.

"Lately there has been a lot of negativity about the country, and the State of the Nation was an opportunity for the President to tell us that all is well, and also tell us about our standards of living."



Siphelo Ndabeni (13), Grade 7, Masiphumelele Primary School.

"This was my first time in Parliament. The State of the Nation is where the President

deals with people's concerns. It was very exhilarating to see the President, telling us how the country has done in the past years."



Lucia Gwele (12), Grade 7, Kuyasa Primary School.

"I never ever dreamt that I would get this opportunity.

I wish that my parents could see me here, because they would be very excited because they only get to see Parliament on television."

Junior Guard of Honour



Live and in person

The winners of the National schools competition “Why I want to visit Parliament” were delighted to attend the State of the Nation Address:

Calvin Ratladi (18), Zicheus Malaza Secondary School, Mpumalanga.

“I was looking forward to hearing about the progress that has been made in the past five years. I am very happy that I have experienced being in Parliament at this time. It was my first time in Cape Town and it was a great pleasure that they considered me for this.

“As disabled persons we are usually degraded and opportunities like this are not given to us. But I am happy.”

Mpho Madiba (17), Mmadikana Secondary School, Limpopo.

“I am happy I finally got to see the President and people that I usually get to see only on television.

“This is the first competition that I have won, I thought that I had bad luck. I am very happy and I using this opportunity to learn as much as I possibly can.”

Precious Marase (16), Madiba Comprehensive School, Gauteng.

“I feel honoured and I am very proud. I’m so inspired, this was a good opportunity for me. I hope what the President said will change people’s mindset about crime and that things that are currently happening in the country will be corrected.

“I wish I was given an opportunity to speak so that I can raise my concerns about education, correctional services and health, as they affect many people.”

Lesego Kantani (17), Kimberley Girls High, Northern Cape.

“Being here was an honour and great privilege. I was very excited about this day and finally getting to see people that I usually see on TV.

“I am happy that I got this opportunity to

see this ceremony live, I did not only see it happen, I was part of it. I missed previous events as this ceremony is usually held while I am at school.”

Bulelwa Mfinyezi (24), Pakamani Senior Secondary School, Eastern Cape.

“I was very happy to finally get an opportunity to see President Kgalema Motlanthe. I knew of him but I would not point him out if asked to, the only person I can point out is Jacob Zuma. I am a little disappointed though as I was hoping to be given a chance to recite a poem for him before he addressed the masses.”



at Parliament

Tshepang Lesole (17), St Josephs Christian Brothers College, Free State.

"From watching the media and the hype created about this event, I wanted to get here sooner.

"To me this day meant getting an opportunity to see the Members of Parliament and to experience being in their midst. I wanted to experience different elements of Parliament."

Sphelele Dlamini (16), Umlazi Comprehensive Technical College, KwaZulu-Natal.

"I am happy and most honoured to have been part of people ruling our land. I wish they can do more to develop townships and improve people's lives. I was hoping to get a chance to speak to people about the plight of school children. What I would have told them has to do with the improvement of security at schools. Pupils get stabbed at school and this happens regularly in township schools. I think the solution to this would be to bring police in to provide safety."

Ayanda Sono (17), Deaconhill High School, Western Cape.

"I am happy I was part of this day as I was looking forward to seeing the President and just being inside Parliament.

"I wish we were also given an opportunity to speak. Things I would have spoken about include asking for more help for people working in community organisations. For instance, we have a community group in Khayelitsha which does drama, dance, music and community work but we have no place to do our rehearsals or any equipment."

Jawe Keanole, 17, Ramotshere High School, North West.

"I am very proud that I was part of the proceedings. I was looking forward to hearing what the president had to say about education, health, crime and unemployment.

"Another issue that is important to me is equality for all, as I believe women are still getting a raw deal. We need to talk more about stopping gender discrimination."

