

in session



AUGUST WOMEN'S MONTH EDITION





IMAGE SOURCE: GALLO IMAGES

Parliament Celebrates Women's Day

Parliament's Presiding Officers, led by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Thoko Didiza, and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, join South Africans today in commemorating the 68th anniversary of Women's Day.

Women's Day has profound significance for the country. On this day, 68 years ago, women – young and old, of all races, some with babies on their backs and coming from all corners of South Africa – descended on Pretoria for a march to the Union Buildings to say no to oppressive pass laws. This indomitable spirit of the women of 1956 has shaped our country's destiny and ignited a beacon of hope that still guides us today. Today, their unity and determination still inspire

us to strive for a more just, equitable, and inclusive society.

Said the Presiding Officers: "Women's Day presents us with an opportunity for deeper reflection on the country's progress over the last 30 years of a democratic dispensation towards greater gender equity and inclusivity. The democratic dividend has been felt by many as our women have become the makers of history

as leaders in government, parliament and legislatures, the judiciary, and the private sector. More recently, among them is Justice Mandisa Maya, the first woman appointed as Chief Justice in the country. We welcome and applaud this historic milestone."

Reflecting on the past thirty years of freedom, Parliament has passed laws that have improved the lives of women from what our

forebears experienced in their lifetime under apartheid and colonialism. This includes pieces of legislation such as the historic feat for reproductive rights with the passing of the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act, the Commission on Gender Equality Act, the Criminal Procedure Second Amendment Act and the Maintenance Act, to name a few. These all sought to uplift and improve the lives of women.

The Commission on Gender Equality Act established the Commission for Gender Equality that promotes gender equality and women's rights in South Africa. The Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act extended freedom of choice by affording every woman the right to choose a safe and legal termination of pregnancy. The Criminal Procedure Second Amendment Act came into operation on 5 August 2022 and amended



IMAGE SOURCE: GALLO IMAGES

the Criminal Procedure Act to regulate the granting and cancellation of bail in domestic-related offences. It also regulates sentences in respect of offences committed against vulnerable persons such as women and children. The Maintenance Act dealt with challenges

of the Federation of South African Women (FSAW). The Charter called for, among others, the enfranchisement of men and women of all races; equal opportunities in employment; equal pay for equal work; equal rights concerning property, marriage and children; and the removal

forms of violent discrimination against women are still entrenched in our society.

Said the Presiding Officers: "In celebrating these milestones and advances made in the pursuit of women's emancipation in the last thirty years of our democracy,

every South African."

As a responsive Parliament, during its sixth term, Parliament also passed legislation, including the Criminal Law Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Bill, the National Register for Sexual Offences



IMAGE SOURCE: GALLO IMAGES

women experienced with previous maintenance laws. It provides for the deduction of maintenance from a person's salary and places a duty on the state to trace people who failed to pay maintenance.

This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the 1954 Women's Charter by the founding conference

of all laws and customs that denied women such equality.

However, as we reflect on the good work done to uplift women over the last 30 years, we must acknowledge the challenges that persist. Women still bear the disproportionate burden of poverty and gender-based violence (GBV) and other

we remain conscious that more still needs to be done to achieve a non-sexist, non-racial, democratic, and prosperous South Africa. But we must do more, be more vigilant, and guard against this scourge threatening the gains of progress made for our women. This responsibility is a shared one – for government, Parliament, and

Bill, and the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill. All these pieces of legislation were passed and assented to by the President to address gaps identified to strengthen the state's capacity to deal with GBV.

Parliament will continue to use all aspects of its constitutional mandate, including oversight over relevant government structures, to ensure the effective implementation of legislation to promote and protect the constitutionally enshrined rights of women in society.

On this Women's Day, let us honour the memory of those who sacrificed so much to advance women's social, political and economic status in the country. Parliament salutes all the women of South Africa and reaffirms its commitment to the ongoing programme of genuine women empowerment, emancipation and development and continues to fight the scourge of all forms of violence against women. 🌸



IMAGE SOURCE: GALLO IMAGES



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OUR IDEALS

Vision

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- enhancing public involvement; deepening engagement in international fora;
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President Cyril Ramaphosa Answers Questions in National Assembly



1. Mkhacani Maswanganyi (ANC):

How will the government (a) develop the Sovereign Wealth Fund and (b) ensure that its development benefits the majority of the people of the Republic?

The President:

“Honourable Speaker, sovereign wealth funds are often used by many countries around the world to harness national resources for economic and social development. They are often used to preserve and grow a country’s wealth for the benefit of future generations.

A document published in December 2021 by the National Treasury describes some of the features of a sovereign wealth fund. They say that such a fund is often a state-owned company that would accumulate resources for capital investment through a dedicated revenue instrument or instruments. It would

then invest these resources in different asset classes. Countries with sovereign wealth funds, and there are a number of them around the world, often maintain surpluses in their current accounts and balance sheets or balances. This provides the fiscal space to establish a sovereign wealth fund.

With our current fiscal position, which includes substantial current account and budget deficits, it is not the most opportune and favourable time for us to establish a sovereign wealth fund. However, a number of options are under consideration.

Funding for service delivery remains under pressure for us. Additional resources are required to improve the recruitment of key personnel such as police and teachers. We also need to increase investment in the maintenance of basic service infrastructure.

In light of these realities, the most appropriate policy path for us is to use any additional resources at this moment to reduce our country’s debt burden and improve service delivery.

