

Insession



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Parliament Commemorates 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children

The Presiding Officers of Parliament, led by the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, stand in solidarity with South Africans and the global community as we commemorate the annual 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children.

This United Nations campaign, observed from 25 November (International Day of No Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day), highlights the urgent need to end the scourge of gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide. During this period, Parliament will also mark World AIDS Day on 1 December and

the International Day for Persons with Disabilities on 3 December, reaffirming its commitment to human rights and social justice.

A Call to Collective Action

This year, the campaign runs under the theme, “30 Years of Advancing Collective Action to End Violence Against Women and Children,” which underscores the importance of a whole-of-society approach to combating GBV. The focus is on amplifying accountability across all sectors, addressing the root causes of GBV, promoting gender equity, fostering positive masculinity, and creating economic opportunities for women and children.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has identified GBV as a “silent pandemic” that erodes the country’s social fabric and hinders progress. He has called on society to confront patriarchal power structures that perpetuate violence and inequality. Parliament echoes this call, emphasising the need for men to participate in the fight against GBV actively

and to challenge harmful norms and behaviours. As we commemorate the campaign, the Presiding Officers also wish to reaffirm Parliament’s commitment to safeguarding the rights and interests of children, as enshrined in the Constitution.

Protecting children from preventable harm, such as unsafe food, is critical to ensuring their safety and dignity. As we reflect on the theme of advancing collective action to end violence and harm against vulnerable groups, Parliament calls on all sectors of society – including government, businesses, civil society organisations, and communities – to work together to ensure every child has access to safe, nutritious food. This collective vigilance is vital to building a healthier, safer, and more equitable society for future generations.

The Presiding Officers of Parliament are deeply concerned about the ongoing food contamination crisis that has claimed the lives of children in the country. This tragedy underscores

the urgent need for stricter food safety measures and accountability within the food production and supply chain. As custodians of the rights and well-being of all South Africans, Parliament will intensify its oversight to ensure that the relevant departments and regulatory bodies enforce food safety standards and take decisive action against those who endanger public health.

Parliament’s Legislative and Oversight Role

Parliament has demonstrated its commitment to combating GBV by passing and reviewing legislation that forms a robust framework for addressing the crisis, including:

- The Domestic Violence Amendment Act
- The Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act
- The National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Act
- The Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act

Through its oversight role,

Parliament continues to monitor the implementation of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, ensuring government accountability. The recently developed Parliamentary Oversight Framework provides a coordinated approach to enforcing the NSP’s pillars and addressing GBV holistically.

Awareness and Advocacy

During the 16 Days campaign, Parliament will leverage its platforms to raise awareness, challenge societal norms, and foster discussions on GBV. Daily messages across social media will amplify the fight against GBV, encouraging collective responsibility and promoting behavioural change. During the NCOP’s plenary on Tuesday, delegates will hold a debate on the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

Additionally, a multiparty delegation will visit GBV hotspots in Cape Town to engage with survivors, support shelters, and collaborate with organisations working with boys and men to address the societal root causes of violence.

A Collective Responsibility

Parliament reaffirms its commitment to ending violence against women and children and calls on all sectors of society – government, civil society and communities – to join forces.

The fight against GBV is not just a campaign; it is a continuous effort that requires year-round dedication, as emphasised by South Africa’s 365 Days National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children.

As we commemorate the 16 Days of Activism, let us remember that the fight against GBV starts with each one of us. Together, we can build a safer, more equitable society where the rights and dignity of every individual are upheld. 🌟



NCOP Chairperson Marches Against Child and Women Abuse in Khayelitsha

The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, recently joined about 100 women and children who have been exposed to abuse from Khayelitsha in a march against violence in the area.

The march was part of activities to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign – a United Nations campaign that takes place annually from 25 November (International Day of No Violence against

Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

Chairperson Mtshweni-Tsipane, joined by her Deputy Mr Les Govender and chairpersons of various parliamentary committees, encouraged the children not to be discouraged by the circumstances they found themselves in and that they should not allow their experience of abuse to define them.

She urged the women to take a stand against violence and protect their children and families. “Mothers, you must take responsibility to protect your children against abuse.

You must be the one who stands strong and takes steps, even if it is your husband who is responsible for the abuse,” said the Chairperson.

The march started and ended at the Nonceba Family

Counselling Centre – a place of care for women and children who have been vulnerable to abuse in the Khayelitsha area. The NCOP Chairperson commended the management and staff at the centre for the work they are doing in caring for individuals who are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.

“Next time we return to this centre, we hope that we won’t find these children here. They must be free and reintegrated with their families and communities,” said Mtshweni-Tsipane, adding that the goal is to ensure that the centre is converted into a skills training centre in the future.

NCOP Deputy Chairperson Govender said: “As Parliament today, we want to say to you that we stand with you, and we stand with your families. We are here to tell you that you are not alone, and when we pray, we ask God to protect

us. My message to you here today is that you are protected by God Almighty.

You are protected by these wonderful social workers and the team that you have here at Nonceba. They are here to protect and care for you, and we are here to give them that full support, to say to you that we are part of your family.”

Other MPs who participated in the march include Ms Lindelwa Dunjwa, Chairperson of the Multi-Party Women’s Caucus; Jane Mananiso, Chairperson of the Select Committee on Security and Justice; Ms Liezl Van Der Merwe, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities; Ms Bridget Masango, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development; Ms Alexandra Lilian Amelia Abrahams; Ms Jasmine Petersen; Ms Dereleen James; Ms Paulnita Marais; and Ms Meagan Chauke-Adonis.



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OUR IDEALS

Vision

An activist and responsive people’s Parliament that improves the quality of life of South Africans and ensures enduring equality in our society.

Strategic Objectives

- Strengthening oversight and accountability;
- enhancing public involvement; deepening engagement in international fora;
- strengthening cooperative government;
- strengthening legislative capacity.

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IN PICTURES: NCOP Delegation Visits Places of Safety







Marriages Bill Public Participation Process an Opportunity to Reset and Ensure Meaningful Engagement

The Marriages Bill presents an opportunity for Parliament to correct course on its public participation processes and ensure meaningful public hearings to formulate legislation that incorporates the aspirations and will of the people. Mosa Chabane, the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs Chairperson, sets out how this will be achieved.

The institution's administration must ensure that pre-public hearing workshops take place to brief communities on the contents of the Bill, that communication and awareness programmes are prepared and disseminated, that communities are mobilised, and the Bill is translated into the languages spoken in the area where the public hearings are to occur. If Parliament achieves these objectives, it will be well on its way to meeting the minimum standards it has set for itself. The plans are well laid out; what is left to do is their

effective implementation during the public participation process for the Marriages Bill, which is due to start in Gauteng.

The wise have been heard to say that hindsight has excellent eyesight because it gives you a clearer perspective on both the pitfalls and strengths of past events. For example, the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs held what it considered to be a successful public participation process for the Electoral Amendment Bill. However, some external observers of the process criticised the quality of what is a constitutionally mandated process. Parliament took this criticism to heart and comprehensively reviewed its public participation processes. The hindsight provided by this process must now become foresight for what lies ahead with the public participation process around the Marriages Bill.

As we reflect on 30 years of a democratic dispensation, it is important to take stock of the journey thus far and to question what the legislature has achieved in its quest to pass legislation that captures the aspirations and will of the people while at the same time enhancing their lives. To give meaning to the notion of a "Parliament of the People, by the people," Parliament's reflections should resist the temptation to blow the trumpets of self-glorification. The revised public participation

model adopted by Parliament seeks to avoid this futile self-glorification by taking external criticism to heart and improving internal systems to facilitate a more inclusive and meaningful public participation process.

Parliamentary administrators have assured us that all processes are in place to support a meaningful public participation process. The upcoming Marriages Bill public hearings should bear witness to this undertaking. This commitment will ensure that the freely elected representatives of the people will be able to meet the constitutionally mandated requirement to ensure meaningful public participation in the drafting of South Africa's legislation.

The Constitutional Court judgement in Mogale and Others v Speaker of the National Assembly, the

Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces & Others, commonly referred to as LAMOSA 2, has been key to charting a new course for public participation in the law-making process. The central question in this case was whether the legislative sector had complied with its constitutional mandate to facilitate public involvement in the legislative process.

The significance of this judgment is that it deals with an issue that lies at the heart of our democracy. This is because our democracy seeks to give effect to the mantra that the people shall govern. The people can only govern if their voices are given effect. The Lamosa judgement has given the legislature a rear-view mirror of its processes, and remedies must be implemented. To directly address shortcomings identified in the Lamosa judgement and many similar

judgements, Parliament has put checks and balances in place to ensure adherence to codified frameworks that achieve the level of public participation it deems reasonable. Reasonable public participation includes the following provisions: pre-hearing workshops must be held to establish relationships with stakeholders.