Competition winners:
(from left to right)
BACK: Tshepang Lesole,
Ayanda Sono, Precious
Marase, Bulelwa Mfinyezi,
Sphelele Dlamini
MIDDLE: Jawe Keanole,
Lesego Kantani
FRONT: Calvin Ratladi,
Mpho James Madiba







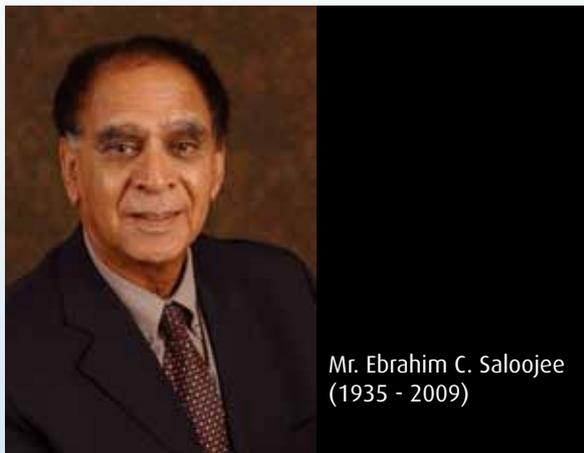
Pictures of the State of the Nation Address 2009

'Champions of the poor'

Parliament has praised Ebrahim Cassim Saloojee and Johnny Schippers for their dedication to the plight of poor people in South Africa. The two Members of Parliament died on the same weekend recently

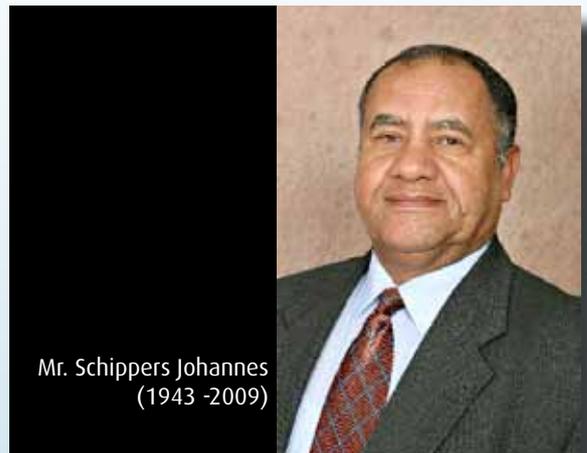
By Sakhile Mokoena

Both men were described as "Champions of the poor who spent much of their adult lives fighting for social development in the country and campaigning for the welfare of ordinary people." In a solemn sitting the National Assembly paid tribute to them and described their commitment and dedication to working for the people as truly inspiring.



Mr. Ebrahim C. Saloojee
(1935 - 2009)

"Comrade Cas" Saloojee passed on at home in Johannesburg on Sunday 1 February after a long illness. He was one of the longest-serving Members of Parliament, having first been elected to the institution in the 1994 democratic elections. "He dedicated much of his adult life to social development and served Parliament with distinction", said Rev Makhenkesi Stofile, the Minister of Sport and Recreation. Members applauded quietly as they remembered their departed comrades. Dr Motsoko Pheko of the Pan Africanist Congress commended Saloojee as "indeed an Honourable Member". "It takes a great deal of discipline to serve this Parliament for 15 years," Dr Pheko said. Besides serving as the chairperson of the Social Development Portfolio Committee for five years (1994 to 1999) he also served on the Portfolio Committees for Finance, Sport and Recreation and Public Service and Administration.



Mr. Schippers Johannes
(1943 -2009)

"Bra Johnny" Schippers died in a car crash on the way to an ANC rally in the Western Cape on Saturday 31 January. He was praised by all parties in the House as an inspiration to the youth for his contribution to community development. A hard worker, dynamic activist, social worker and teacher, were some of the descriptions of Bra Johnny, as he was commonly known. As an MP, Schippers was always well-dressed and often quiet in committee meetings but when he spoke "wisdom came out of his mouth." He became a Member of Parliament in 2000 (under the New National Party) and in 2003 he crossed the floor to join the ANC. Bra Johnny served on the Portfolio Committee for Public Works, the Portfolio Committee on Defence, and the Portfolio Committee on Safety and Security.

