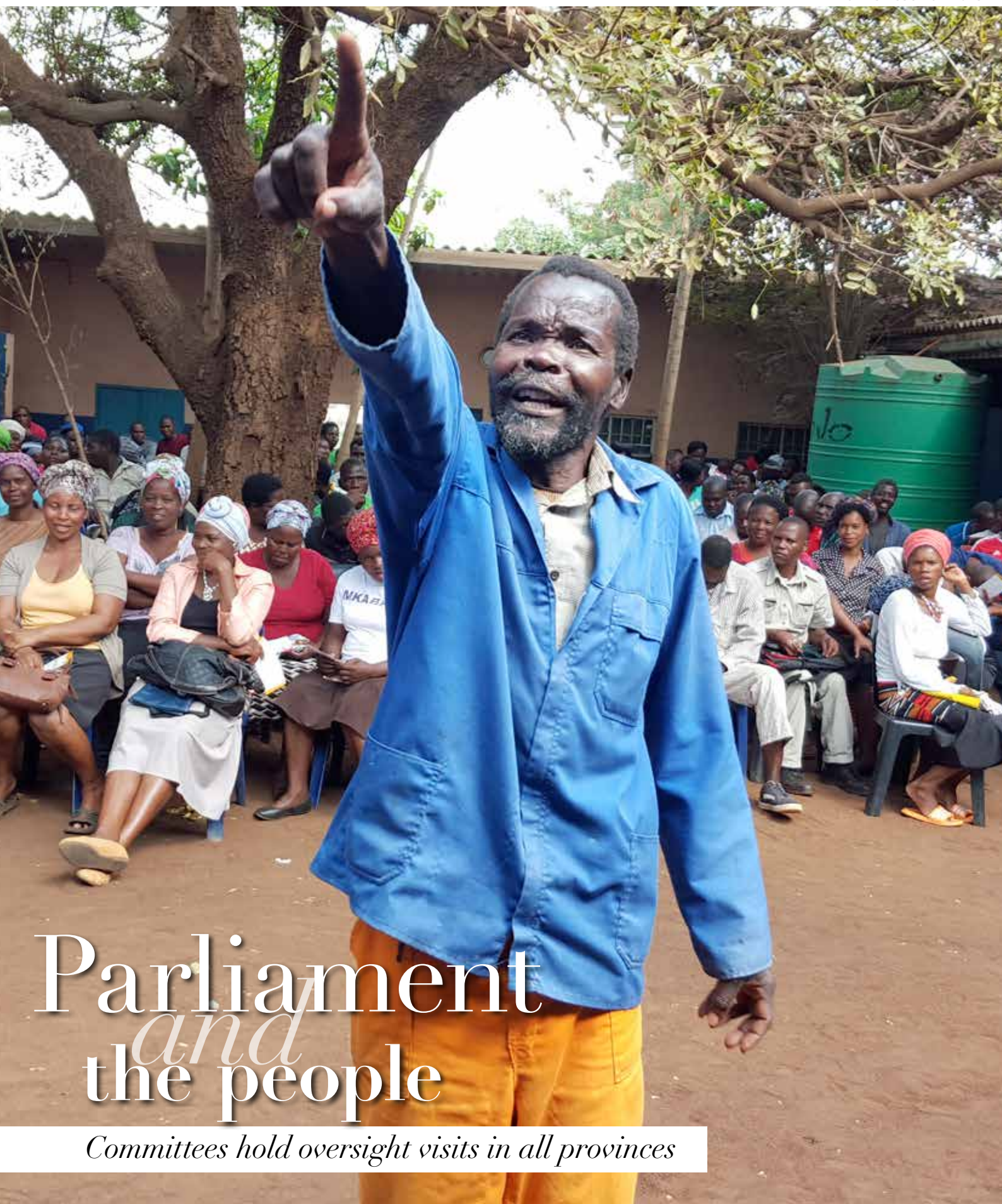


Monthly magazine of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

in session



Vol. 15 ISSUE 8 2015



Parliament *and* the people

Committees hold oversight visits in all provinces



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Mace of National Assembly

Vision

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

Mission

Parliament aims to provide a service to the people of South Africa by providing the following:

- A vibrant people's Assembly that intervenes and transforms society and addresses the development challenges of our people;
- Effective oversight over the Executive by strengthening its scrutiny of actions against the needs of South Africans;
- Participation of South Africans in the decision-making processes that affect their lives;
- A healthy relationship between the three arms of the State, that promotes efficient co-operative governance between the spheres of government, and ensures appropriate links with our region and the world; and
- An innovative, transformative, effective and efficient parliamentary service and administration that enables Members of Parliament to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities.

Strategic Objectives

1. Strengthening oversight and accountability
2. Enhancing public involvement
3. Deepening engagement in international fora
4. Strengthening co-operative government
5. Strengthening legislative capacity



Black Rod of National Council of Provinces

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COVER: Citizens made their voices heard at the series of country-wide oversight visits by Committees from both the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces.