In addition, effective communication and awareness programmes must be developed, communities must be mobilised and consultation meetings must be convened. Summaries of the Bill must be translated into at least three languages spoken in a particular province, and transport must be provided to the hearings. These codified standards must now be adhered to without deviation. The most important of these

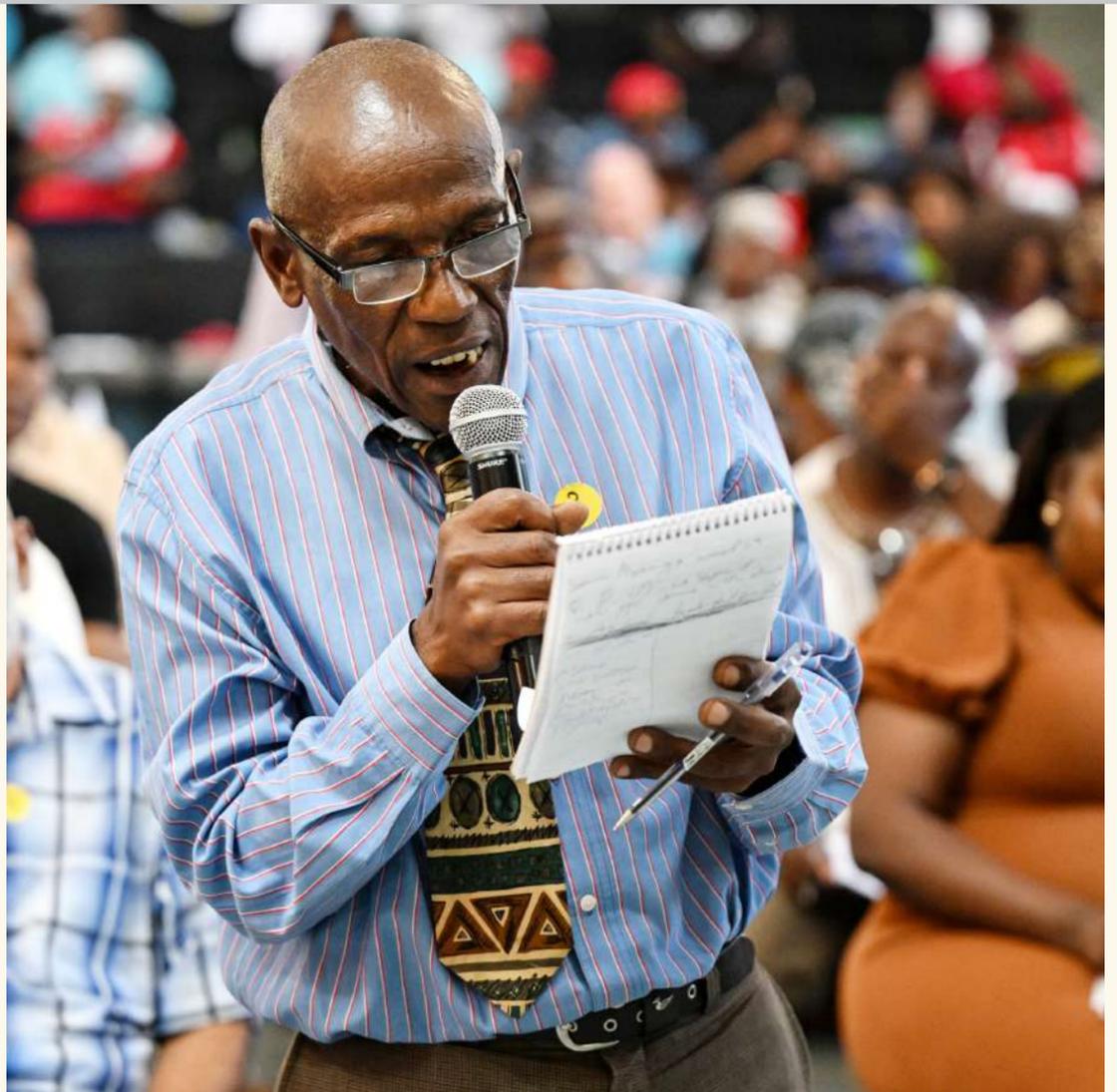


standards will be the pre-hearing workshops to educate South Africans from all walks of life about the Bill's intentions. This will ensure that participation in the public hearings is impactful and adds value to the Bill. Ultimately, these standards set out to ensure that all Bills reflect the aspirations and the will of the people.

The Bill also aims to protect children by aligning South African legislation with international standards by raising the legal marriage age to 18 and making it a criminal offence to marry minors. The voice of the people is critical to achieving legislation that incorporates various other bits of legislation to bring it in line with the spirit of the Constitution.

The refinement of the public participation process comes at an opportune time, as Parliament considers the Marriages Bill, which aims to create a single, non-discriminatory legislation for marriages. The proposed Bill also seeks to simplify the complex framework currently regulating the various forms of marriages.

Akin to an eagle, Parliament must knock its beak against a rock, pluck the dirt from its talons and shed old feathers to enable regrowth and ensure its ability to thrive. It is only through this process of self-correction that Parliament will be able to enable effective public participation. Plans are in place; now is the time for implementation. 🇿🇦



Parliament Launches Weekly Committee Cluster Media Briefings



In a move to enhance ongoing public accountability, transparency, and openness during this 7th term of Parliament, Parliament announced the launch of its Weekly Committee Cluster Media Briefings programme last month. This programme started on Monday, 25 November 2024 and represents an important shift in Parliament's ongoing engagement with the media and the public.

Through this regular programme, parliamentary committees - often referred to as the engines that drive the work of Parliament - will provide regular, structured insights into their vital work, moving beyond traditional plenary session

reporting to showcase the deeper, continuous work of Parliament.

Parliament also aims to provide improved public access to the inner workings of parliamentary committees to deepen public

understanding of Parliament's crucial oversight role.

This weekly engagement will enable journalists and citizens alike to gain comprehensive insights into how legislative scrutiny is conducted, how oversight activities impact

governance, and how public participation shapes our democratic processes.

The inaugural briefing started with four of Parliament's oversight committees from both Houses - the National Assembly and the National

Council of Province - which play a vital role in ensuring financial accountability and good governance. Together, these committees are instrumental in safeguarding public resources and promoting fiscal responsibility. 🇿🇦



Shaping Global Governance: South Africa's Vision for the 2025 G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit Presidency

With South Africa assuming the G20 Presidency, Parliament is preparing to host a series of G20-related events, including the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20). These events will enable parliamentarians to deliberate on their role in fortifying G20 decisions by upholding multilateralism, promoting inclusive global governance reform and advocating for the interests of Africa and the Global South. Additionally, they will seek to promote peace through dialogue and advance progress towards the SDGs while addressing urgent climate challenges, writes Dr Annelie Lotriet.

Three weeks ago, I had the honour of receiving the hand-over of the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (known as the P20) presidency to South Africa on behalf of our Parliament at the National Congress Palace in Brasília, Brazil.

The summit, organised in partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the world body of parliaments, was a significant platform for the representative assemblies of the world's largest economies to contribute to sustainable, equitable and inclusive growth.

It convened under the theme "Parliaments for a just world and a sustainable planet", where the primary focus of the

discussions focused on the role of parliaments in addressing hunger, poverty and inequality; promoting socio-environmental development and a just and inclusive ecological transition; and building a global governance framework adapted to the challenges of the 21st century.

Receiving the P20 presidency coincides with President Cyril Ramaphosa receiving the presidency of the G20 under the theme of "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability", which South Africa is set to assume from 1 December 2024 for the duration of 2025. Following a productive year, South Africa takes over the baton from Brazil which hosted a successful 10th P20 Summit from 6 to 8 November and the

G20 Leaders' Summit on 18 and 19 November. Assuming the P20 presidency serves as a historic moment, not only for South Africa but for the entire African continent. Like the upcoming G20 Summit, it signifies the very first P20 Speakers' Summit to be held on African soil.

Understanding the P20 Summit

The G20, comprising Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Russia, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States, along with two regional bodies, the African Union and the European Union, plays a vital role in addressing

major international economic concerns. Collectively, G20 members represent a substantial portion of global economic output, a significant share of the world's population, and a considerable portion of international trade.

Initially centred on macroeconomic issues, the forum has broadened its scope to encompass trade, climate change, sustainable development, health, agriculture, energy, the environment, and anti-corruption. To foster inclusivity, the G20 promotes dialogue among relevant stakeholders via engagement groups, involving non-governmental participants who provide recommendations to G20 Leaders and contribute to

the policy-making process. Parliaments constitute one of these crucial engagement groups.

The G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summits (P20) provide a legislative dimension to global governance, fostering inter-parliamentary cooperation and facilitating engagement between governments, parliaments, and other stakeholders in implementing various G20 outcomes.

They not only raise awareness but also build political support for G20 international commitments, serving as a pivotal platform for Speakers of Parliament to discuss and explore

parliamentary avenues to fortify the implementation of G20 decisions.

Vision for the 2025 P20 Summit

Parliaments play a crucial role in implementing G20 decisions through their law-making mandates, overseeing government action, approving the budget, representing voters in decision-making, and facilitating public participation in their work. South Africa’s hosting of the 2025 P20 Summit and other events will seek to interrogate these roles within the context of G20 decisions.

We will strive to uphold multilateralism, advocate for inclusive global governance reform, champion the interests of Africa and the developing world, promote peace through dialogue, and advance progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while working to avert a climate crisis.

In promoting multilateralism with the United Nations (UN) at its core, South Africa will continue encouraging P20 parliaments to engage and question their governments on ongoing conflicts and their resolution through dialogue, not war. We will also continue emphasising the need for the reform of global governance institutions such as the UN Security Council and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

These bodies must become more representative, inclusive and legitimate to improve their functionality in current times. They must reform to accommodate the interests of Africa and the Global South fairly.

South Africa will also continue lobbying G20 parliaments to ensure that their countries’ laws are aligned with the commitments of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

As law-making authorities, it is crucial for parliaments to thoroughly assess the adequacy of their national laws and policies, particularly their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), in tackling climate change across different areas of governance, with a specific emphasis on safeguarding the most vulnerable. The recently published 2024 UN NDC Synthesis Report, released on 28 October 2024, raises concern by revealing that current national climate strategies are insufficient to avert the potentially catastrophic impact of climate change on global economies and the well-being of countless individuals worldwide.

This report underscores the urgent requirement for robust, revised national climate strategies to prevent environmental turmoil. Therefore, P20 parliaments and their environmental oversight committees have their work cut out for them.

Furthermore, as oversight bodies, P20 parliaments are tasked with the crucial role of ensuring accountability. South Africa will, therefore, continue championing for P20 parliaments to oversee their governments’ adherence to G20 commitments, notably those pertaining to emissions reduction efforts, financial and technological transfer commitments, and previous pledges meant to aid the developing world.

This will remain a priority for South Africa, notably as Africa grapples with the disastrous effects of climate change despite its minimal contribution to it. Countries’ transition efforts must be just and fair, and P20 parliaments must ensure that their governments’ budgets are aligned with overarching developmental and climate priorities and promises.