Prisms of Light

TITLE: *Prisms of Light*

AUTHOR: Mewa Ramgobin,
South African MP

PUBLISHER: Iqula Publishing and
Mewa Ramgobin

REVIEWER: Mrs Gwen Mahlangu-
Nkabinde, Speaker of the National
Assembly

In the foreword of the book, Rev. Makhenkesi Arnold Stofile, Minister of Sport and Recreation, invokes an ancient Persian proverb to describe the author: "Every man goes down to his death bearing in his hand only that which he has given away."

Even though seemingly read in reverse, the African equivalent says "every baby is born clasping talents or gifts for the world." The commonality of the two proverbs is the essence of imparting something to the world, be it material in nature, knowledge, skills and so forth. Mewa Ramgobin is one such person. He gives in abundance, whether in politics or culture.

The essence of the book, stylistically and otherwise, can be discerned from Dr. Pallo Jordan when he quotes William Shakespeare to the effect that a "Good name in man and woman, dear my Lord, is the immediate jewel of their soul." This book is arranged in a series of vignettes, each one focusing on insights or reflections of luminaries that Mewa Ramgobin has come across in his life. Their listing is not a mere names-dropping exercise but, as Dr. Jordan puts it, this "autobiography is an author's dialogue with his own experience, in

which he invites you to participate".

Through his contact with these people, the reader definitely sees how they not only enriched his life, but also how their interactions portrayed "complex relationships between South Africa's highly contested past and the ways in which South Africans choose to remember their past and see themselves in post-apartheid South Africa". This complexity, which constitutes a climax of the book for me, is captured in a poignant moment Mr. Ramgobin shared with the unlikely guest in his house (due to their vast if not antagonistic political differences), the former Bophuthatswana leader, Mr. Lucas Mangope. The moment is captured as follows:

He came with his wife on a Sunday afternoon. I have yet to come across a person who could drink as much tea and so passionately. But I guess Lucas could also say that he had not come across a person who was so passionate about a united South Africa and perils of re-tribalization and how Bantustans were instruments of political domination and repression... (p.97)

The above is a testimony of how people like the Hon. Ramgobin went an extra mile to reach out to those South Africans - ordinarily considered enemies - in the name of national reconciliation and nation building. This is precisely why Parliament is proud to be associated not only with the author as a Member of Parliament but also the book itself.

As a former member and office bearer of the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW), the Hon. Ramgobin published his first novel:

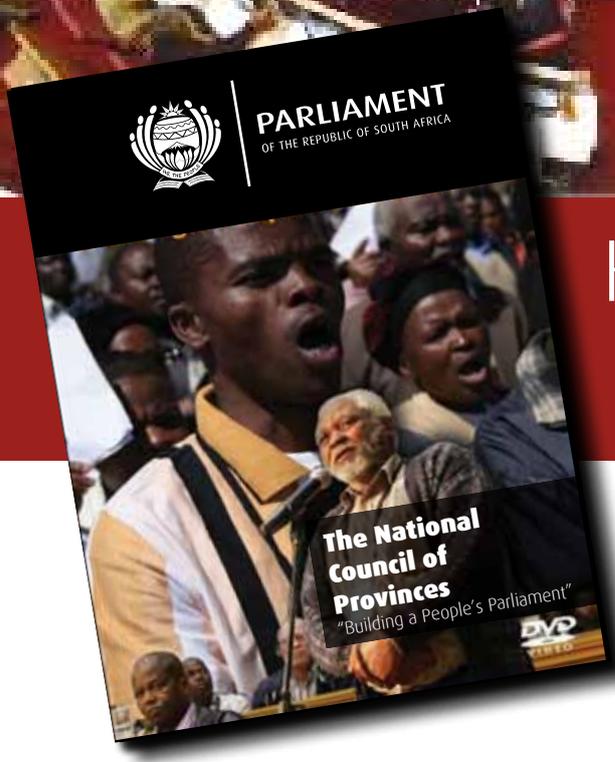
Waiting to live, in 1986. ***Prisms of Light*** is

his second title in the literary field. This is a project for which he has

received abundant support from luminaries such as the Rev. Dr. Stofile, and Dr. Pallo Jordan, Minister of Arts and Culture, who also contributed a blurb as part of the cover of the book. So did the South African Nobel Literature Laureate, Nadine Gordimer who wrote that "for Mewa Ramgobin, to be Indian is to be Everyman, Everywoman".