Several countries use revenue from exploiting their natural resources to establish and

sustain sovereign wealth funds. In our country, however, the public revenues or royalties that we derive from mineral resources have historically not been very reliable nor have they been very consistent. Therefore, we have suggested that one of the possible routes towards establishing a sovereign wealth fund is reforming and consolidating state-owned enterprises. This is the route several countries have used, and one example that I learned of was Singapore through Temasek, Dubai and the United Arab Emirates UAE through their investment in the Dubai Fund.

We are working to implement a new centralised ownership model for our state-owned enterprises. As I said in the Opening of Parliament Address, establishing a state-owned enterprise holding company will give us greater capacity to build a sovereign wealth fund. This has been done successfully by other countries whose sovereign wealth funds have built up capital from the high performance of the state-owned enterprises rather than from the fiscus.

While the conditions do not currently exist to establish the immediate establishment of a sovereign wealth fund, this is an objective to which

we should continue to work. Such a fund could ensure that the national wealth of our country is effectively used to support economic and social development for years to come. I thank you, Madam Speaker.”



2. Mr George Michalakis (DA):

Has the government commissioned any studies or investigations to determine the extent to which private sector investments into the crumbling ports, railways and other infrastructure can drive the economic growth of the Republic? If not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details of the (a) findings of such studies or investigations and (b) steps that the government is taking to facilitate and encourage private sector investment?

The President:

“Honourable Speaker, honourable members, for our economy to grow, we need an efficient and well-functioning economy but, more particularly, a well-functioning logistics system.

If the goods we produce are to be globally competitive, we need to know that as we produce our goods, they have a channel through which they will travel from our ports to the places of our destination. This is why we have focused on the logistics sector as part of our broader agenda for economic reform.

For many years, our rail system and ports have suffered from underinvestment, particularly in infrastructure and equipment and in the maintenance of that equipment. This has contributed to our economy’s deteriorating performance. This trend was exacerbated during the state capture period when funds were diverted from pressing infrastructure needs.

The poor condition of our rail network and the inefficient operation of our port terminals now represent—what I would call—a binding constraint on economic growth and job creation. This has implications for key sectors of our economy, such

as mining, agriculture, and manufacturing.

We are urgently working to restore our logistics system to world-class standards. A number of our port outlets used to be amongst the best in the world, but they have deteriorated over time. Due to Transnet's limited balance sheet and our constrained fiscal resources, we need to mobilise capital from the private sector, where the money is.

During the Sixth Administration, Operation Vulindlela, together with the Department of Transport, commissioned research on the opportunities for private sector participation in the logistics sector. This research found that there is a significant appetite for private sector investment in ports and rail. It also found that a clear and consistent legal and regulatory framework is needed to unlock this investment, which requires a level playing field for private operators. This work informed the development of the Freight Logistics Roadmap and the Private Sector Participation Framework for the rail sector. The roadmap was developed through consultation with the various key players in that sector, including business, labour, and government.

Significant progress has already been made in implementing the Freight Logistics Roadmap, which Cabinet approved in December 2023.

Transnet has published a draft Network Statement for the rail system. This will enable private rail operators to access the network for the first time.

Transnet is undergoing a fundamental restructuring process to separate infrastructure from operations. This is done by establishing the Rail Infrastructure Manager and

the National Ports Authority as independent subsidiaries of Transnet.

Private sector participation is also being introduced in container terminals. This is starting with an equity partnership between Transnet and an international terminal operator for the Durban Pier 2 Container Terminal.

The Department of Transport has already established a dedicated Private Sector Participation Unit to identify and develop further opportunities for private investment. These opportunities would be realised through concessions, joint ventures, and other models. At the same time, we have made it clear that port and rail infrastructure will remain in public ownership even as competition is introduced in the operations.

We are, therefore, very clear that this is not a process of privatisation; it is a process of concessions, enabling those with money that currently our Transnet balance sheet cannot support to bring their money in and invest in making our ports and our container terminals much more efficient.

We are confident that through these efforts and by implementing the Freight Logistics Roadmap, we will enable massive new investment in our ports and our rail system. This will unlock economic growth and create jobs.

I saw that a number of companies, particularly one company that made investment commitments at the investment conference the previous year and last year, have already invested well over R500 million.

I was able to go to the port of Durban and see the container terminal they had already built, which is now working very efficiently. The container terminal works in a way where the producers of goods bring in their products, and they are contained at the

port. Thereafter this container manager is then able to allocate shipment times and all that. And all that has required quite a lot of money, but in the end, they rent the space from Transnet, and Transnet is able to continue its other important work of the reforms they've embarked upon.

So, it creates a mutually beneficial partnership between a state-owned entity and the private sector, which ultimately increases efficiency and will eventually return our ports to the global standards they used to occupy. Thank you, Honourable Speaker."



3. Dr John Hlope, Leader of the Opposition (MK):

With reference to his address to the African Union on 25 May 2020, during which he honoured the legions of revolutionary leaders of Africa who took up the mantle of PanAfricanism and who fought for the economic and political integration of Africa, (a) how does he justify the Republic's foreign policy which often seems to be more aligned with Western interests than with the needs of the African continent and (b) what steps has he taken to ensure that the Republic remains a leader in promoting African unity and self-determination?

The President:

"Thank you Honourable Deputy Speaker, Honourable Members, Africa is at the centre of our foreign policy. We are firmly committed to strengthening the African

Union, AU, and the Southern African Development Community, SADC, as instruments of peace, stability, integration, and development in our region and on our continent.