I underscore these powers, particularly considering the concerns expressed by constituents regarding the

G20’s limited accountability and transparency. The P20, serving as the representative arms of our governments, is uniquely positioned to address this gap through our parliamentary mandates, which, when executed resolutely, can facilitate transparency, accountability, and public access to the

G20’s work. As Parliament, we will ensure public access to P20 discussions, which aligns with how the South African Constitution mandates Parliament to conduct its work.

South Africa’s chairing of the P20 will provide a strategic opportunity for Parliament to set the agenda and

facilitate discussions among P20 parliaments on issues of interest to our country, our continent, and the rest of the developing world. These were Parliament’s focal points for the 2024 P20 Summit, and we remain committed to pursuing them further under our 2025 P20 presidency. 🇿🇦





No Threat to South Africa's Water Security, says Minister

The Minister of Water and Sanitation, Ms Pemmy Majodina, has assured Parliament and the country that there is currently no threat to South Africa's water security. Delivering a statement in the National Assembly on water security, the minister said that while there was no immediate national threat, certain parts of the country face localised shortages due to resource mismanagement, leaks and population growth. Sakhile Mokoena reports.

"I want to assure South Africans that we have enough water; the national balance exceeds demand," she stated. "But there are localised deficits in places like Gauteng and parts of KwaZulu-Natal."

The minister warned, however, that water availability could decline rapidly as supply decreases and demand

grows due to economic and population growth, urbanisation, inefficient water use, municipal distribution losses, wetland degradation, and climate change impacts, including heatwaves.

Ms Majodina also urged South Africans to change their water consumption behaviour and treat water as a scarce resource. "South Africans are over-consuming water. We are using 218 litres per capita per day against the international standard and norm of 173 litres. Therefore, we need to reduce consumption. Municipalities must also fix leaks in their water distribution system. We cannot afford to be throwing away almost half of the water supplied to municipalities through leaks," she said.

According to the minister, the water supply disruptions currently affecting Gauteng are not caused by drought or the closure of the Lesotho water tunnel for maintenance but by challenges in water resource management. "It is caused by the rapid growth in the demand for water due to the influx of people from all corners into the city. Leaks result from under-budgeting for infrastructure maintenance by municipalities, as well as illegal connections and vandalism of infrastructure," she said.

Outlining the roles of her

department and municipalities in the water supply chain, the minister clarified that delivering water to citizens is the responsibility of municipalities, and the national government manages water resources and builds national infrastructure such as dams, canals, reservoirs, and water treatment plants. "We are responsible for raw water supply; water boards buy that water from us, treat it and sell it to municipalities, which supply the citizens. We are not trying to run away from our responsibility, but the responsibility of municipalities is clearly defined," the minister explained.

The uMkhonto weSizwe Party did not accept the minister's distinction between the department and municipalities, arguing they are part of the same government. "Minister, you cannot separate the department from municipalities; you are one government. We also differ from the minister in that South Africa has no water security problem. We have a problem of drought. The country is not getting enough rainfall, which threatens our water security," said Mr Nkosinathi Nxumalo, an MK Party Member of Parliament.

Mr Nxumalo pointed out

corruption and insufficient infrastructure maintenance budgets threaten water security. He expressed concern about communities living near large dams but still lacking water, calling it "water apartheid".

Mr Stephen Moore of the Democratic Alliance cited research indicating that 47% of the country's water treatment systems are in critical or poor condition, only 14% are in good or excellent condition, 68% of sanitation systems are at high or critical risk, and 41% of water is lost to leaks.

"While we have emerged battered from 15 years of power cuts, we may not survive water shedding. People will suffer from dehydration and unsafe drinking water; livestock will die from the same causes. As climate change advances, bringing unpredictable weather patterns, our country's food security will further deteriorate, in a nation where millions already go without three daily meals," warned Mr Moore.

He proposed that the solution should not be a national takeover of municipal responsibilities but a cooperative approach with stringent oversight. On the national government level, working with the Presidency, the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs,



Ms Pemmy Majodina, Minister of Water and Sanitation

the Water and Sanitation departments, and the National Treasury must work together to save South Africa from disaster.

“The minister proposed measures like stricter water-use restrictions, incentives for better municipal management, ring-fencing water revenue for infrastructure, and licencing requirements to ensure accountability,” Mr Moore said. “The Democratic Alliance supports these measures, but

the promises alone will not fix our water system. We need to see enforcement, transparency and accountability at every level.”

Ms Rebecca Mohlala of the Economic Freedom Fighters criticised the minister’s statement as “a torrent of empty promises”. She said, “The minister speaks of constitutional rights while people drink from muddy streams. The minister boasts

about raw water security while Gauteng and KZN face crippling water shortages.

“You boast 90 per cent access to water, yet millions of people still wake up to dry taps and broken promises. You speak of 218 litres per capita; what a fantasy. Our mothers and children are rationing every drop while the elite fill their swimming pools. This is not mismanagement – it is a crime against humanity,” Ms Mohlala

said.

She also suggested that the call to reduce water consumption should be directed at mining companies, which consume millions of litres in their operations. The Inkatha Freedom Party’s representative, Mr Khethamabala Sithole, echoed concerns about inadequate funding for infrastructure maintenance. “Our view is that failure to allocate infrastructure

and maintenance resources where they are most needed and address the infrastructure backlog has created a crisis. All municipalities should be resourced financially and through capacity building to sustain and supply clean water,” he suggested.

Mr Sithole warned the government not to approach this crisis with complacency, as South Africa is a water-stressed country. 🌍

Electricity Tariffs Increase is Unaffordable, says NCOP House Chairperson



Debating the significant increase in electricity costs after the National Electricity Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) granted Eskom’s application to raise charges retrospectively, the sponsor of the debate and the House Chairperson of committees in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), Mr Dennis Ryder, gave a broad background of the genesis of Eskom’s energy supply and liquidity challenges, which has led to a proposed 36.1% increase in electricity tariffs in 2025. Abel Mputing reports.

In his speech, Mr Ryder said that loadshedding in South Africa began to become a daily reality in South Africa in 2008 because of the administration of former President Thabo Mbeki’s decision to stop investing in power plants and the maintenance of electricity generators. Regrettably, he pointed out, although no new energy was added to the Eskom grid, “its workforce rose by 33% between 2004 and 2021 and the salary increase of its workers was exorbitant”. Furthermore, he added that

Eskom blames the current tariff increase on the low electricity tariffs it has been subjected to over the years, which did not reconcile with its capital expenditure. Mr Ryder suggested that this is untrue.

“Eskom makes itself out to be the victim in this story, and they are not. Eskom squandered the prime position it once held. As recent as 2001, Eskom was internationally recognised as the top power company of the year.”

He claimed Eskom lost its mettle due to its engagement

in corrupt tender awards and nepotism and has now become a crime scene. “Eskom has been deemed as a site of state capture. It has been strangled by years of bad decisions, failed ideology, unfettered self-enrichment, and blatant theft.” He said the suggested increases are unaffordable to South African businesses, our economy and people trying desperately to get by from one payday to the next.

NCOP delegate from the North West, Ms Sylvia Sithole, said that Eskom’s mandate to provide access to reliable

electricity is not adequately funded. “This can be attributed to a lack of cost-effective tariffs Eskom has been subjected to and the resultant revenue shortfalls, which have been an ongoing challenge since 2006,” she said.

“Thus, NERSA’s tariff determinations have been insufficient to cover the efficient supply and distribution of electricity to customers and to recoup a fair return on its capital expenditure. Consequently, Eskom has been forced to rely on debt and government guarantees to

fund its shortfalls.” Ms Sithole said this led to maintenance backlogs compounded by high municipality debt and debt-servicing costs.

Ms Meisie Kennedy, a permanent delegate from Limpopo, said that it would be useful to think of electricity as a public good that must be affordable if it is to bolster socio-economic development. “The EFF is therefore against the suggested tariff increases that, in any event, have been very high for several years. Tariffs were increased by 18% in 2023 and 13% in 2024,” she

reminded the House.

To add salt to the wound, she stated, Eskom has applied to NERSA for a 36.1% increase in April 2025, 11% in 2026 and 9.1% in 2027.

"It's unreasonable for the government to expect people to shoulder the full cost of these electricity tariffs, considering that Eskom was established through public funds," Ms Kennedy said.

Eskom's problem is not its low tariffs but mismanagement through state capture and a lack of investment in renewable energy resources. "The burden of the state's failures cannot be put on the shoulders of our people," she said.

Mr Mandla Peter, a permanent delegate to the NCOP from the Eastern Cape, said his party, the United Democratic Movement, "vehemently opposes" the electricity tariff increases proposed by Eskom.

"Firstly, we want to know the status of NERSA. Who is NERSA? Who are these people running NERSA? Are these people South African citizens? If so, are they telling us that ordinary South Africans should shoulder the consequences of corruption?"

Ms Seeng Mokoena, a permanent delegate from KwaZulu-Natal, said these retrospective electricity price hikes are more than just numbers on the bill. They are a hammer blow to millions of households already struggling

to make ends meet. She said those who will bear the brunt of these hikes are the most vulnerable in our society, the poorest of the poor.

Eskom's "coal addiction" is costing the country far more than it is worth, and who is profiting from this? she asked. "We want an inquiry to understand the cause of exorbitant prices of coal in the market and who controls the coal market monopoly.

We want the Department of Mineral Resources to consider implementing measures to regulate coal prices to ensure they are competitive and reasonable," she said.

Ms Mokoena said the debate is about more than just electricity. "It is about justice,

equity and the dignity of all South Africans. Hence, the MK Party supports the introduction of renewable energy resources. These should not be considered

optional, either. They are essential components of an affordable, sustainable green future for all South Africans." 🇿🇦



Mr Dennis Ryder, House Chairperson of Committees in the NCOP

NCOP Debates Value of Bailouts of State-Owned Enterprises



Leading the debate in the National Council of Provinces on the negative impact of the bailouts given to many of South Africa's state-owned enterprises on frontline government departments, Mr Memory Booyesen, a Member of the Western Cape Legislature, pointed out that the budget deficits now affecting many government departments is a crisis that quietly, but profoundly affects everyone in our nation. Abel Mputing reports.