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Distribution & subscriptions: Jacqueline Zils

Publisher: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

Printer: Mailtronic Direct Marketing

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INSESSION is a monthly publication, which is published by the Information and Content Development Unit of the Parliamentary Communication Services of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. All material published is copyrighted and cannot be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher.

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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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ISSN 2227-1325 (Print)

ISSN 2227-3778 (Online)

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Editor's note

During September, approximately 30 of Parliament's 50-odd Committees travelled to communities in far-flung parts of all nine provinces to exercise their oversight duties. About 10 Select Committees (SCs) from the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) kicked off the two weeks of engaging with citizens.

More than 20 National Assembly (NA) Portfolio Committees (PCs) followed. Between the PCs and the SCs, they visited mostly rural towns and villages to track service delivery in schools, on farms, in factories and within communities.

It is impossible to reflect in this brief column the range of issues and challenges that Parliament's Committees considered in the two-week oversight period. Suffice it to say that it demonstrates that the Parliament the public sees on television and in the news probably represents about 10% of the on-the-ground work that Parliament actually does, especially when its Committees leave the parliamentary precinct to visit those citizens who don't have the resources to bring their concerns to Cape Town.

The joint Select Committees on Land and Mineral Resources and Communications and Public Enterprises visited the Kruger National Park to monitor efforts to stop rhino poaching; the Select Committee on Education and Recreation investigated transformation at the University of Free State; the Select Committee on Social Services assessed the progress of the eradication of the bucket toilet system; the joint Select Committees on Trade, International Relations, Business and Economic Development visited a non-governmental organisation, Widowed Women of South Africa, commending it for protecting child-headed households. (See these stories on pages 20 to 23).

The PCs from the NA visited Free State, Limpopo, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. Like their counterparts in the NCOP, some NA Committees joined forces in order to maximise their reach. An unprecedented collaborative team of Committees on Police, Defence, Military Veterans, Home Affairs and International Relations has together embarked on oversight of issues concerning the safety of South Africa's borders. (Read about the PC oversight visits on pages 24 to 27).

Earlier in the month, the NCOP's permanent delegates also returned to their provinces to check up on progress in delivery of infrastructure programmes. The theme for this biannual event was "Advancing infrastructural investment and development for better services to communities". They tracked infrastructural projects, including the construction of roads, clinics, bridges, hospitals, houses and sanitation services throughout the country.

While the delegates found what they saw generally encouraging, they expressed mixed reactions, acknowledging how much more has to be done. (Read about their trips on pages 14 to 19).

Members of Parliament are now in their constituencies for their regular constituency weeks, but during September the parliamentary precinct was busy. *InSession* includes a spread on questions put to Ministers so that they account for delivery (pages 7 and 8). This being Heritage Month, *InSession* includes a report on the Heritage Day debate in the NCOP (page 28). There is also coverage of an NA debate on the threat of drug abuse to society (see page 32) and on a debate in the NCOP on police deaths (page 34).

Yet another debate held by the NCOP was on the Institutions Supporting Democracy (ISDs), where a commitment was made to protect their impartiality and independence (page 11). The changing role of these institutions, which includes the Public Protector, the Independent Electoral Commission and the South African Human Rights Commission, was the subject of a workshop held at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, with inputs from Committee Chairpersons and Ministers as well as respected independent commentators from civil society (see pages 9 and 10).

Another parliamentary workshop was a Women's Roundtable Discussion. As a follow-up, *InSession* interviewed the Chairperson of the Multi-Party Women's Caucus, Ms Masefele Morutoa, on page 30 and 31.

We hope in these pages to give you an insight into the workings of Parliament that you may not know about. This is your Parliament, and you have the right to be informed about what happens behind the scenes. Your comments, queries and challenges are always welcome.

Get back to us! We want to hear what you have to say.

Moira Levy
Editor



Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Baleka Mbete

MESSAGE FROM THE national assembly



Auditing *a democratic country such as ours is an integral part of our constitutional framework in deepening democracy through increased accountability. It is a symbol of maturity in administrative controls, which are key in promoting good governance.*

In this regard, the Constitution requires us to report in a manner that enables Parliament and the Executive to account on the use of public funds and the value derived by the citizens. As the representative institution of the people, it falls to the national and provincial legislatures to ensure that the budget optimally matches our people's needs with available resources. If resources were limitless, there would be no need to ration, negotiate trade-offs and make compromises – everybody could get whatever they wanted from the budget.

In reality, spending needs inevitably exceed available funding, forcing government to make choices about the allocation of scarce resources to meet competing needs in society as informed by the priorities of our developmental state. Budgeting forces us to be aware of overall financial constraints, helps in making difficult trade-offs, and supports the efficient implementation of policies.

This clean audit outcome signifies that Parliament is leading by example. In performing its audit, the Auditor-General (A-G) assesses performance against criteria that include financial and performance management and compliance with legislation.

A clean audit is an indication that there were no material findings in all these areas, which is laudable. We also recognise that this clean audit outcome was preceded by yet another award bestowed on Parliament for the “Most Improved Audit Outcome in the Western

Cape” in the 2014/15 financial year. These achievements are a reflection of the leadership provided by the Executive Authority and the tireless work by governance structures – Parliamentary Oversight Authority, senior management and the general staff of Parliament.