Our country plays a leading role in several continental platforms and issues. For example, as I said, we are the chair of the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative. We are currently the AU champion of pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. South Africa has been working closely with other countries towards fully implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area. This is set to eliminate trade barriers, boost intra-African trade, and advance prosperity for all on our continent.

We continue to work within the AU to end several ongoing conflicts on our continent and to restore constitutional and democratic government to countries that have recently experienced coup d'états.

We are currently involved in supporting the people of Mozambique, the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC, South Sudan, and other countries to enhance and ensure peace and stability on our continent.

As the African Union Chair in 2020, South Africa led the continental response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This involved overseeing a continent-wide strategy, setting up innovative online platforms to access essential medical supplies, and mobilising the international community to address issues such as African countries' debts and secure vaccines.

South Africa has consistently championed the African agenda on the world stage. Our country successfully advocated for the inclusion of the AU as a fully-fledged member of the G20. We have indicated that we will prominently include the interests of the African continent on the agenda of

our G20 presidency next year.

South Africa has also stressed the value of the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa BRICS alliance to advance Africa's developmental agenda. As chair of BRICS last year, our country invited representatives from other African countries to attend the summit that was held in Johannesburg. Forty-six African countries attended, including twenty heads of state and government.

We continue to pursue an independent foreign policy as a country. Through our foreign policy, we aim to promote our national interests, which are based on protecting and promoting our national sovereignty and constitutional order.

The key pillars of our foreign policy include promoting human rights, peace and stability and strengthening trade and investment ties with other countries.

Since the advent of democracy, South Africa has taken a position of non-alignment as we deal with global matters. This means we have chosen not to align ourselves with any major global powers or blocks. Instead, our country strives to work with all countries for global peace and development. Our own values and principles guide us, and we are committed to advancing the development and prosperity of the continent we call home. Thank you."



4. Ms Dina Pule (ANC):

Noting the high levels of concentration in critical

productive sectors of the economy like agriculture that is limiting access to markets for the previously disadvantaged small and emerging farmers, as well as the report of the Competition Commission that records that less than 1% in fresh produce sales come from smallholder or previously disadvantaged farmers, what are the integrated policy measures to (a) reverse the high levels of concentration in the agricultural sector and (b) expand access to markets for small-scale and previously disadvantaged farmers?

The President:

"Honourable Deputy Speaker, the concentration of ownership, production, and market access in agriculture constrains our economy's potential. It suppresses agricultural output, undermines growth and job creation, and perpetuates the historical injustice of land dispossession.

The agriculture and agro-processing master plan is an important instrument for addressing this challenge. The master plan aims to build an agriculture and agro-processing sector that is inclusive, competitive, job-creating, sustainable, and that continues to grow.

Pillar 5 of the master plan specifically seeks to facilitate market expansion, improve market access and promote trade. This will be achieved through, amongst other things, by strengthening partnerships with established industry associations to ensure that small and medium enterprises can access existing networks that facilitate exports.

The master plan itself aims to increase the participation of black farmers in the national fresh produce markets. It aims to ensure that the National Agricultural Marketing Council and the Marketing Agricultural

Marketing Products Act facilitate market access for black farmers.

The government is working with the Perishable Products Export Control Board to assist small-scale and previously disadvantaged farmers in complying with food safety requirements. Low throughput also hinders these farmers' ability to consistently supply the markets.

For this reason, the master plan has prioritised producer support as one of its critical pillars. This support includes financing, extension, and advisory services.

By 2030, the master plan aims to increase the share of black producers in grain production from 4% to 20%, in livestock from the current 32% to 40%, in fruits from the current 2% to 10%, and in vegetables from 15% to 29%.

Given the extent of the challenge facing small producers, we welcome the provisional report of the Competition Commission's Fresh Produce Market inquiry. We look forward to the publication of the final report and its recommendations for addressing market concentration in the agricultural sector. I thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker."



5. Mr Julius Malema (EFF):

Whether, considering the promise he made to the people of Alexandra in 2018 that the government would build one million houses in that township, and with reference to the Sjewtla township where people get washed away by the

river each time it rains, the building of the houses has commenced; if not, why not; if so, (a) what are the details of the progress that has been made thus far and (b) by when is the building of the houses envisaged to be completed in Alexandra?

The President:

"Honourable Deputy Speaker, in April 2019, I spoke to the Alexandra residents about the challenges they faced. I made reference to a programme to build one million houses for the whole of South Africa. It is quite clear from the recording of what I said that these houses were not just for Alexandra. There is simply not enough space in Alexandra to develop and even approach the scale that would amount to one million.

Housing in Alexandra has long been a challenge. Many people continue to move to Alexandra due to its proximity to economic opportunities, straining existing resources and increasing housing demand. There is a lack of land available for development in and around Alexandra. Land invasions and the growth of informal settlements exacerbate this situation.

Under these conditions, the different spheres of government are working together to address the housing challenges in Alexandra. Plans are underway to build approximately 40 000 houses in Frankenwald and Linksfield, benefitting the residents in the area and others in Alexandra.

One of the urgent tasks is to relocate approximately 8 000 households in the floodlines or plains of the Jukskei River. An enumeration process to establish which households will be affected has been completed. Various land parcels have been identified for relocation.

Studies on the suitability of the land have been completed on secured land portions.

One project, the Linksfield development, has secured township proclamations for a proposed 10 000 units. The costing and engineering approvals have been obtained.