Mr Booyesen said the crisis risks the very core of our social services, such as education, health, and safety. According to him, the crisis arises from the fact that the national government has poured half a trillion rand into

state-owned enterprises for over a decade, bailing out corrupt, mismanaged and inefficient SOEs at the expense of critical service delivery services. In his view, these bailouts "represent choices that government made to prioritise inefficiency over the

urgent needs of its citizens". This becomes unbearable, when one considers the R8.5 billion budget cut to frontline services that, for instance, the Western Cape Government has endured in successive financial years. This money could have

been invested in 2 000 more teachers, which the province requires. It also is unable to expand hospital services or bolster the police services in the province. Nonetheless, Mr Booyesen was optimistic that the Government of National

Unity would be able to instil a culture of accountability in these SOEs and would put the needs of its citizens over the endless cycle of SOE bailouts.

Mr Virgill Gericke (Economic Freedom Fighters)

contributed to the debate by highlighting the important role that SOEs play in South Africa. "They are meant to uplift and empower and create economic opportunities for those who were grossly disadvantaged by apartheid and colonialism." However, under the ANC the country has seen how SOEs have been "... run by politicians and officials as their personal properties with little regard to pieces of legislation that govern them", Mr Gericke said. However, due to their important role in protecting "the social rights of vulnerable South Africans", he was in favour of continued support for SOEs.

Ms Seeng Mokoena, KwaZulu-Natal permanent delegate to the NCOP, was also concerned about the billions of rands

poured into Eskom and South African Airways, with little to show for the money. Meanwhile, vital frontline services are left high and dry, she said. "Hospitals struggle to meet the demand for vital medical supplies, our schools are crumbling, while our police force is spread thinner and thinner on the ground." She also noted that the endless SOE bailouts have pushed South Africa's debt to gross domestic product to well over 70%. "[SOEs] are indeed a growing burden to the poor," she said, echoing other speakers.

Mr Bino Farmer, a permanent delegate to the NCOP representing the Western Cape, also mentioned the important role SOEs have in leading the transformation agenda but all the bailouts have had the

opposite effect. "SOEs have been viewed as drivers of corruption and nepotism, which made them not to be aligned with the state's developmental agenda," he said. According to Mr Farmer, there is now a conflict between them and the market-driven economy, which has hindered a partnership between public and private enterprises, he suggested.

Nonetheless, despite all their challenges, he agreed with some of the other speakers in the debate that SOEs should be supported. The concept of SOE is central to the ANC vision of an inclusive, resilient and self-sustaining economy, said Northern Cape's permanent delegate to the NCOP, Mr Solomon Mabilo.

In this framework, SOEs are critical for social and economic transformation and for driving growth in strategic sectors to provide essential services and equitable development. He criticised speakers preceding him in the debate, who were "preoccupied and pathologically entrapped in highlighting the SOEs that don't perform optimally when there are well over 50 other SOEs that do."

He mentioned the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa as one of the SOEs that is slowly improving. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) also "is constantly coming up with ground-breaking scientific approaches in addressing our country's challenges".

Mr Mabilo added, "The South African National Road Agency's massive road infrastructure investment that has helped to facilitate economic growth is another case in point of SOEs that are performing well. We are committed to the success of SOEs. The way forward is to ensure that their governance structures are free from corruption and undue influence."

Mr Mabilo pointed out that these entities remain a priority because they are also central to the Sustainable Development Goals, of which our country is a signatory. Their success is also crucial in facilitating the key public-private infrastructure investment partnership that will "foster innovation, assist in risk sharing and alleviate the infrastructure investment burden".

Influx of Cheap Imports and Fake Products Killing South Africa's Textile & Clothing Industry



The influx of cheap imported textile and clothing products and the illegal entry of fake products are reportedly some of the contributing factors to the challenges facing South Africa's textile and clothing industry. This emerged during a recent debate in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) on the topic of revitalising the clothing and textile industries to unlock the economic potential of the township and rural economies to create jobs, reduce inequality, and empower local communities. Sakhile Mokoena reports.

The mover of the topic, Mr Mpho Modise, an African National Congress delegate from the North West province, opened the debate by reminding the House about the history of the textile and clothing industry and its contribution to job creation and economic empowerment for township

and rural communities. Mr Modise argued that the industry's decline started after 1994 when the country signed international trade agreements and opened its industries to global competition. "Immediately after 1994, South Africa was put under immense pressure to conform

and align with international economic trade policies consciously managed by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation. Some of these policies include trade liberalisation or rather the lifting of certain trade restrictions, which brought increased integration of the

South African economy with the global economy but created new vulnerabilities by opening the South African economy to external factors with potential negative inclusive industrial development consequences," Mr Modise said. Mr Modise believes that

despite some successes, these international trade treaties have not delivered the desired outcome for South Africa. Instead, they have created multiple challenges for the clothing and textile industry, such as the influx of cheap clothing and textiles, which increased after 1994 and intensified in the 2000s,

mainly from China, Eswatini and Madagascar. He is, however, hopeful that the industry could be revitalised, as the industrialisation of the textile and clothing industry is prominently featured on the government's National Development Plan agenda. "We also support the textile, clothing, footwear and leather growth programme, which was implemented by the ANC government and is recently being accelerated," said Mr Modise.

Participating in the debate, the Minister of Small Business Development, Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, agreed that the influx of cheap imports and fake products were among the industry's major challenges. She told members of the NCOP about some of the government's planned initiatives to revitalise the sector to unlock its potential.

"We are busy with sets of strategic actions that we all

need to support if we are serious about transforming the sector, growing the economy and creating jobs. Working with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and the South African Revenue Service, we must cut down on cheap imports through tariffs, including on e-commerce platforms; and clampdown on fake illicit imports entering the country," said the minister.

According to the minister, limiting these illicit cheap imports is critical to opening the local market for small enterprises, particularly those from townships and rural areas. The government is also working to strengthen state capacity through coordination on enforcing regulations and bylaws to crack down on illicit business.

"Working together with organisations against counterfeit goods, we will soon announce a partnership with a campaign to fight the proliferation of counterfeit

goods in our country," she said. NCOP Permanent Delegate from Mpumalanga, Ms Sonja Boshoff of the Democratic Alliance, who is also the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Economic Development and Trade, accused the ANC of not prioritising the industry and failing to realise its potential to transform rural and township communities into thriving centres of economic activity.

"There is tremendous opportunity in these communities to create jobs, reduce inequality and empower individuals, Ms Boshoff said. "One of the most promising ways to achieve this is by revitalising our clothing and textile industries, which have the power to transform these communities into thriving centres of economic activity.

"However, the ANC approach to the clothing and textile industry seems a bit like an old jacket left forgotten at

the back of the closet - out of sight, out of mind. While our communities are calling for opportunities and investment, the government seems content with mothballing the potential of this industry," Ms Boshoff said. "The creation of local business homes and incubation and development programmes will greatly assist in reducing transportation costs and making the supply chain shorter and allow producers to serve consumers directly, making products more affordable and accessible," she said.

"For clothing and textile industries to compete in a globalised world, they must be supported by a skilled workforce - investing in training programmes that equip young people and women in rural areas and townships with the necessary skills in garment making, textile design and entrepreneurship will go a long way in growing this industry," Ms Boshoff said.

Ms Mathapelo Siwisa, an Economic Freedom Fighters delegate from the Northern Cape, was concerned that despite the sector's many positive characteristics, it has performed poorly in South Africa and faced numerous challenges. "One of the challenges is growing global competition with cheap imports. The failure to have a protective industrial policy has led to the killing of the local industry," said Ms Siwisa.

She said the decline in manufacturing and South Africa's textile and clothing industry is because the government focuses more on imports than exports. "Government needs to relook at its import policies and focus on the revival of the closed-down textile and clothing factories. We need more investment in local manufacturing and minimise imports - focus on industrialisation," Ms Siwisa urged. 🇿🇦

SCOPA & SIU Renew Memorandum of Understanding



The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) and the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) renewed their memorandum of understanding (MoU) at Parliament last month.

The purpose of the MoU is to strengthen the relationship between SCOPA and the SIU in investigating and reporting irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditures of public funds. More importantly, the signing

of the MoU assists in the formal referral of certain pressing matters from SCOPA to the SIU. Matters referred by SCOPA to the SIU for investigation or to motivate a proclamation include the

Eskom intelligence report, the National Skills Fund and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Prestige Portfolio. SCOPA has concentrated

on monitoring how state institutions implement consequence management.

The Presidency has established a mechanism to oversee the implementation of SIU referrals

to these institutions. Both SCOPA and the SIU will focus on ensuring that state institutions act on the SIU's systemic recommendations. These recommendations aim to improve administrative

practices and prevent incidents of maladministration, malpractice and corruption. The SIU has created a National Corruption Prevention and Risk Management Framework (NCPRMF) to execute the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. Once the Cabinet approves it, the framework will be available for public consultation.

SCOPA has been receiving updates from the SIU on maladministration, malpractice, and corruption revealed by

its investigations at state institutions. It notes the specific concerns raised regarding the high levels of corruption, maladministration, malpractice, lack of consequence management, and delays in prosecutions, all of which result in the state's failure to recover monies owed to it. The SCOPA of the 6th Parliament resolved and entered into a memorandum of understanding with the SIU for collaboration in areas of mutual interest, particularly in investigating and considering

matters relating to the misuse of public funds and implementing prevention measures and monitoring activities.

The initial MOU remained in force until the dissolution of the 6th Parliament. The SCOPA of the 7th Parliament, having acknowledged the importance of consultation, mutual support and cooperation to ensure effective financial oversight and accountability of state institutions, resolved to enter into the renewed MoU.