This should inspire us to do more. We should not become complacent, but continue to set the tone and example for good governance, which ultimately strengthens and deepens South Africa's democracy.

Over the years, Parliament ensured adequate implementation of the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act of 2009 and continuous improvement of internal and financial controls. We have thus seen consistent improvements in Parliament's audit outcomes.

Parliament has established an independent Internal Audit Committee to conduct oversight over the financial and risk management of the institution. We also moved from out-sourced arrangements of the internal audit function to building a well-functioning in-house Internal Audit Unit, which reports to the Audit Committee.

As the Executive Authority, we expect this unit to proactively identify weaknesses in financial and management controls and bring these to the attention of the Audit Committee. We also expect management to take steps to address any weaknesses or challenges identified in this regard.

As the fifth Parliament, we have committed ourselves to oversee the implementation of the National Development Plan. It is important that we align our strategic plan, our budget and our operational plans to realise our set objectives in this term. In this regard, the executive authority will continue to hold senior management accountable for the implementation of these plans.

Before I conclude, I wish to suggest that there is room for our auditing of performance to be more nuanced. I suggest that the time has come for us to look beyond the numbers and to introduce value-for-money auditing, which determines whether the choices we make provide the best value for money in the circumstances. Of course, I recognise that this form of auditing is more complex, but it has to be done.

In accepting this award of excellence, I wish to acknowledge the key role of the A-G in ensuring good governance. We regard the A-G's office as an invaluable partner in achieving this goal in Parliament and within other organs of the state. We value the independence of the A-G and we will continue to assist to strengthen the Office of the A-G.

The new Secretary to Parliament, Mr Gengezi Mgidlana, and his senior management team, has worked to have in place the critical fundamentals any institution wishes for. This achievement also serves as a tribute to the late Mr Michael Coetzee [previous Secretary to Parliament] who laid the groundwork for good governance and strong financial control in the institution. 🙏

Remarks by National Assembly Speaker, Ms Baleka Mbete, on the occasion of the hand-over of the Excellence Award – Parliament's Clean Audit.

i put the question

Questions asked in Parliament in September concerned, among other things, how South Africa's association with Brics would benefit South Africa and plans to balance the budget deficit. Compiled by Elijah Moholola.

Mr Jan Esterhuizen (IFP) asked the Minister of Mineral Resources, Adv Ngoako Ramatlhodi, with regard to the dangers of underground mining and the provisions of the Mine Health and Safety Act, Act 29 of 1996, what steps have been taken to ensure that miners are equipped with integrated communication systems to ensure clear and reliable communications underground.

The Minister responded: The Act provides for communication systems to be installed at the mines. Inspectors appointed under the Mine Health and Safety Act conduct audits and inspections to ensure compliance. The department, in collaboration with the stakeholders, also monitors, through the Mine Health and Safety Council, the implementation of the 2014 Mine Health and Safety Tripartite Summit commitments to ultimately ensure that every mineworker returns from work unharmed every day.

Ms Hlengiwe Maxon (EFF) asked the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, with reference to the view that the New Development Bank by the Brics [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] partnership may have a significant impact on developing countries, particularly in Africa, on contested issues such as the exploitation of natural resources, land grabs and land displacement, labour practices, environmental concerns, agriculture and food security, what steps have been taken to ensure that

South Africa's national interests in the fields of the local beneficiation of resources, labour practices and job creation are secured and strengthened through the Brics partnership.

The Minister answered: The particular priorities raised with regard to ensuring that national interests in the fields of the local beneficiation of resources, labour practices and job creation are secured and strengthened through the Brics partnership have consistently been promoted through all our Brics engagements. It is important to note that these issues are also contained in the Cabinet's Strategy for Brics, which was adopted in 2012. Although it is a classified document, it directly addresses these priorities, which have also been regularly outlined in policy addresses by the relevant government ministers, who are members of the Brics Inter-Ministerial Committee.

The Strategy for Brics Economic Partnership, which the Brics leaders adopted at the recent Sixth Brics Summit, also clearly reflects these issues in the identified priority areas for cooperation such as manufacturing and minerals processing and agricultural cooperation.

Adv Anton Alberts (FF Plus) asked the Minister of Public Enterprises, Ms Lynne Brown, about the status of the process around the rule of a 2% increase for pensions paid to members of the Transnet Second Defined Benefit Fund and the Transport Pension Fund, which

will make it possible for these pension funds to pay increases of more than 2% to their members if the funds are available, and why the amendments were introduced.

The Minister replied: The proposed amendments, which have been approved by the Board of Trustees of the Transnet Second Defined Benefit Fund and the Transnet Sub Fund of the Transport Pension Fund as well as the Transnet Board of Directors, are currently being considered by myself and the Minister of Finance.

The travel benefits of retired employees of Transnet have not been amended. Employees on management levels in Transnet relinquished their travel benefits in lieu of a percentage remuneration adjustment from approximately October 2006 until April 2007, when their remuneration was changed from a basic pay plus benefits dispensation to a total-cost-to-company approach. As their conditions of employment had changed, they were required to sign new contracts of employment.