Construction of social housing and open market units has also started. Another project, the Frankenwald development, is currently in the township proclamation phase and is projected to yield 30 000 units. The government is actively working to unblock and complete various stalled housing projects in Alexandra. Progress has been made on projects like the Helen Joseph Hostel and the KwaNobuhle Hostel, with design approvals and beneficiary administration processes underway.

The City of Johannesburg has obtained an evacuation order to relocate households in flood-prone areas. Environmental assessments are underway to identify affected households, and efforts are being made to secure land for relocation.

Units have been constructed for other smaller projects like Marlboro Gardens, Marlboro Second Avenue, and Madala Hostel.

The specific challenges in Alexandra create a complex environment for housing development. Overcoming these challenges requires a multifaceted approach and collaboration between various stakeholders.

Progress is being made, and the government remains committed to delivering housing solutions and improving the living conditions of our people in Alexandra. I thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker."



6. Mr Nkosingphile Hadebe (IFP):

Whether, with regard to his recent visit to Angola and the invitation he has extended to President João Lourenço for an official visit to the Republic, which his counterpart accepted, he intends initiating discussions on combating illicit trade and illegal substances that may be in transit between the two countries, in order to protect the assets of Africa, such as its minerals and wildlife; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

The President:

"Honourable House Chair, His Excellency, President João Lourenço of the Republic of Angola, has accepted my invitation to undertake a state visit to South Africa later this year. The objective of the visit is to further strengthen co-operation between our two countries in various areas: political, economic, security, and social.

The agenda for the meeting between the two heads of state is currently being developed. Various ministers are envisaged to assist the two heads of state in preparing for the visit.

Within this context, the Ministers will have an opportunity to reflect on safety and security matters, including the trade and transport of illegal substances between the two countries.

They would then be able to present a report and recommendations to the heads of state during President João Lourenço's state visit to South Africa later this year, in December. I thank you, Honourable House Chair." 🇿🇦

NCOP Advocates for an Interventionist Oversight Agenda



The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) engaged in a three-day planning session to ensure seamless coordination of its intergovernmental oversight mandate. The planning session also aimed to create effective accountability mechanisms and an interface between the NCOP and the three spheres of governance: national, provincial and local government. Abel Mputing reports.

In his opening address, the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Mr Poobalan Govender, said that achieving these goals will enable the NCOP to effectively address policy implementation weaknesses and coordination disjuncture

while using its oversight data to perform its constitutional mandate.

He urged NCOP members to use their own experiences to improve corporate and intergovernmental governance systems and improve the material conditions of the people.

Underpinned by the policy and implementation priorities articulated by the President during his Opening of Parliament Address, the theme for the three-day programme was “Towards an Oversight Agenda for the Seventh Parliament: Delineating Key Oversight Priorities for the NCOP in the Seventh Parliament”. These priorities include inclusive economic growth, job creation, reduction of poverty, and building an ethical and developmental state, Mr Govender said.

However, achieving these priorities is hampered by a lack of a “clear administrative architecture to effectively coordinate South

African development plans across all three spheres of government as recently stated by the National Planning Commission’s 10-year report,” Mr Govender said.

He stressed that the NCOP’s oversight agenda in the seventh administration ensures that a targeted and integrated accountability approach is maintained to advance the effective implementation of

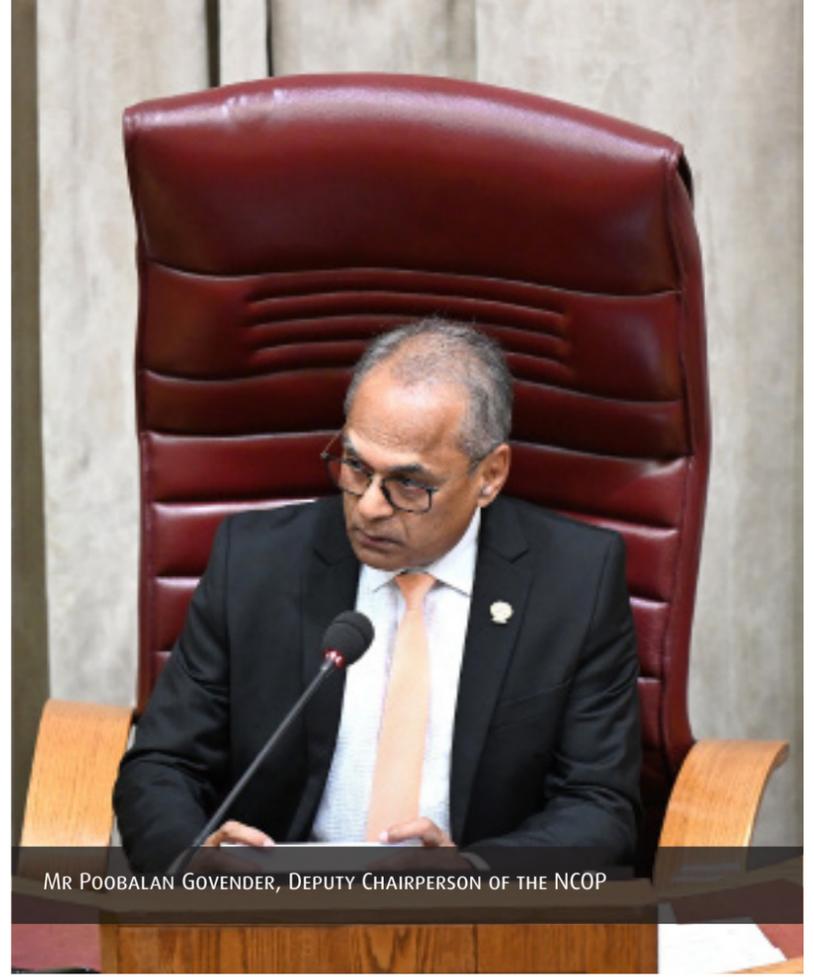
key development priorities for governing across provinces, metros, districts, and local municipalities.