Both parties acknowledge the importance of collaboration on aspects such as information disclosure, reporting, and mutual cooperation and assistance to ensure effective financial oversight and accountability of state institutions, thereby combatting maladministration, malpractice, and corruption of state resources, money, and assets.

The SIU will review the matters referred by SCOPA, examine the evidence, and prepare a

motivation for a proclamation for the President's signature. According to the SIU Act, the Head of the SIU has the authority to assign an SIU member for secondment to a state institution, such as Parliament, to investigate the identified issues and provide a report on the findings. The results of these investigations can serve as evidence to support requests for proclamations to conduct more comprehensive investigations and to pursue the recovery of state funds. 🇱🇸

Increased Law Enforcement Deployment to Bring about Safer Roads for 2024 Festive Season



In a recent meeting, the Portfolio Committee on Transport noted with appreciation the revised Festive Road Safety Strategy for 2024, which centres around the 24-hour deployment of road traffic officers. Sibongile Maputi reports.

Committee Chairperson, Mr Donald Selamolela, said the strategy is comprehensive, easy to follow, and contains clear and necessary interventions. "We really appreciate your efforts to save lives and the work that has gone into this strategy. We are all working in the interests of the country and protecting, not only the lives of our people, but even those leaving our

borders," he said.

"We share the sentiment that road safety is not only a government responsibility but the community's as well. It hurts when our people always come to identify bodies and await complex investigations with findings that are sometimes hardly communicated to the people," Mr Selamolela said.

The committee received a briefing on the Festive Road Safety Strategy for 2024 and heard that law enforcement will be on 24-hour deployment on the roads over the festive season. The Deputy Minister, Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa, informed the committee that the department aims for zero road deaths.

However, this is difficult to

achieve because people find ways to avoid complying with the law. He said the use of web applications and warning oncoming drivers of the presence of law enforcement by flicking one's lights is irresponsible citizenry.

Mr Selamolela shared the same sentiments and said he would call for all committee chairpersons in

the Chairpersons forum to support the strategy. "We are confident of this. Everyone has been consulted on this, and we are happy. Serving people means continually improving in an attempt to represent their interests. This committee feels that the Road Traffic Management Corporation and the Department of Transport are doing just that," he said. 🇱🇸



Committee Welcomes Tough Action to Address Debt Owed to Water Boards

The Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation has welcomed the National Treasury's intention to invoke section 216(2) of the Constitution to withhold equitable share from defaulting municipalities that owe large amounts of money to water boards for bulk services, writes Malatswa Molepo.

The committee received briefings recently from the National Treasury, the Department of Water and Sanitation and the South

African Local Government Association (SALGA) on a response with solutions to the problem of the enormous debt municipalities owe to water boards.

"The measures by the National Treasury represent the necessary tough love needed to overcome the current challenges.

We are hopeful that these measures should invoke the realisation of the need to pay for services to ensure the viability of not only the water boards but the entire water value chain," said Mr Leon Basson, the Chairperson of the committee.

The committee is of the view that the intended actions are measured and intended to achieve the greater good for the sector. Also, the committee considers the

"carrot and stick approach" essential in an environment where municipalities have not committed to paying water boards for services rendered. "By only releasing portions of the equitable share on conditions that the first portion of the equitable share to be released will be strictly used to pay water board accounts.

Should this condition be met, the second portion of the equitable share will be released with its own conditions. This could be the corrective measure needed to prevent Vaal Central and Magalies Water from bankruptcy," Mr Basson said.

The committee has always maintained that the R23.7 billion owed to water boards is unsustainable and presents a security and socio-economic risk the country cannot afford. Similarly, the

committee had called for tough measures to be taken against municipalities to stop the tide of accumulating debt.

While the committee acknowledged that the measures are short-term, implementing medium- to long-term measures such as enabling private-sector partnerships within the sector and improving renegotiating repayment agreements between water boards and municipalities requires urgent action.

The committee noted concerns raised by SALGA regarding the funding model of the local sphere of government and the ripple effect of debt owed to municipalities. The committee highlighted the need to adopt a culture of payment for services across the board. In line with this, the committee encouraged municipalities and

water boards to adopt robust debt collection mechanisms that will ensure sustainable cash flow management.

"At the centre of the current crisis is the unwillingness to pay for services rendered. If left unchecked, this culture will lead to the systematic collapse of the water value chain. These measures should help change this culture and ensure the viability of water boards and the sector as a whole," the Chairperson noted.

The committee will continue monitoring the situation to ensure the interventions produce the intended results. and Infrastructure, and of the Ad Hoc Committee on the General Intelligence Laws Amendment Bill. He was the Speaker of the Northern Cape Legislature from 2014 to 2019. 



Ms Dina Pule, Portfolio Committee on Agriculture Chairperson (right)

Agriculture Committee would like Further Updates on Terbufos Pesticide Poisoning

The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture welcomed the briefing from the Department of Agriculture on the agricultural pesticide Terbufos. This pesticide has been linked to the poisoning deaths of several children, and the Chairperson of the committee, Ms Dina Pule, told the Minister of Agriculture, Mr John Steenhuisen, that the committee would invite him to return for further briefings on the matter. Malentsoe Magwagwa reports.

The minister told the committee that only five manufacturers of the pesticide Terbufos exist in South Africa, and the department plans to meet with them to discuss the measures they have in place to protect the supply chain and ensure that the pesticide's end use is legitimate.

Mr Steenhuisen also said that the department is waiting for independent laboratory results of samples taken during the inspection of spaza shops in Gauteng to see if there is a potential match in South African products.

He said the department believes that the Terbufos found in Gauteng do not emanate from one of the

five South African producers but come from across South Africa's borders.

The minister said another substance was found in spaza shops that were banned from production and sale in South Africa in 2016.

These discoveries indicate a supply chain coming from outside South Africa.

However, the department is waiting for the independent laboratory results and interactions with the five manufacturers to understand precisely where these substances are coming from and how the department can stop them from coming into South Africa if this is the case.

Meanwhile, the committee commended the department for the educational programmes it will be embarking upon to educate communities about the dangers of Terbufos.

"We appreciate the fact that you have briefed us, minister. Once you have the proper outcome, you must return to provide a full report. It must not be far; as soon as the outcome is available," Ms Pule said.

The department also briefed the committee on farmer support programmes, including the status of the national policy on comprehensive producer development support. It

provided updates on various bills, including the Animal Welfare Bill, the Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Bill, and the Perishable Products Export Control Amendment Bill.

As for progress on the Animal Welfare Bill, the Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Bill and the Perishable Product Export Control Amendment Bill, the committee expressed its disappointment that, nine years later, the department is still unable to finalise these crucial bills. In response, the department said it does not have the capacity to process them and appealed to the committee for assistance with budget.

On the Animal Welfare Bill, the department said a new socio-economic impact assessment study must still be conducted, as the existing one was compiled in 2018.

The department also said that drafting of the Bill must still begin, and it expects to introduce it to Parliament in June 2026. With the other two bills, the department told the committee that it expects the draft bills to be finalised and introduced in Parliament by November 2026.

The committee expressed its unhappiness with this situation, attributing it to the department's lack of proactiveness, among other things. 🇿🇦



COGTA Committee Satisfied with Provinces' Readiness for Summer Initiation Season

The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) has urged traditional leaders, communities and families to cooperate to protect the lives of initiates and not tolerate any negligence that leads to mutilation, torture or death in the summer initiation season that has started in most provinces. Alicestine October reports.

The National Initiation Oversight Committee (NIOC), the Department of Traditional Affairs, leaders of various houses of traditional leaders, the Eastern Cape Department of COGTA and the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee briefed the committee on readiness for the summer initiation season.

The committee heard that the summer initiation season has started in many provinces, and registration and screenings have been done.

The committee noted the preparations undertaken as satisfactory to meet the needs of the initiation season, as this was a concern given reports of deaths and mutilation that have been reported over the years. According to the committee, no one should participate without explicit consent and the support of families, who must take full responsibility for the well-being of the initiate.

Members also said that registration should be done according to the law and that no unregistered initiation sites, traditional surgeons or nurses should be allowed to operate. The committee also urged that all criminal activities be reported to the police and swift action taken to bring perpetrators to book.

It also urged medical screenings to ensure that no one neglects their health while undergoing initiation but overall, the committee was

encouraged that a lot of this work has been done, especially in the Eastern Cape.

On the training of iingcibi and amakhankatha, members believed that this is important to ensure hygienic and safe operations and to alert hospitals and health workers to stand ready to intervene and rescue those at risk. According to members there should also be enough water, food and personal protective equipment for all initiates to ensure the safety of everyone undergoing initiation.

Committee Chairperson Dr Zweli Mkhize said the committee also supports mobilising the South African Police Service to encourage timely arrests of perpetrators and the training prosecutors for effective prosecution and compliance with the law.

"We believe that the cause of deaths must be immediately determined and, where transgressions are identified, the perpetrators are brought to book," he said.

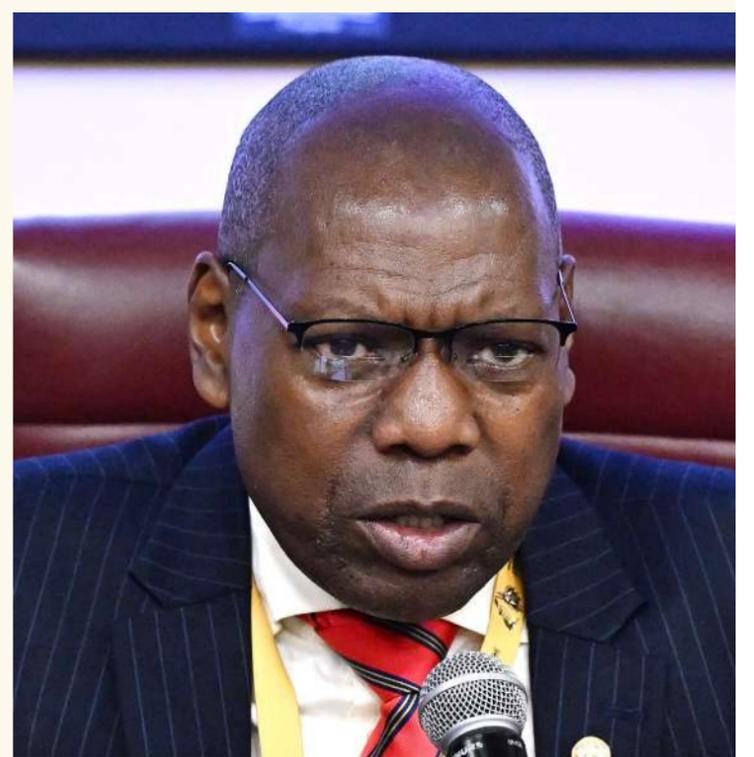
He urged that the whole community, including amakhosi, religious leaders,

civil society, media and social platforms assist in creating a positive environment to help prevent malpractice and eliminate misconceptions about the initiation process. The Chairperson said strong communication campaigns must be mounted to remove any miscommunication. "We support the message of the provincial government of the Eastern Cape of initiates returning alive."