Thus, from the date of conversion, they also no longer qualified for travel benefits after retirement. Management-level employees who joined Transnet from 2007 onwards were not entitled to free travel benefits. Despite these changes, employees on non-management levels have retained their travel benefits, both during their employment and upon retirement and these benefits have not been amended.

Mr Ahmed Shaik Emam (NFP) asked the Minister of Finance, Mr Nhlanhla Nene, given that expenditure exceeds revenue resulting in an increase in borrowing every financial year, what plans are in place to either increase revenue or decrease expenditure to create a balance.

The Minister replied: The major aims of government's fiscal policy are to reduce the budget deficit, stabilise debt and begin the process of rebuilding fiscal space. In 2012/13, government introduced the main budget non-interest expenditure ceiling. To further strengthen its commitment to narrowing the deficit, a fiscal package was announced in October 2014 and implemented in the 2015 Budget.

The existing expenditure ceiling was revised down by a total of R25bn in 2015/16 and 2016/17, while personal income tax and the fuel levy were increased to raise R16.8bn more tax revenue in 2015/16. The combination of lower spending and higher revenue will result in a main budget primary balance being achieved in 2017/18.

Mr Jihad Mohapi (ANC) asked the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Pravin Gordhan, what plans are in place to implement the requirements of the Public Administration Management Act, 2014 (Act 11 of 2014) to help rescue municipalities in distress.

The Minister responded: The Public Administration Management (PAM) Act, 2014 (Act 11 of 2014) ("PAM Act") imposes an obligation on the Minister of Public Service and Administration (MPSA), in consultation with the Minister responsible for local government, to develop regulations providing guidelines on how to manage horizontal transfers of staff at senior management levels across all the three spheres of

government. This provision will enable municipalities to draw on staff with the necessary experience and competence in other spheres once the legal framework is in place.

The Department of Public Service and Administration is currently developing minimum norms and standards, among other things, including transfers between the three spheres of government.

The regulations are not yet in place. The regulations, once finalised, will provide guidance on the implementation of the PAM Act to help rescue municipalities in distress, taking into consideration the different conditions of employment of senior managers and categories of municipalities.

The Department of Cooperative

Mr Ahmed Shaik Emam (NFP)



Governance and Traditional Affairs participates in the National Task Team, comprising the Department of Justice, Cooperative Governance, National Treasury and South African Local Government Association, established by the MPSA to develop the regulations.

Ms Thandi Mpambo-Sibhukwana (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini, whether any progress has been made regarding negotiations with the Banking Association of South Africa to reduce the fees for all social grant beneficiaries.

The Minister answered: Achieving sustainable and inclusive development in the financial sector goes hand in hand with improving access to financial services, particularly for the poor and vulnerable. To this end, increasing access to affordable, convenient and appropriate financial services, financial inclusion interventions are essential.

The Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency are undertaking a number of initiatives that will contribute to the financial inclusion of the poor through the social security system.

We will be engaging the National Treasury, as directed by the Reserve Bank, which is the custodian of the Banking Policy, to facilitate negotiations about the reduction of banking charges. While these initiatives are currently under way, we have also made provision in the new social grants payment tender to accommodate bank charges for social grants beneficiaries. For instance, there will be no direct costs for beneficiaries if they use the payment channel of the contracted service provider as stipulated in the new tender. 🇿🇦

ISDs moving with the times

The *Institutions Supporting Democracy (ISDs)* gathered at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg earlier this month to attend a workshop to assess progress and to discuss matters that have been raised over the years. The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Lechesa Tsenoli, spoke to *InSession* about what the workshop set out to achieve.

The wise men and women who came together more than two decades ago to draft our Constitution were mindful of one concern. A perfect Constitution on paper is all very well, but what of those issues that would inevitably fall between the cracks? Even in those heady days of our new democracy they were far-sighted enough to act with caution, making provision in case citizens found themselves stranded outside the protection of our internationally renowned Constitution.

Their solution? In time they set up mechanisms to provide recourse for such citizens who fell outside the protection of the law. The result was the Chapter Nine Institutions, so-called because they arose from the Bill of Rights in Chapter Nine of the Constitution. Today these are more accurately called the ISDs because not all of them are created in terms of Chapter Nine of the Constitution.

This was not the first time the ISDs have held such a meeting. Early on in the fifth Parliament in February 2015, they were called by Parliament's Presiding Officers to a gathering for such a purpose. What made this latest meeting different is that for the first time in attendance were the Chairpersons of the Committees that the ISDs account to, as well as Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the government departments under which they fall. Also invited were Administration Law Lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Prof Kathy Govender and Justice Navi Pillay who recently led the International Human Rights Commission. She provided a useful global perspective on the pros and cons of different structures that serve the broad human rights sector.

Mr Tsenoli, who co-chaired the workshop with former Member of Parliament Mr Cecil Burgess and who had been mandated by the National Assembly's (NA's) Speaker at the February meeting to oversee engagement with these institutions, said this clearly attested to the seriousness with which the fifth Parliament regards these institutions. It was an opportunity to give the ISDs a platform to air their views on matters requiring the attention of the Presiding Officers.