The Chairperson of the NCOP, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, agreed with these sentiments. “At the outset, we must underline our deliberate act to reposition the NCOP and its unique and distinct constitutional mandate in the sector across government and

the hearts and minds of our people,” she said. Ms Mtshweni-Tsipane maintained that coherent intergovernmental relations in the planning, budgeting, and implementation of strategic priorities for the 7th administration are critical to the NCOP’s success in executing its mandate of ensuring that provincial interests are considered in the national sphere



DEPUTY PRESIDENT MR PAUL MASHATILE DELIVERED THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE NCOP’S THREE SPHERES OF GOVERNANCE PLANNING SESSION



MR POOBALAN GOVENDER, DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP

of government. She said the NCOP will embrace an interventionist approach in its oversight mechanisms to achieve this.

She said this approach was endorsed by the authors of the country's Constitution, who wanted the NCOP to play a unique yet critical role in advancing the gains of South Africa's democracy by deepening democracy in legislative and governance processes. However, Ms

Mtshweni-Tsipane questioned how much the NCOP has lived up to the spirit and the constitutional mandate that are its cornerstones.

She further asked if the NCOP is used to its fullest extent as a legislative platform to achieve the strategic objectives of a transformative national agenda that addresses South Africa's history of oppression, domination and exploitation. She posed these

questions, she said, because the NCOP is the only House whose constitutional mandate straddles the three spheres of governance.

She said this three-sphere planning session is intended to be the centre of coordination and cooperation, giving effect to the NCOP's unique function. Therefore, she urged her colleagues to work together through joint consultation, joint planning, and joint programming to achieve

synergy for improved policy reforms and implementation. Mindful of the progress made since the democratic transition, Ms Mtshweni-Tsipane also noted that the lingering effects of colonialism and apartheid remain a source of social tension today.

"Whilst we acknowledge that the democratic state has introduced reforms, it hasn't done enough to bring about change and transformation in

inequality," the Chairperson said.

She encouraged her NCOP colleagues to delve deeper into the imperatives and objectives of the Inter-Governmental Relations Framework Act, which seeks, among other things, to ensure a coherent government, effective service provision, monitoring and implementation of policy and legislation, and the realisation of national priorities. 🇿🇦



MS REFILWE MTSHWENI-TSIPANE, CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP





Deputy President Mashatile tells NCOP, ‘Hold us Accountable’

During his keynote address to the NCOP’s three spheres of governance planning session, the Deputy President, Mr Paul Mashatile, pledged: “In my capacity as the Leader of Government Business in Parliament, I pledge to this House that the executive will always be accountable to Parliament. NCOP, do your work without fear or favour. Hold us accountable,” he said. Abel Mputing reports on his address.

During his keynote address to the NCOP’s three spheres of governance planning

session, the Deputy President, Mr Paul Mashatile, pledged: “In my capacity as the Leader of Government Business in Parliament, I pledge to this House that the executive will always be accountable to Parliament. NCOP, do your work without fear or favour. Hold us accountable,” he said. Abel Mputing reports on his address.

Mr Mashatile began by outlining the executive’s key legislative priorities for the seventh Parliament, which are inclusive growth, job creation, and the realisation of a capable, developmental state.

“A developmental state in our context is a state that will redirect resources towards job creation and ensure that people have access to asset ownership, economic opportunity, education, healthcare, and other basic services,” he told delegates.

He noted that the shape and form of such a state include a plan to professionalise the public service by investing in the capacity of the National

School of Government.

The Deputy President also reflected on the country’s democratic transition and the commitments ahead for the seventh administration. “Over the last thirty years, we have adopted progressive policies, and in the seventh administration, we are going to pay special attention to the speed of execution of such policies,” the Deputy President said.

Furthermore, the Presidency will continue to be the centre of executive undertakings. “This includes strengthening coordination through a refocused Presidency as the centre of government by pulling together other critical government departments, such as Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the National Treasury, into its ambit. This strategic, operational move will enable the government to create a seamless interface between planning and budgeting and support efforts to improve service delivery.

“Our intention is to align planning and budgeting as part of implementing the District Development Model premised on one plan, one vision. This we will do to achieve maximum results in building a better life for all,” Mr Mashatile said. To this end, with the help of local government, “we need to prioritise overcoming local CAPEX funding gaps for infrastructure. For example, we are introducing a public-private partnership model in water supply with the National Treasury and the Department of Water and Sanitation to resolve the potential water crisis, as we have done in

curbing the energy and load-shedding crisis.”

To realise the spirit and object of the three-sphere planning session’s theme, the Deputy President said that a common understanding of the monitoring, implementation, and evaluation framework laid out in the Intergovernmental Framework Act is needed.