The strong oversight role of traditional leaders and all

spheres of government, including municipalities and provincial and national governments was also highlighted. This is particularly in providing additional resources, as the some in the delegation indicated that there are challenges and resources are inadequate.

The committee is now planning an oversight visit to the Eastern Cape to get a first-hand perspective of how things are going. 🇿🇦



Dr Zweli Mkhize, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on COGTA



Committees Call on Government to Put South Africans' Interests First, as They Decarbonise Economy

The Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition, along with the Portfolio Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation, have asked the government to consider the interests of South Africans when developing green projects. Sibongile Maputi reports.

The committees held a joint meeting recently for a briefing on the Green Hydrogen

Commercialisation Strategy and the Electric Vehicles White Paper. The strong delegation was led by the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Mr Parks Tau, and his deputies, Ms Nomalungelo Gina and Mr Zuko Godlimpi.

The meeting heard that the transition to electric vehicles is complex and risky. Still, South Africa needs to make such a transition to maintain job creation and mineral beneficiation, among other benefits. Mr Tau assured committee members that the move to green energies will be phased and just.

Committee member Mr Wayne Thring said it is important that while the government is focused on our efforts to decarbonise, the developed

world should not set the tone. "We ought to be careful of weaponisation of the climate agenda when Africa contributed 4% in the carbon footprint.

We should position ourselves to do what is best for South Africa and her economy. Why are we subjected to some punitive regulations that come from the developed world?" he asked.

Members had questions on various issues, including partnerships, the Department of Basic Education's involvement, recruiting students to the programme, and coal mines.

One committee member, Mr Malusi Gigaba, wanted to know if the programmes were not overly ambitious

and sought the timeframes for implementation. "These projects should not be viewed just as energy but an industrialisation opportunity. Given that our economy is energy-intensive, I don't think we should shy away from that," he suggested.

"Use the opportunities to support the industrialisation programme of government further. The issue we need to discuss is how we intend to industrialise the economy," Mr Gigaba said, agreeing with Mr Thring about global carbon contributions.

Committee member Ms Natasha Mazzone had concerns about the cost of new equipment in the green energy economy, which she fears could frustrate progress. She also spoke

favourably about South Africa's innovative talents and encouraged the government to incentivise scientists and engineers to work in South Africa.

Co-chairperson Mr Mzwandile Masina said the committees welcomed the progress but are concerned about the lack of information on how South Africans will benefit from the green energy projects.

"When we were told of the climate-change situation, we closed Komati and replaced it with renewables. What followed was a crisis and other problems," Mr Masina noted. The Komati Power Station had been repurposed into a renewable energy training facility and repowered with solar, wind, and battery storage. 🌱



Ms Tsakani Maluleke, the Auditor-General of South Africa

Committee on Auditor-General Welcomes R3.47 billion Financial Losses Recovered

The Standing Committee on the Auditor General (AG) welcomed the recovery and prevention of the R3.47 billion in financial losses by the Office of the Auditor-General (AGSA) through the material irregularities (MIs) process, writes Faith Ndenze.

The committee received a briefing from the AGSA on its integrated annual report for the 2023/24 financial year.

The AG has recovered R1.55 billion in financial losses and R1.14 billion in financial losses in the process of recovery and has prevented the financial loss of R0.78 billion for government departments, municipalities, and entities.

These successes show the importance of executing the new powers of the AG obtained through the amended Public Audit Act.

In the year under review, the AG identified 626 MIs for non-compliance and suspected fraud.

This resulted in 500 MIs for material financial loss, 51 MIs for substantial harm to the general public, 66 MIs for substantial harm to public sector institutions, and 9 MIs for misuse of material public resources.

An MI is any non-compliance with legislation, fraud, theft or breach of fiduciary duty that could result in a material financial loss, misuse of public

funds or substantial harm to a public sector institution or the public. The amended Public Audit Act introduced the concept of MIs.

It expanded the powers of the AG to refer the MIs to relevant bodies for investigation if the accounting officer or authority does not take appropriate action to address them.

The committee welcomes the AGSA's culture shift strategy. This entails plotting auditees not only according to mere compliance but also focusing on service delivery

performance. This shows that 23% of government departments and entities and 45% of municipalities are currently doing harm, while 40% of departments and entities and 43% of municipalities are not doing the basics.

The committee commends the AG for receiving a clean audit opinion for the year under review. A functional Office of the AG is important as it results in a positive shift towards accountability and public sector performance. 🌟



Signing of UPRD Bill into Law a Welcome Development

The signing of the Upstream Petroleum Resources Development Bill of 2021 into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 29 October was the historic climax of a lawmaking process set in motion by the Portfolio Committee on Mineral Resources and Energy of the 6th Parliament. This welcome development reflects the shining and meticulous legacy of the committee of the 6th Parliament, writes Mikateko Mahlaule, the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Mineral and Petroleum Resources.

This memorable development shall always be unreservedly attributed to the remarkable work of the previous committee, which was guided by Section 59(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. This section states that the National Assembly (NA) ought to facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the NA and its committees. Based on that constitutional imperative, which is part of Parliament's mandate, the committee crisscrossed all nine provinces to solicit the views of South African citizens, including organised formations on the Bill in 26 district municipalities and four metropolitan municipalities.

The UPRD Act, as it is commonly referred to, opens access to natural petroleum resources to historically excluded and marginalised South Africans by providing for, among other things, active state and black persons' participation in developing the nation's petroleum resources. It also provides for the designation of the Petroleum Agency of South Africa (PASA) as the regulatory authority for the upstream petroleum sector and the designation of a State Petroleum Company

as the entity responsible for managing the state's 20% carried interest in petroleum rights.

State participation in petroleum rights

Section 34 of the UPRD Act provides for the designation of a state-owned entity (the State Petroleum Company) to manage state participation in petroleum exploration and production activities through a carried interest in petroleum rights. This entity must enter into a joint operating agreement with the holder or become a party to an existing

joint operating agreement and appoint a minimum of two or more representatives to the joint operating committee of the exploration or production operation to represent the state. It is also entitled to full participation, including the corresponding percentage of voting rights as determined in the joint operating agreement.

In October 2024, the Cabinet approved submitting the South African National Petroleum Company (SANPC) Bill of 2024 to Parliament. The Bill establishes the State Petroleum Company, as contemplated in section 34

of the UPRD Act, through a merger of PetroSA, the South African Gas Development Company (iGas) and the Strategic Fuel Fund (SFF). On 14 October 2024, Minister of Minerals and Petroleum Resources, Mr Gwede Mantashe, published an explanatory summary of the 2024 South African National Petroleum Company Bill (SANPC Bill) in the Government Gazette, which confirms that the minister intends to introduce the SANPC Bill in the NA "shortly". The public is invited to comment on the Bill before 20 December 2024.



Black persons' participation

Section 31 of the Act states that every petroleum right must have a minimum of 10% undivided participation interest by black persons. It goes further to say that the 10% undivided interest may, however, be diluted to no less than 5%, subject to a right of first refusal by the state on terms agreed to with the relevant black person to any funder of the company for purposes of raising capital. Also, this section of the Act instructs the holder or an applicant for a petroleum right who is unable to comply with the required black persons' participation

interest requirement to lodge a request for an extension to comply within a period to be determined by PASA.

Regulatory authority

The designation of the Petroleum Agency of South Africa as the regulatory authority for the upstream petroleum sector is contained in section 9 of the Act, which empowers the petroleum agency to administer the country's acreage for the exploration, development and production of petroleum. PASA will perform many other functions, including, among other things, providing technical support to the

minister for the promotion of onshore and offshore exploration and production of petroleum, receiving and evaluating applications for reconnaissance permits, petroleum rights and retention permits and making recommendations to the minister. Other functions include enforcing health, safety and quality standards in accordance with the applicable legislation regulating upstream petroleum health and safety.

Offences and penalties

The Act also deals with offences and penalties in sections 101 and 102. For

instance, it says that any person found guilty of conducting reconnaissance operations, exploration and production of petroleum or commencement with work on any block or blocks without a reconnaissance permit, as well as exploration and production right, may be liable to a fine not exceeding 10% of the person's or right holder's annual turnover in the country and its exports during the person's or right holder's preceding financial year or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding four years, or to both a fine and such imprisonment.

Commencement

We await the operation of

the Act in line with section 111(1), which states that the Act comes into operation on a date fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette and that different dates may be so fixed in respect of different provisions of the Act. As Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, I would like to assure the public that the diligent work done by the 6th Parliament will be continued in the 7th Parliament to ensure that all stakeholders are afforded an opportunity to sufficiently participate in lawmaking. 🇷🇵

Committee Conducts Successful Oversight Visit to South African Navy



The Select Committee on Security and Justice recently conducted a fruitful oversight visit to the South African Naval base in Simonstown in Cape Town. It was the committee's first oversight visit to the base since the start of the 7th Parliament, writes Rajaa Azzakani.