"One of the things we came to consider was how to ensure that Parliament organises itself to interact better with these institutions," he said. He explained that the plan was to make this a regular series of meetings where the ISDs have an opportunity to engage directly with the Speaker, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) and Parliament's other Presiding Officers.

"We have a lot of responsibility to these institutions. As Parliament they provide us with support as important mechanisms for people who have not had joy in one place or another, for those people who are affected negatively by



DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE NA: Mr Lechesa Tsenoli.

what the state does or doesn't do. We must be seen to act speedily."

According to his account of the workshop, it was marked by frank and honest assessment of the challenges facing the ISDs. "For instance, some complain that they don't have teeth, that they are not able to enforce their decisions, that they are often not properly funded."

One of the most pressing issues that comes up repeatedly is whether some of the ISDs – those that deal with human rights issues – should be amalgamated to form a single ombud-type body.

This is an old debate. It was mooted back in 2006 when the late Minister Kader Asmal put this forward in what

has come to be known as the Asmal Report. He also cited weaknesses in the governance of the ISDs, and the anomalies and inconsistencies in their labour and remuneration procedures.

The Chairperson of the Forum of ISDs, Mr Bongani Khumalo, presented a report on behalf of all the ISDs, assessing the funding gap in the strategic plans of the institutions. Inconsistency in remuneration is another issue that repeatedly comes up for debate, and Mr Tsenoli reported that the Department of Justice noted that this was a matter to be taken up by the Independent Commission on Remuneration of Public Office Bearers to handle the current fragmentation in remuneration of the members of these bodies.

Asked if Parliament is any nearer to addressing the issues raised in the Asmal Report, Mr Tsenoli gave an emphatic yes. For one thing, he said, the Office of Institutions Supporting Democracy is up and running, located within the Office of the Speaker, where it is subject to the constraints of the parliamentary leadership as well as the benefits of that position.

Mr Tsenoli was at pains to make it clear that although the institutions themselves are stronger and better organised than before, resolution of the challenges identified in the Asmal Report “is going to be a process”.

In his view the most “vulnerable” institutions are the ones that deal with cultural and language issues. “This is an area around which we are not doing particularly well as Parliament. Language is underestimated as a source of conflict. “There must be room and spaces for people to go to if they believe they are not being treated according to the principles of Batho Pele. Twenty-one years on we must assess each

[institution] against that background, [to see] whether they have in their particular way played their role.”

One of the key issues up for debate at the workshop was whether these institutions, each of which is attached to a government department, should be “delinked” and go it alone. Some were all for being accountable directly to Parliament. They felt this would ensure their reports are considered in more depth and their issues would become the direct responsibility of Parliament.

Being closely associated with a department, some institutions argued, meant they did not have the authority to assert their demands. Most importantly, their budgets were ring-fenced within those departmental budgets, and in these times of cost-cutting, some felt that they did not have access to Treasury to motivate for their own sufficient budget to allow them to be effective.

“Some of the departments themselves also wanted to be rid of the headache of being responsible for these institutions’ budgets,” Mr Tsenoli said with a laugh, but he emphasised that all ISDs showed themselves keen to investigate new methods of operating, taking into account current financial constraints.

With the different views expressed, this is the start of a long process before agreement is reached, and even then legislative and even constitutional amendments may be required to enforce any changes.

“A process is under way in our opinion and we would like to see a qualitatively different relationship between ourselves as Parliament and the Committees of Parliament, and the ISDs. This working together with the institutions is evidence of good things happening,” Mr Tsenoli said.

“We now try to work together as much as possible, conduct investigations together, which did not happen before,” Mr Tsenoli said, referring to another of the chief critiques in the Asmal Report. “The institutions are beginning to work differently in response to the criticism that they often duplicate investigations and overlap in functions. They are starting to find ways to deal with those problems.”

Today, there is a forum of the chairpersons of all the nine institutions, which Mr Tsenoli described as a significant “step of progress”. Most important is the fact that they now have access to the NA’s Speaker and the NCOP’s Chairperson, as well as an established agreement to meet regularly.

The workshop agreed all the institutions should investigate the evidence of the impact they have had over the years and based on that, decisions would be made about the most effective way forward.

“They agreed to draw from the lessons learnt over the years. This workshop was an important first step, a first-time coming together of all stakeholders to thrash out conclusions. Soon we will come together to discuss the outcome of that workshop and make recommendations.” A report of the outcomes will have to be presented to Parliament.

There was a clear sense that in the years since their formation, changes had taken place in South Africa and in our democracy, and the ISDs today recognise that 21 years on, these changes need to be taken into account. This must include consideration of the stressful economic environment that puts pressure on the budgets of all of the existing institutions. 🌍

ISDs are a cornerstone of democracy

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) has a duty to protect the Institutions Supporting Democracy (ISDs), and ensure their independence and impartiality. This was the most prevalent view of Members of Parliament (MPs) when the NCOP held a debate on the ISDs in September, reports Elijah Moholola.