Amongst some of his political initiatives are the establishment of the Gandhi Museum and Library, organising the Gandhi annual lectures and teaching people across the racial divide. Connected to these is a string of positions he occupied in the Mass Democratic Movement, for which he earned a number of banning orders as a reward. 





Humble beginnings to **People's power**

The National Council of Provinces, 12 years on, is captured on DVD.

TITLE: *The National Council of Provinces*
AUTHOR & PUBLISHER: Parliament
REVIEWED by: INSESSION

"Let's have a National Council of Provinces." With this decision, the founders of the second house which was designed to replace South Africa's defunct Senate, decided that it should be replaced with a dynamic and involved system that would draw much more widely on the political wishes and the governmental skills of the populace. This DVD (The National

Council of Provinces "Building a People's Parliament") tells the story of how in their search for something unique, South African, and custom-built to involve as many people as far afield as possible in sharing in government, the NCOP's founders managed after much debating and studying of alternative models overseas, to get it right.

As former President Thabo Mbeki puts the question: "After liberation, how do you constitute government to retain the element of participatory government?" In other words, how could a non-centralised, non-federal, people-driven system be given a new lease on life, that would involve people in far-off provinces on a sustained basis? The answer lies in the NCOP's formula of taking the democratically-oriented debates and concurrent decision-making that marks the new spheres of government, (rather than the old-

style "tiers of government") directly to the provinces. NCOP representatives cannot fake it: they must know what they are taking to their province, they must know and think hard about what advice they give, or their province could make the wrong decision.

That's the basis of their worth, because "each province has a vote" and that is what could possibly lead to the expansion of the NCOP as the business of government extends to every corner of South Africa. The DVD is a useful summary of the workings of the NCOP and it also raises some interesting questions on its future.

Distribution is free of charge, available from:

- 1. All provincial legislatures**
- 2. All national libraries (including University libraries)**
- 3. Public Relations Officer, NCOP, P.O. Box 15, Cape Town, 8000.**

THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT



National Assembly

National Assembly - NA

The National Assembly (NA) consists of 400 members elected in accordance with a system of proportional representation, i.e. if a party garnered 40% of the votes in a general election, it is entitled to take up 40% of the seats in the National Assembly.

The Constitution provides for a Speaker and Deputy Speaker. The duties of a Speaker, as the principal office-bearer in the Assembly, fall broadly into three categories:

- Presiding over sittings of the Assembly, maintaining order, and applying and interpreting its rules, conventions, practices and precedents (these duties are shared with the other presiding officers).
- Acting as a representative of, and spokesperson for, the Assembly and (with the Chairperson of the NCOP) for Parliament in the outside world.
- In conjunction with the Chairperson of the NCOP, acting as chief executive officer for Parliament.

The Constitution also strengthened public participation in the work of the National Assembly by making public sittings and meetings the norm. Members of the public are regularly invited to make submissions or representations on legislation and other matters before committees of the National Assembly and they can even petition Parliament if they feel particularly strongly about a matter.