He also outlined the executive’s expectations for Parliament, saying that the seventh Parliament is responsible for guiding South Africa towards prosperity, inclusivity and sustainable development. To live up to

“We are called to be agents of change, to be champions of inclusive growth”

- Deputy President Paul Mashatile

this expectation, he advised the NCOP delegates that law-making, oversight and public participation are the key instruments the NCOP could use to satisfy this expectation. Regarding drafting legislation, Mr Mashatile said, "We must ensure that laws uphold the principles of justice, equality, and the rule of law through robust legislative oversight and public participation." On the developmental agenda, he reminded delegates of the centrality of the National Development Plan. "It is imperative that we, as the seventh administration, continue our collaborative efforts to serve as a crucial

pillar that guides our developmental strategy," embedded in the NDP. Central to this is investment in the economy. "We must make it our mission to promote fixed capital investment, industrialisation, job creation and work hard towards improving our people's lives," the Deputy President said.

"As we set out to create an oversight agenda for the 7th Parliament," Mr Mashatile said, "let us all pledge to uphold the values of honesty, diligence and dedication to our country." people, and other formations representing the diverse interests and voices of

our citizens."

Citing the example set by historic events such as the Congress of the People in 1955, the Conference for a Democratic Future in 1989, the CODESA talks in the early 1990s, and drawing on the experience of formulating the country's democratic Constitution, which was adopted in 1996, it is envisaged that a national dialogue will involve extensive and inclusive public participation.

"As we have done at many important moments in our history, we will seek to forge

a common vision and build a comprehensive social compact with a clear programme of action to realise our aspirations for the country. Through this

national dialogue, we are called to be agents of change, to be champions of inclusive growth, to be creators of opportunity," he said. 🇿🇦



NCOP Summit Addresses Weaknesses in Policy Implementation and Planning

On Day One of the National Council of Provinces' (NCOP) three-day planning session, ministers, deputy ministers, and senior government officials from the Government of National Unity (GNU) shared their departments' plans and commitments to coordinated planning for better service delivery and economic development.

The planning session's theme was "Towards an Oversight Agenda for the Seventh Parliament: Delineating Key Oversight Priorities for the NCOP in the Seventh Parliament". Sakhile Mokoena reports.

The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Mr Dean McPherson, spoke about the department's plan to contribute to the government's programme of action to

achieve inclusive economic growth. "We want to use infrastructure to reignite the economy and create jobs in South Africa. Unemployment has reached historic levels, and any policy or plan that is not evidence-based and does not create employment must be discarded," said the minister.

He said the department plans to expand the role and size of the construction industry to contribute to economic growth and create jobs that will improve people's lives. "Our view is that infrastructure investment will lead to lower unemployment and a prosperous South Africa. The GNU intends to turn the

country into a construction site," he said.

The department also plans to increase spending on infrastructure, tackle under expenditure on infrastructure, and ensure a budget for infrastructure maintenance across all three spheres of government. One of the biggest threats to infrastructure development is the rise of the construction mafia, which the minister said was hampering trust in the sector and further complicating investor confidence. Mr MacPherson believes that apart from tackling this matter through crime-fighting agencies, a policy change is also necessary

to ensure that government does not incentivise criminality.

He also explained how the 30% set aside for local procurement provides a gateway for the rise of the construction mafia, and he proposed reviewing this provision. While the rule has not been legislated, it has been institutionalised over the years and has created an opportunity for the construction mafia. "Under the 30% rule, many criminal syndicates believe they are entitled to 30% of the project, and without it, the project cannot go ahead. They violently threaten construction crews until they receive the



MR MKHULEKO HLENGWA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

cash, they believe they are entitled to," the minister said. "Our view is that the 30% rule should be reviewed in such a manner that we can empower local communities without creating the incentivisation of the mafias," he said. The department plans to address other challenges confronting the infrastructure sector, including municipal underspending, project delays, cost overruns, and shoddy workmanship.

The Deputy Minister of Transport, Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa, presented his department's commitment to coordinated planning and plans to contribute to economic growth through road infrastructure. He told the NCOP summit that the government has approved that the fixing of potholes be addressed as a national project. Local expertise should be employed, and, where possible, this project should be used to develop skills. The paving of rural roads could

become community projects.

The Department of Transport is mandated to collaborate with all appropriate public sector stakeholders and potential private sector partners to develop a concept document, implementation plan, and funding model for direct national intervention to fix potholes and improve general road conditions.

The Deputy Minister said the national department is also ready to assist provinces and municipalities in addressing road infrastructure challenges. "We will do our part in the economic reconstruction and recovery. We commit to working with other departments and the NCOP to reduce accidents and deaths on our roads," said Mr Hlengwa.

Another member of the executive from the economic cluster, Ms Samantha Graham-Maré, the Deputy Minister of Electricity and Energy, warned that while there is no loadshedding currently, South Africa is not out of the woods. Loadshedding remains a risk until the sector is stable, she said.

The Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Mr Zuko Godlimpi, spoke about the importance of economic planning and noted loadshedding as the starkest example of planning failure. He argued that the government knew there would be a need

for additional electricity generation but waited too long before building new power stations, resulting in huge economic costs due to loadshedding.

The department is also examining the spatial transformation of the country's

industrial profiling, which is concentrated in five major metros, leaving the bulk of the land mass without industrial opportunities. To address this, the department plans to expand the scope of the special economic zones and use them as anchor points for spatial integration. 🌍



MR ZUKO GODLIMPI, DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COMPETITION



MR DEAN MCPHERSON, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE



MS SAMANTHA GRAHAM-MARÉ, DEPUTY MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY

This is Moment to Renew Commitment to Promise of 1994, says Salga President



Speaking during the National Council of Province's (NCOP) Three-Sphere Planning Session, the President of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Mr Bheki Stofile, drew the attention of national, provincial and local government and other stakeholders to issues that continue to impede municipal service delivery: governance and governance support at local government level, the powers and the privileges of this sector, and the local government fiscal framework. Abel Mputing reports.