Committee Chairperson Ms Jane Mananiso said the committee wished to familiarise itself with the workings of the Navy and to engage on its 2023/24 annual performance report and 2024/25 performance indicators. "We are a new committee. We wanted to hear first-hand their challenges and how we can assist from our side," she said.

Ms Mananiso said the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is the backbone of securing South Africa from external threats and, within the value chain of the security

cluster, assists with maritime safety, border patrol, and air and land space monitoring, among other valuable functions.

"The naval base was chosen for the committee to receive a comprehensive introduction to the work of the Navy and its programmes, staffing, challenges, infrastructure, maintenance of its assets, and how the budgetary constraints impact operations," she said.

At the start of yesterday's proceedings, Ms Mananiso

invoked Rule 127 of the National Council of Provinces, wherein she said a committee could, at the start of a meeting, deliberate on whether to close its proceedings to the public if it deems that the information to be presented is of a confidential nature and will impact the country's security.

The committee deliberated behind closed doors on the matter. A majority agreed to the proposal, but some indicated that this should have been decided before the visit, had the Navy previously indicated the information was confidential,

and if its presentations had been received on time. The committee then resolved that the meeting with the department and the Minister, Ms Angie Motshekga, would be closed to the public, but after that, the physical oversight and walkabout would be open to all. The committee heard that the Navy is working hard to provide combat-ready vessels and platforms for the country's defence and to satisfy its international commitments. It is further committed to eradicating all acts of maritime criminality within South Africa's domain and surrounding waters.

However, years of underfunding have resulted in the scheduled upkeep, maintenance and repairs of vessels falling behind. This has severely compromised the Navy's ability to "fight and win" at sea. The committee heard that South Africa has 3,924 kilometres of maritime borders, with 96% of its imports and exports moving by sea. The Navy said that its "Operation Corona" maritime coastal patrols deter illegal, unregulated, and uncontrolled fishing, but the monetary value of these forms of fishing exceeds that of legal fishing. Nonetheless, the Navy is working with other departments to stem this criminality. The committee

heard that the Navy did not achieve its “hours at sea per year” target for the 2023/2024 financial year due to prolonged maintenance and repairs to its vessels. This is mainly due to capacity constraints at Armscor dockyard, which are further compounded by procurement challenges. The committee suggested a better working relationship between the Navy and Armscor is required.

Ms Mananiso said the committee also requested information about transformation relating to women, disability, and LGBTQ+ people and was assured that programmes exist in the Navy

to ensure integration. The committee also did a walkabout of the naval base, boarded the SA Drakensberg, and visited the dry dock and the maintenance workshop. “We have seen the picture, and it shows the capabilities. This is one of the spaces that really shows you must find a way to deal with procurement matters. It was also highlighted to us that the new Bill on procurement [needs to] assist them in finding a better way of dealing with procurement,” said Ms Mananiso.

“The committee will forever advocate for more budget. We have emphasised, too,

that they need to prioritise better. They have committed to meet the targets that they underachieved. We are committed to working with

them. We requested a detailed report on procurement and supply chain matters so we can ascertain if everything is above board or if consequence

management should be meted out. We are moving in the right direction, irrespective of the challenges,” the Chairperson said. 🇿🇦



COGTA Committee conducts Oversight Visit to Gauteng Municipalities



The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs conducted an oversight visit to Gauteng last month to assess service delivery and governance issues at Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and Merafong Local Municipality. Alicestine October reports.

This visit followed the Auditor-General’s (AG) last audit findings on distressed and dysfunctional municipalities in the country.

Explaining the reason for the oversight visit, committee Chairperson Dr Zweli Mkhize said that the committee wanted to ascertain the challenges at these municipalities and see how, through intergovernmental relations (IGR) structures, the municipalities can

address those challenges and ensure services are delivered to citizens.

The first visit was to Merafong Local Municipality. The municipality is under an S139(5) intervention and has received disclaimed audit outcomes for over five consecutive years. It has adopted an unfunded budget and failed to implement the Financial Recovery Plan (FRP). The municipality failed to honour its payment

agreement with Rand Water, which restricted the water supply by 20%. This restriction has resulted in most of the suburbs not having water. The committee will engage the municipality on the reason for the repeated poor financial performance and how to assist the municipality in addressing challenges to ensure service delivery to communities.

During the visit, the committee, among others, observed that the municipality

is plagued by water supply and sanitation challenges and has huge governance and financial management issues. There are also challenges with community dissatisfaction, with some residents resorting to the courts with complaints about the municipality. The committee noted that many municipal governance issues are related to non-compliance with legislation, and it urged the municipality to address this issue so that the municipality deals with the poor audit

outcomes from the past.

The committee also urged the municipal leadership to focus on consequence management to correct all the wrongs identified by the AG, in particular, correcting irregular, unauthorised and wasteful expenditures. Consequence management, the committee believes, needs proper, functioning disciplinary boards and ensuring that disciplinary processes are appropriately managed.” The committee also urged the municipality to provide various reports on investigations into corruption, irregularities, maladministration, and other issues the community has raised.

In Tshwane metro, where four different mayors have taken the reins since the last local government elections in November 2021, the committee was encouraged by the tangible positive improvement in governance and the financial position in the City of Tshwane. Despite this, the committee has urged the municipality to continue with the focused revenue enhancement strategy to improve the finances of the municipality anchored on the reduction of fruitless and wasteful expenditures and enhanced debt recovery initiatives. The committee

raised concerns that the municipality is owed over R27.8 billion, which directly impacts the municipality's cash flow management.

Other concerns flagged were the municipality's adoption of an unfunded budget for the 2024/25 financial year and the financial risk the unfunded budget places on the municipality, including the possible increase of debt, poor service delivery and cash shortfalls that can lead to late payments, to creditors and limit spending on maintenance and repairs.

Another concern was infrastructure challenges in the municipality that have

contributed to high non-revenue water of 34.4%, which robs the municipality of much-needed revenue for services. The committee urged the municipality to invest more in infrastructure maintenance as it remains the central pillar of economic development and quality service delivery to the people.

In the Johannesburg Metro, the committee also noted serious challenges and huge opportunities for the municipality to correct them. The committee was concerned about the political instability in the metro, as it has changed mayors six times in three years. The committee noted the AG's observations

that the changes in the political leadership have not significantly impacted the audit outcomes. However, the committee requested a report on how the metro handles the hung municipality. This, the committee believes, can help provide lessons on how to deal with hung municipalities, especially with the bill on coalition governments in the pipeline.

Another big concern was the reported non-revenue water losses. The committee asked for the municipality's turnaround strategy to address these water losses resulting from infrastructure deterioration and illegal connections. The committee

also urged the municipality to conduct community satisfaction surveys and share this information with the committee to see how some of their challenges affect communities.

Members were also concerned about allegations of maladministration and corruption that must be investigated. The committee also raised serious concerns about the municipality's finances. It noted that the municipality is running an R3 billion deficit in the current year, which signals huge challenges in its revenue collection. Members were also concerned that the municipality underspends on

its infrastructure grant and has an outstanding debt of R58 billion owed to it by various entities.

The committee requested other reports from the municipality, including how it will recover its outstanding debt, details on its infrastructure master plan, and how infrastructure, especially water infrastructure, will be refurbished, repaired, and maintained to curb water losses. The committee also requested a list and progress report of court orders and forensic investigations since the 2019/20 financial year and a report on consequence management. 🇿🇦

President Cyril Ramaphosa's Annual Address to the NCOP



President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered his annual address to the National Council of Provinces in November. He said the decision by the NCOP to dedicate the debate on his address to focus on our collective efforts to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living is a worthy and timely response to the mandate of the people. inSession is presenting a shortened version of the speech to highlight the important topics he focused on.

It has been almost six months since South Africans went to the polls. Through their votes, the people of South Africa gave their elected representatives a firm mandate to improve their living conditions and their prospects for a better life. Since then, we have worked to give effect to that mandate [...] [...] Over the course of the last

30 years, we have set out on the path of transformation. We have made progress on many fronts. But we have also confronted severe constraints and challenges to our development. Some of these constraints and challenges have arisen from beyond our shores. Some of these challenges include a series

of global financial crises, a devastating global pandemic, geopolitical rivalry and the catastrophic effects of climate change. But many of these constraints and challenges have arisen at home. These include state capture and corruption, policy missteps, service delivery failures and civil unrest. As we work to put

these challenges behind us, our focus is on the actions we must take – boldly and with urgency – to implement our electoral mandate. Our actions must make a real difference in people's lives now. Our actions must also build an inclusive economy that will continue to reduce poverty into the future – and ultimately eradicate it.

Poverty alleviation

Since the advent of democracy, we have dedicated great effort and resources towards alleviating poverty and reducing inequality. As we work to rebuild the economy, to create more employment and open opportunities for emerging businesses, we



continue to assist the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. We provide various forms of support and protection through the 'social wage'. This includes the provision of social grants, free basic services, health care, basic education, higher education, social housing, and transport.

When debt servicing costs are excluded, around 60 percent of government's budget is spent on the social wage. The funds we spend on social support and protection are not wasted. They make a real difference in people's lives and improve their prospects for a better future. The results of Census 2022 show the impact of these social policies. Households living in formal houses increased to 89 percent in 2022, a huge rise from 65 percent in 1996. Eight out of 10 South Africans now have access to piped water at home or in their yards. Ninety percent of people have access to electricity, up from 58 percent in 1996.

Reducing the cost of living

A vital part of the effort to reduce the cost of living is the provision of a free basic minimum of services to

indigent households. Through this programme, millions of indigent people have been able to access basic needs like electricity and water. Yet, we know that this programme is not reaching all the people it should. It is estimated, for example, that around 10 million poor households qualify for free basic electricity, but it only reaches about 2.3 million households.

While the provision of such services to indigent households is funded by the national fiscus, these resources are either poorly managed by municipalities or they are misdirected to other council expenditures.

This is one instance where the weaknesses in local government have a direct bearing on the quality of life of the poorest in our society. It is one of the reasons that we are working to ensure that we have effective local government as part of our efforts to build a capable state.