National Council of Provinces

National Council of Provinces - NCOP

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) came into being with the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

The role of the NCOP is stated clearly in section 42(4) of the Constitution: "The National Council of Provinces represents the provinces to ensure that provincial interests are taken into account in the national sphere of government. It does this mainly by participating in the national legislative process and by providing a national forum for public consideration of issues affecting the provinces." Because delegations vote according to the mandate of their provincial legislature, the legislative process in the National Council of Provinces must allow an opportunity for provinces to discuss matters and formulate positions. At the same time, provinces, through their delegations, need an opportunity to discuss matters with each other. To allow proper consultation and discussion both within provincial legislatures and among provinces, the National Council of Provinces operates on a six-week cycle. In each cycle specific times are set aside for work in the provinces and for decision in the NCOP. In addition to its overarching responsibility to hold the Executive accountable for its responsibilities in relation to provinces, the Constitution gives the NCOP a number of very specific oversight responsibilities that relate to the relationship between the spheres of government and to matters of national importance. In terms of section 72 of the Constitution, the NCOP has a duty to facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the NCOP and its committees and to conduct its business in an open manner. The fact that the NCOP must obtain mandates on some national legislation in itself opens up a significant opportunity for public participation.

THROUGH THE LENS



Civil Guards of Honour at the 2009 State of the Nation Address



Umlibo kantu traditional group performed at the 2009 State of the Nation Address



Mr Luzuko Jacobs, Parliament's spokesperson, interviewed by the SABC News team



Members of Parliament and guests at the State of the Nation Address



CITIZEN'S FORUM

Have Your Say

In this, the first of what will be a regular column in Parliament's INSESSION magazine, let me start by thanking all you readers who wrote to tell us what you think about INSESSION and how we can make it better.

So far, you've asked for continued quality, accessible information about what Parliament does, for more educational issues - for example, the coming elections - and for more space for public views about Parliament.

Also very useful were your suggestions about making INSESSION easier to get hold of and to use as a resource.

These include posting INSESSION on Parliament's website (www.parliament.gov.za), numbering the magazine for easy reference, increasing the print run and distributing it to all community media. We've already implemented most of these suggestions.

Comments came from a cross section of South Africans - from the Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo and the Western Cape, from universities, community radio, research institutions, consultants and the "person in the street".

These comments, and those yet to come, all help Parliament to meet its Constitutional mandate - as South Africa's law-making institution that also monitors implementation of these laws and the policies that underpin them.

But INSESSION is only one of many initiatives from Parliament aimed at deepening and broadening engagement with our people.

There is another magazine that we produce called REFLECTIONS, which comes out once a year, generally in December, as an insert in commercial newspapers.

And Parliament also has other public participation, education and oversight initiatives. They include Taking Parliament to the People, The People's Assembly, the Youth Parliament, the Women's Parliament and our voter education campaign around this year's general election.

All of these initiatives open a window for people to better understand - and participate in - Parliament as an institution whose goal is to promote representative and participatory democracy. INSESSION and these other initiatives also provide a window for Parliament to better understand the concerns of the people we serve.

How many laws Parliament makes - and what these are - is important. But Parliament's success should be gauged also by how it monitors implementation of the laws that it makes and its relevance and responsiveness to our people's needs.

So dear reader, continue claiming your space in this magazine. Continue giving us feedback - congratulations or criticism - and articles that we can consider for publication. 

This is your Parliament.

Make your voice heard.

Luzuko Jacobs

Editor-in-Chief



Petronella Mentor, MP
with students at Parliament



Tomorrow's leaders tour Parliament



Students from Sweden at Parliament



OUR SOUTH AFRICA – THE SUN

The sun heals the divisions of the past, improves the quality of life of all South Africans, frees the potential of each person and builds a united and democratic South Africa, taking its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.



OUR PEOPLE – THE PROTEA LEAVES

Our people, building on the foundation of a democratic and open society, freely elect representatives, acting as a voice of the people and providing a national forum for public consideration of issues. “WE, THE PEOPLE” is the emblem’s legend, taken from the preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.



OUR PARLIAMENT – THE DRUM, PROTEA AND TRIANGLES (NINE PROVINCES)

The drum calls the people’s Parliament, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, to consider national and provincial issues, ensuring government by the people under the Constitution.



OUR CONSTITUTION – THE BOOK

Our constitution lays the foundation for a democratic and open society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. It is the supreme law of our country, and ensures government by the people.