The ISDs referred to are the Auditor-General; the Commission for Gender Equality; the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities; the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa; the Independent Electoral Commission; the Public Protector; and the South African Human Rights Commission.

Mr Jomo Nyambi, the NCOP's House Chairperson for Committees, Oversight and Inter-Governmental Relations, said the debate offered MPs an invaluable occasion to strengthen their relationships with ISDs, and to find ways to improve the working relations between Parliament and ISDs.

"As we may know, the ISDs complement and support Parliament's oversight function. Therefore Parliament is duty-bound to ensure that the ISDs are effective in their functioning, and strengthened in their ability to discharge their primary roles. This we do, not only on the understanding of our constitutional obligation, but also because we understand the importance of the ISDs in our democracy."

He added that the Constitution demands that other organs of state assist and protect ISDs to ensure their independence, impartiality, dignity and effectiveness.

Free State delegate for the Democratic Alliance Mr George Michalakis argued that "cadre deployment" has "infiltrated the Chapter Nine institutions one by one", and this had resulted in them being reduced to serving political party interests rather than being watchdogs against abuse of democratic power. "Although not a Chapter Nine institution, we still are – or should be – a body safeguarding democracy. We are, after all, supposed to be the Upper House and Upper Houses have historically been the guardians of constitutional principles," he said.

Northern Cape delegate for the Economic Freedom Fighters Ms Nkagisang Mokgosi said it was important that ISDs received financial support and that they were free from political interference. "Institutions Supporting Democracy need adequate funding so that they build internal administrative and technical capacity to carry out their constitutional mandate. Like the judiciary, institutions that support democracy must be independent from all political interference.

"Institutions that support democracy must be allowed to carry out their mandate. If there are disagreements, parties must use appropriate legal processes to contest the outcomes of work conducted by ISDs," she said.

KwaZulu-Natal delegate for the Inkatha Freedom Party Mr Mntomuhle Khawula said while some of the institutions were performing fairly well, they needed to be properly capacitated. He also highlighted the issue of non-interference as being important in order to safeguard the impartiality of these institutions.

"Some practices, which we find very ambiguous and ironical, is that with some of the key institutions that we have, the President is responsible for appointing their Heads. But the very same office, the Presidency, has been writing to such Heads after appointing them asking them to give reasons why they should be regarded as fit to hold office. Why appoint them if seven or 12 months down the line they are doubted in their ability to hold office? This is a disservice to democracy," he said.

The ISDs are a cornerstone to the architecture of democracy and development, said Mr Lennox Gaehler for the United Democratic Movement in the Eastern Cape. "In our democracy, and as South Africans, Chapter Nine institutions are a necessity. We have suffered at the hands of previous regimes that were never accountable to anyone, with post-independence socio-economic ills still part of our lives.

"These institutions are inherently linked to good governance and the legitimacy to govern. Equally, they are playing a critical role in ensuring the success of representative and participatory democracy. Once these institutions are weakened and not supported, the rule of law is eroded and tyranny becomes the order of the day." 🗣️

Parliament recognises role of women in liberation struggle

The *role of women in South Africa's transformation will be highlighted and recognised through Parliament's Memory Project, which was launched at the end of September, writes Elijah Moholola.*

Speaking at the launch of the project, which will be commemorated through a series of public lectures annually, National Assembly Speaker Ms Baleka Mbete said that history usually did not acknowledge the involvement of women in the South African liberation struggle.

"Parliament has a critical role to play in contributing to nation-building and heritage in South Africa. It is for this reason that we are proud to launch the Memory Project to coincide with Heritage Month," she said.

Ms Mbete explained that the purpose of the Memory Project was to honour the contribution of women in South Africa.

"Through the Memory Project, Parliament will publicise and archive the historical and current experiences of South African women. The project will acknowledge women from across political, economical and social spectrums who have contributed to transformation in South Africa. The project will honour both those who are still living and those who have passed on," Ms Mbete said.

The inaugural lecture honoured the life and legacy of Ms Charlotte Mannya Maxeke took place at Freedom Park in Pretoria. Ms Mbete said Parliament will consider naming a Committee room or a street in the parliamentary precinct after her. She further said the current generation of leaders should strive to emulate the courage, resilience

and integrity shown by the likes of Ms Maxeke.

The inaugural Memory Project public lecture on Ms Maxeke was addressed by Ms Gertrude Shope. Ms Shope narrated the role played by Ms Maxeke during the struggle for freedom in South Africa. She said courage was one of Ms Maxeke's defining characteristics.

"The courage to fight for what she thought was right, often being the only woman. This determination and zeal were to greatly influence the quality of the struggle for liberation in general, and for the emancipation of women and for gender equality in our country in particular.

"This was particularly evident during her tenure as President of the Bantu Women's League, the predecessor to the ANC Women's League, which was formed in 1913. Her legacy was a source of constant guidance and inspiration throughout the years of the struggle for liberation," she said.

"At the start of the Codesa (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) negotiations, the leaders of participating parties, mainly men, would sit, discuss and agree on certain matters and only after that would women's opinions be sought. The ANC women delegates at the talks invited women from various groups to get together and they agreed that they were not satisfied with being consulted after everything had been decided.