Social grants remain a lifeline for millions of people, particularly children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. The introduction of the SRD grant during

the Covid-19 pandemic has provided much needed relief to as many as 11 million unemployed people at its peak. Today, around half of all households in South Africa benefit from social grants.

Studies have shown that the Child Support Grant has a positive impact on children's nutrition, health, school attendance and educational outcomes. Although there are some weaknesses in the system, it is impressive that the state provides direct financial support to 28 million beneficiaries every month without fail.

But we must also recognise that this is not a desirable nor a sustainable situation. While there will always be people who need support – such as the elderly, children and persons with disabilities – our aim must be to steadily move as many social grant recipients as possible into sustainable livelihoods.

Food is among the most basic of human needs. Yet nearly a quarter of households consider their access to food as inadequate or severely inadequate. While the steep rise in food inflation since the

COVID pandemic has eased over the last few months, consumers are yet to feel the effects in their pockets.

Among the measures to ensure that all South Africans have affordable access to sufficient food, Government is looking at whether the basket of food items that is exempted from VAT could be expanded to include more basic products.

Support to SMMEs

Another important area is the expansion of the country's agricultural output. This requires more effective land redistribution and the provision of the support needed by beneficiaries to work the land. We have seen how financial support to small-scale farmers in recent years has significantly increased the cultivation of land. Many South Africans get their food from spaza shops and informal traders.

These outlets are an important part of township and rural economies. They provide residents with convenience and value. However, the recent spate of food-borne illnesses has highlighted the several risks associated with these enterprises.

The tragic deaths of a number of children after eating food from some of these outlets requires urgent and decisive action to prevent the contamination of food by harmful substances, particularly pesticides that are being sold unlawfully.

Since we announced a range of measures two weeks ago, multi-disciplinary teams have been conducting inspections of spaza shops across the country. Nearly 200,000 spaza shops have been visited. More than 1,000 spaza shops, supermarkets and warehouses have been closed down. Large quantities of goods have been confiscated and numerous fines have been issued for violations of by-laws.

Addressing spatial inequality

Poverty in South Africa is also a consequence of where people live. Our cities and towns were designed by the apartheid planners to keep black people at a distance from the centres of economic activity and social services. This has created spatial inequality that we have not yet been able to overcome. One of the consequences of this situation is that millions of South Africans, especially the

poor and working class, spend a large portion of their income on transport costs. Studies suggest that poor households can spend more than a third of their income on transport.

The work that has been done over the last few years to restore the key commuter train corridors to full operation is a vital part of efforts to reduce the cost of living. Surveys by Statistics SA have shown that trains are the least expensive mode of transport in the country. In 2020, the cost of train travel was around 40 percent less than by minibus taxi and 27 percent less than by bus.

Energy poverty

Another challenge we have had to confront is energy poverty. We have done well as a country: across almost all municipalities between 80 and 100 percent of households have access to electricity. Yet we have struggled for more than a decade to produce enough electricity to meet demand, which resulted in crippling load shedding. The cost of building new generating capacity, combined with the effects of state capture and mismanagement,

has contributed to a steady rise in the cost of electricity for consumers. Even now, NERSA is considering an application from Eskom for tariff increases that will put a further strain on households and businesses.

It is vital that we settle on a tariff path that enables Eskom to achieve financial sustainability while not placing an undue burden on consumers of electricity. We have embarked on far-reaching reforms of the electricity sector that will establish a competitive electricity market. This will improve energy security and lower the cost of electricity.

Access to healthcare

Improving access to quality health care is central to our efforts to tackle poverty. A healthier nation is a more productive nation. As a government, we have prioritised the strengthening of primary healthcare. This is an important part of the progressive implementation of the National Health Insurance, which will give all South Africans equal access to quality health care regardless of their ability to pay. The work underway to implement the

NHI includes the upgrading and expansion of public health facilities and the training of qualified and capable personnel.

The value of education

Education is ultimately the most powerful instrument we have to end poverty. By investing in the skills and capabilities of young people, we will be able to break the cycle of poverty that is handed down from one generation to the next. We have done much to make education accessible and affordable for all, including through no-fee schools and funding for tertiary students from poor and working-class backgrounds. Almost 90 percent of all learners in the public education system attend no-fee schools.

The number of students benefiting from NSFAS rose from around 40,000 in the early years of democracy to over 780,000 last year. We are now focused on achieving universal access for all children to early childhood development facilities. This is essential to prepare them for school and set them up to be successful in life. In basic education, we have prioritised

improvements in reading and mathematics.

Affordable housing

Due to our past, millions of South Africans experience asset poverty. They do not own land or houses or other assets that can be used to raise capital, to start a business or to hand on to the next generation. We have started to address the challenge of asset poverty through our land reform programmes and the provision of subsidised housing.

While the state has provided houses to millions of South Africans since 1994, many people do not have title deeds to these houses. We are working to remove the backlog of title deeds for subsidised housing and reform the system of title deeds to make it more affordable and accessible.

Impact of crime

Crime, violence and corruption make people poorer. They make communities live in fear. In recent years, we have focused on putting more boots on the ground through the recruitment of police personnel. In this administration, the South

African Police Service will implement a more data-driven approach to target violent crime hotspots and direct resources accordingly. The SAPS, through more effective policing will continue to work with communities through community policing forums to promote the role of citizens in reducing crime.

One of the most pervasive and vicious forms of crime in South Africa is the violence perpetrated by men against women and children. Through the National Strategic Plan against Gender-Based Violence, we are strengthening the response of the criminal justice system, providing better support for survivors of gender-based violence, and reducing the vulnerability of women through improving their economic position. We are also undertaking programmes of prevention, working with men and boys in particular to address the attitudes and practices that contribute to such crimes.

On Monday, we joined people around the world in marking the start of 16 Days of Activism of no Violence against Women and Children. We call on all South Africans to



become involved and to raise awareness about this scourge and what we need to do to end gender-based violence.

Addressing unemployment

While the number of people in employment has doubled over the last 30 years, this has not kept pace with the number of people entering the workforce each year. More than 11 million people are currently unemployed in South Africa. Because there can be no job creation without growth, we have placed inclusive economic growth at the centre of the work of the Government of National Unity.

We are pursuing far-reaching economic reforms to make the economy more competitive and to enable greater growth. There is now significant momentum to our reforms in strategic network industries like electricity, water, telecommunications, rail and ports. In this administration, we are focusing on reforming the local government system and improving the delivery of basic services.

We are expanding investment in infrastructure. Infrastructure investment contributes to economic growth by stimulating activity in the construction and related industries. It also provides the networks and facilities that allow for the production and distribution of raw materials, manufactured goods, data, electricity, water and the other essentials of a functioning economy.

We have seen the impact on people’s lives of new roads and bridges in rural areas, of new clinics and hospitals, of new schools and colleges, of water schemes and new housing projects.

Over the last four years, major projects have been completed in areas such as transport, water and sanitation, energy, human settlements and student accommodation.

Another 82 Strategic Integrated Projects, with a combined

value of R437 billion are in construction. The problem of unemployment is most severe among young people. To address this, the government established the SAYouth. mobi platform for young people to find opportunities for employment, training and development. Other initiatives include a pay-for-performance programme that links training to employment opportunities.

The revitalised National Youth Service involves young people in different fields of work social and community work. The Presidential Employment Stimulus has created earning opportunities for more than 2 million participants. Around 84 percent of participants are young people.

The government is increasing support for small businesses and entrepreneurs across the spectrum, from informal enterprises to high growth, high-tech start-ups. To unlock growth in informal employment, the government is working to ease restrictions on informal trading, reduce the cost of trading and expand lending to small businesses by providing guarantees and first-loss funding.

One of the pillars of our response to gender-based violence is the economic empowerment of women. At the same time, improving the economic position of women is a critical part of reducing poverty and inequality – and unleashing the potential of our economy.

One of the initiatives to empower women is the Women Economic Assembly, which has done good work to incorporate women-owned businesses into established business value chains. The women economic empowerment programme has now trained 10,000 women businesses to secure procurement from the government and the private sector.

G20 presidency

As we pursue inclusive growth,

we need to be increasingly seeking opportunities elsewhere on the African continent. As the African Continental Free Trade Area gains momentum, our companies need to expand their presence in the huge continental market that is being formed.

On Sunday, the 1st of December, South Africa will be taking over the Presidency of the G20 group of countries. Together, these countries account for 75 per cent of the world’s trade and 85 percent of global GDP. We will use our Presidency to bring the development priorities of the African Continent and the Global South more firmly onto the agenda of the G20.

Through our G20 Presidency we will focus on the theme of ‘Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability’. We will call on the members of the G20 to stand in solidarity with those people who are facing hardship, poverty and conflict.

We will work to tackle inequality through fair

and consistent trade rules, improved debt relief mechanisms, and increased funding for climate actions and development. We aim to strengthen the commitment of all countries to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The G20 Presidency is also an opportunity to present to the world the great opportunities and experiences that South Africa has to offer.

Arising from the elections in May, the Government of National Unity has been working with other formations in society towards the convening of a National Dialogue. The National Dialogue will encourage the participation of all South Africans, as individuals and in their various formations.

The National Dialogue will need to address the persistence of poverty, unemployment and inequality. The National Dialogue will seek to forge a new social compact on the action required by all members of society to achieve

the vision of the National Development Plan.

In closing, I wish to recall the words of our founding President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela at the ‘Make Poverty History’ campaign in 2005. He said: “Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.”

There are moments when the depth of poverty in our country may lead us to despair. Poverty, unemployment and inequality are so pervasive and so persistent that we sometimes fear we may never overcome them. And yet, we overcame apartheid. We overcame slavery and colonialism.

Through our collective actions, we will be able to end poverty in our country. Together, we will be able to achieve a more just, more equal society in which all South Africans share in the country’s wealth. A society in which no one is left behind. 🇿🇦





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.



OUR PARLIAMENT – THE DRUM

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.