On governance, he blamed persistent political challenges in various municipalities, including coalition-governed municipalities, which often

destabilise them. This is exacerbated by ongoing challenges with the support framework of section 154 intervention processes, in which national and provincial governments aim to improve municipalities' capacity and performance.

Mr Stofile said that these interventions are often constitutionally suspect in some instances. "It is against

On the powers and privileges of local government, he proposed strengthening the local government's role in the electricity distribution industry, including reaffirming exclusive mandates assigned to local government on reticulation and reviewing ballooning municipal debt, tariff structures and their role in sustainable management of water and sanitation.

financial sustainability.

The amount municipalities owe to various entities is usually discussed in the public sphere. However, Mr Stofile said this is seldom discussed in terms of what is owed to municipalities. "Often, the R72 billion debt owed to state entities by municipalities is not juxtaposed against the R347 billion that government, businesses, and communities owe to municipalities, a situation that

ensure that this growing debt situation does not undermine the solvency of local government and the country's credit rating." He went on to say that as much as there should be an urgency in paying our creditors, there is also a need to increase the allocation of budget to municipalities, given the rising cost of service delivery. "The current fiscal framework, which allocates a measly 9.1% to the local government sphere, does need an urgent review. Without reconsidering our fiscal instruments and the allocative formula, some of our municipalities will remain unviable and unsustainable," he said.

In his view, the NCOP's workshop has provided the three spheres of governance with an opportunity to revitalise the commitments made after the first democratic elections in 1994. "As we anchor the plans of this 7th Parliament and take stock of current realities, we must go a step further to capture this moment as an opportunity to renew and recommit ourselves to the promise of 1994," Mr Stofile said. 🇿🇦



this backdrop that we are calling on this seventh administration to ensure that all spheres of government, as directed by Section 154 of the Constitution, support local government in achieving its constitutional mandate."

On the local government fiscal framework, Mr Stofile proposed rectifying challenges in the current fiscal framework, which have created a situation in which R347 billion is owed to municipalities, severely restricting local government's

is unfair to municipalities."

He said to right this wrong, "Bold measures are needed to ensure municipalities collect and better manage their customers, and national interventions are taken to

NCOP Deputy Chair Calls for Renewed Urgency to Oversight Findings and Executive Outcomes



Reflecting on the first day of the NCOP's Three Sphere Planning Session, the NCOP's Deputy Chairperson, Mr Poobalan Govender, stressed that the contributions made will help set the policy and oversight priorities for the NCOP's 7th Parliament tenure, writes Abel Mputing.

Regarding local government and the developmental state, Mr Poobalan said that the key focus of deliberations was provincial and local government, where the key service delivery priorities of the state find expression. "Their strategic role in the government's service delivery machinery places them in a position to experience unique developmental challenges. As such, provincial and local government are at the centre

of the NCOP's planning and budgeting, implementation and oversight agenda," Mr Poobalan said.

He urged NCOP members to be mindful of the urgency of responding to the findings of their oversight work. "As we move in unison in strengthening our planning and coordination processes, we must be cognisant of urgency to implement with the utmost speed in responding to the needs of the people if we are to deepen the impact of our work," the Deputy Chairperson said.

He reminded the NCOP delegates that the three-day session's objectives are to develop a comprehensive planning, oversight, and tracking framework to facilitate intergovernmental relations. However, within this context, "the apex priority is to ensure

that each level of government can execute its function and contribute to national objectives," Mr Poobalan said, urging all intergovernmental relations stakeholders to focus on the imperatives



of the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of all spheres of governance.

Reflecting on the role of cooperative governance, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa, briefed NCOP delegates on

the progress his department has made in implementing the Municipal Support and Implementation Plans (MSIPs) in the nine provinces, as per his department's State of Local Government Report of 2022.