"Instead, they wanted to participate fully in the planning committee and all the structures of the negotiations. We, together with many women from religious and other non-governmental organisations, held a big demonstration in front of the building where the Codesa talks were taking place and only then won our right to participate fully.

"Following this, the Women's Coalition was formed with women from different parties, which developed the Women's Charter. The main points of the Charter were incorporated into the South African Constitution," said Ms Shope.

The courage to fight for what is right and to stand up and be counted is one of Ms Maxeke's legacies that should be continued, not only in politics, but in all spheres of life, Ms Shope said.

Referring to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) towards 2030, Ms Shope said South Africa had done well in many areas relating to gender equality, but still has a way to go. She specifically referred to two critical points relating to women as outlined in the SDGs.

"The first relates to eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. The unacceptably high incidence of crime against women and girl children in our country needs the urgent attention of all leaders in society and members of communities, male and female.

"The second is ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. Although we have done



COURAGE TO FIGHT: Struggle stalwart and former MP Ms Gertrude Shope delivered the first Memory Project lecture on the life and legacy of Ms Charlotte Maxeke.

quite well in this area, there is much that still needs to be done.

“The coming local government elections pose a particular challenge with respect to female candidates at ward level, as there is no mechanism yet that enables us to ensure that at least 50% of ward candidates are women,” she said.

Deputy President Mr Cyril Ramaphosa applauded Parliament’s Presiding Officers “for launching this initiative to recognise, remember and honour the women who toiled, suffered and sacrificed to ensure that today is better than yesterday, and that tomorrow will be better than today.”

Mr Ramaphosa said: “The women the Memory Project seeks to honour were South African patriots – women who had a strong sense of duty to their people and their country. They committed

hearts and minds, resources and energy to ensure that the dignity of the downtrodden and oppressed is restored, that there is reconciliation between black and white, and that there is equality between women and men.

“In a world still characterised by patriarchy, our literature, oral traditions and popular culture are still dominated by male protagonists. Too often, women are presented as passive bystanders. The Memory Project will help us to change that. It will put women where they belong – at the centre of historical progress and development. It will show that women are capable leaders in their own right,” he said.

Mr Ramaphosa said that Ms Maxeke bequeathed a proud, inspiring and enduring legacy to millions of South African women. She applied herself with distinction and commanded respect

among her male counterparts.

“While she worked as a teacher at King Sabata Dalindyebo’s private school, she was one of the few women whose voices were heard in the chief’s court among men, and who had influence in the council. This great humanist was a pioneer in many respects. She founded the Bantu Women’s League, a predecessor of the Women’s League to defend the rights of women.

“Not only did she fight against the evil pass system, but she also organised women to fight against the disgusting, humiliating practice of medical inspection of black domestic workers. Like many of the women who will be honoured through this project, Charlotte Maxeke was not only a leader of South Africa’s women, she was a leader of South Africa’s people,” said Mr Ramaphosa. 🇿🇦

NCOP Provincial Week round-up

The permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) embarked on a week-long Provincial Week programme across the nine provinces in September to assess progress made in delivering infrastructure projects. The InSession team travelled with them and Modise Kabeli compiled this report.

The theme for this biannual event was: “Advancing infrastructure investment and development for better services to communities”. The provincial delegates split into smaller groups and visited district municipalities in the provinces to meet with the provincial legislatures, the South African Local Government Association (Salga), premiers, Members of the Executive Councils (MECs), mayors and other relevant stakeholders.

When the first democratic government was elected in 1994, it embarked on a massive, multibillion-rand development drive to provide infrastructure in black communities, which was lacking due to apartheid’s separate development policies.

To meet the demands of a growing economy and population, the new democratic government made infrastructure development a priority.

During the 2015 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period, state-owned enterprises and local government accounted for just under 70% of all public investment in infrastructure. South Africa’s current infrastructure spending in gross domestic product (GDP) exceeds other economies worldwide by 4.9%.

The national government is the primary financier of infrastructure development of rail and public transportation systems, while the provinces focus mainly on roads and social infrastructure.

The delegations used this opportunity to conduct oversight visits to strategic infrastructure projects and held public meetings to enable members of the public to raise matters related to service delivery. This gave Parliament, the provincial legislatures and Salga an opportunity to monitor the progress of these projects with specific focus on:

- Catalytic projects – such as the Northern Mineral Belt (in particular the Waterberg region in Limpopo province); the Gauteng-Free State-Durban Logistics Corridor; the South-Eastern Node & Corridor Development; the Saldanha-Northern Cape Development Corridor; the East London Industrial Development Zone; and the Coega Industrial Development Zone in Port Elizabeth.
- Enabling socio-economic development projects – such as greening the economy; electricity generation, transmission and



- distribution; bulk water and sanitation supply; municipal development; agro-logistics and rural infrastructure development; urban spatial development and management; and re-organisation and regional integration projects.
- Cross-cutting projects – such as information and communication technologies, national school build and higher education projects.