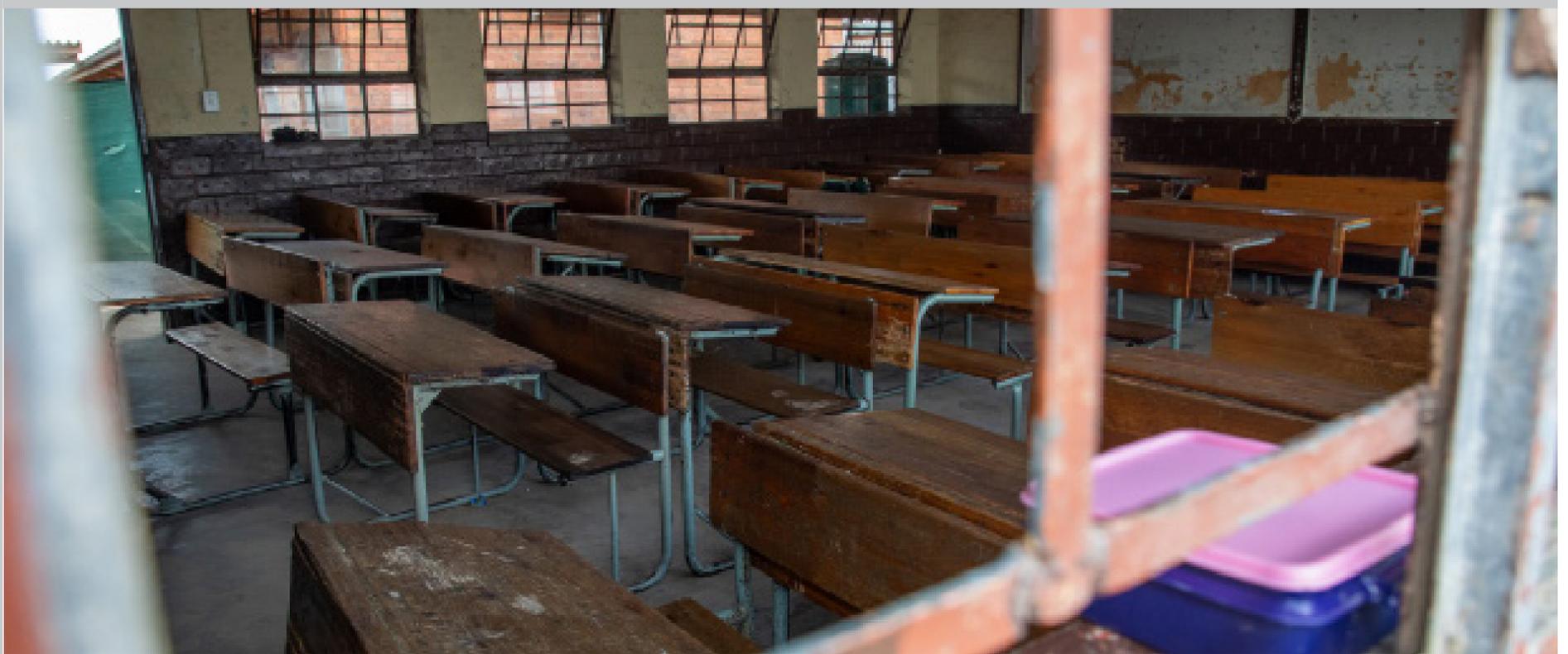
This report categorised 66 municipalities as distressed and requiring support from all three spheres of government, including provincial sector departments.

Mr Hlabisa told delegates that the primary purpose of the Municipal Support and Intervention Plans is to outline interventions to improve the sorry state of many municipalities. "The plans," he said, "identify actions to be undertaken by all stakeholders across all spheres that will be targeted and impactful to

effectively respond to and eliminate challenges currently pervasive in municipalities as identified in the State of Local Government Report."

The plans aim to improve governance, staff capacity, financial management, service delivery, and local government development in

all municipalities. To this end, regional monitoring mechanisms have been implemented in Gauteng, while Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, North West, and KwaZulu Natal have adopted frameworks to monitor the implementation of the plans on a quarterly basis. However, the Free State and Northern Cape provinces struggle to institutionalise monitoring and reporting of municipal performance. In conclusion, Minister Hlabisa presented some of the department's recommendations for achieving progress and accountability in the provincial and local spheres of governance. "It is recommended that the NCOP notes the progress report and challenges in implementing the Municipal Support and Implementation Plans in the nine provinces," he said. In addition, he assured the House that "provinces are continuously providing support to these municipalities to improve performance and provision of service delivery". 🌟



Department of Basic Education Outlines Plans to Eradicate Mud Schools and Pit Latrines

The Department of Basic Education has told the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) that it remains committed to eradicating pit latrines in schools, along with schools built with mud and other inappropriate materials, writes Sakhile Mokoena.

In a presentation to the NCOP's Three Sphere Planning Session, which took place recently, the Director-General of Basic Education, Mr Mweliso Matanzima, said significant progress had been achieved in completely eradicating pit latrines in schools and

replacing mud schools in rural areas.

"Through the Sanitation Appropriate for Education initiative, we have completed 3 107 sanitation projects. The remaining 268 projects are scheduled for completion in 2024/25. The Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative replaced 331 schools made entirely of inappropriate materials," Mr Matanzima reported. The department has also identified schools needing additional classrooms to address overcrowding, and this project is scheduled for completion in the 2024/25 financial year. Of the 338 schools made entirely of inappropriate materials, such as mud and planks, 331 have been replaced. The remaining seven schools for replacement are scheduled for completion

in 2024/25.

Mr Matanzima also reported on the department's initiatives to improve school safety. These include partnerships with various stakeholders, such as the South African Police Service, to implement the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy. This partnership also involves linking schools to local police

stations and conducting searches and seizures, in line with the South African School's Act upon reasonable suspicion of the suspect carrying or trading illegal substances and weapons. The Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy also seeks to combat alcohol and drug use among learners in schools, address gangsterism in schools and communities, and control

the number of liquor outlets and taverns in the vicinity of schools.

Other challenges facing schools include bullying, theft and burglary, school-related gender-based violence, and corporal punishment in the classroom, which the Director-General said remains the prevailing form of violence in schools. 🇿🇦





OUR PEOPLE – ALL ARE EQUAL

The coat of arms of the Republic of South Africa, representing the equality of all its citizens, features a central shield with a sunburst at the top, a banner below it reading 'WE THE PEOPLE', and a book at the bottom. The shield is flanked by two green branches with red and yellow fruit.



OUR PEOPLE – THE PROTEA LEAVES

The people, talking or the foundation of a democratic and constitutional order, is the central theme of the coat of arms of the Republic of South Africa, representing the equality of all its citizens, features a central shield with a sunburst at the top, a banner below it reading 'WE THE PEOPLE', and a book at the bottom. The shield is flanked by two green branches with red and yellow fruit.



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