WATER FOR ALL: Members of Parliament, including Mr Mergan Chetty, Mrs Lynette Zwane, Mr Omie Singh and Mr Mntomuhle Khawula, listen attentively as a multimillion-rand water project in Nongoma in KwaZulu-Natal is explained to them.

When it comes to findings, this Provincial Week showed that major infrastructure interventions are taking place throughout the country. The delegates expressed mixed reactions to what they learnt during these visits.

The briefing by the Limpopo Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements

and Traditional Affairs indicated that an amount of R17bn has been allocated in Municipal Infrastructure Grants, which are for provision of basic services. The department further indicated that access to such services is: refuse removal 21%; sanitation 63%; water supply 86%; and electricity supply 87%.

The NCOP delegation spent two

days criss-crossing the province, covering more than 500km to gain first-hand experience of the state of infrastructure development and service delivery.

Delegation leader, NCOP's Limpopo Provincial Whip Ms Tsapane Mampuru,

criticised the project manager responsible for the Kgabo Park Water Supply project in Capricorn District Municipality when the delegation found water leaking from one of the site's three reservoirs. Such leaks, she said, contributed to the water supply problems the municipality was experiencing.

The delegation also visited the nearby Maupye Water Project, which started in 2013 and is now complete and benefiting residents. However, the delegation found another dam, the Glen Alpine, has insufficient capacity to meet demand and is experiencing construction difficulties due to funding problems.

The delegation also visited the Mokwena/Glenfumes Water Supply Project, where the pump machine is broken. The Blouberg Local Municipality claimed that this was due to funding that had not materialised and the lack of electricity supply from Eskom.

Following a presentation by the Office of the Premier on the state of infrastructure in the province, the NCOP identified persistent challenges with the provision of water, sanitation and health facilities.

Interventions that the province has put in place include the formulation of the Limpopo Development Plan and the Premier Infrastructure Coordination Council, which provides strategic oversight on the implementation of all infrastructural programmes by the provincial government and district municipality.

The delegation also revisited

projects in Greater Tzaneen and Greater Tubatse (in the Vhembe District), which had been part of the programme in September 2014. Following its oversight visits, Ms Mampuru said the delegation was reasonably pleased with what they saw in the province.

In North West province, community members who attended a public meeting in Ba-Mogopa Community Hall complained about the lack of housing, non-existent learner transport, water shortages and a lack of employment as major problems. At another public meeting in Tigane Community Hall, the community also complained about the lack of employment, a non-existent police force and a general unwillingness by their councillors to help them.

Due to budget constraints the condition of provincial surfaced roads in many provinces, including North West, is expected to remain unchanged in the current financial year. This also means that a lot of money is spent on routine maintenance and patching potholes and other road damage.

North West Acting Premier Ms Wendy Nelson indicated that the province has a backlog in the construction of the road network amounting to about R5bn. However, the Provincial Treasury and Public Works are engaging with the Development Bank of Southern Africa for a funding model to address the backlog.

Sanral presented the Strategic Infrastructure Project (SIP 4), which aims to unlock economic opportunities in the province. Sanral

told the NCOP delegation that they have allocated R5.7m and created about 800 skilled and unskilled jobs.

In the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, the NCOP delegation led by Hon Boingotlo Nthebe, Provincial Whip for the North West Province, visited Ventersdorp Local Municipality.

Acting Premier Ms Nelson told the delegation that unrest in Ventersdorp is under control and state buildings will be protected against vandalism. She also said that 100% of households are supplied with electricity, but different electricity pricing rates causes dissatisfaction among residents.

In Gauteng, NCOP delegates received a briefing from the departments of Infrastructure Development, Water and Sanitation, and the South African National Roads Agency.

The Head of the Department of Infrastructure Development, Mr Berthuel Netshiswinzhe, said challenges in the inclusion and promotion of the township economy, protracted procurement processes and poor planning delayed the implementation and execution of financial management processes.

The 2.5% population growth in the province will place greater pressure on the already fragile public health system, Mr Netshiswinzhe said. "Considering the capacity of the existing clinics, many thousands of people are not attended to by public health facilities. This means eight more hospitals are required in the province," he added.

The delegation was also briefed on sanitation challenges in the province. Acting Provincial Head of the Department of Water and Sanitation, Ms Petunia Ramunenyiwa, said the main challenges to the provision of water-borne sanitation are provision of bulk services, long lead times for new waste water treatment works, uncontrolled densification and insufficient funding.

Protests about water and sanitation services, especially in informal settlements, the old and dilapidated infrastructure, illegal connections and high water losses, and hostility from community members are some of the issues preventing implementation of projects in Gauteng.

Ms Tasneem Motara, the leader of the Gauteng NCOP delegation, said that all issues raised will be considered when the delegation finalises its report.

The Mpumalanga delegation was briefed about the planned Moloto Rail Corridor, which will link the province with neighbours Limpopo and Gauteng, and is also expected to reduce road fatalities in the area. The project will see the construction of a railway line between KwaMhlanga in Mpumalanga and Tshwane in Gauteng.

The Provincial Department of Public Works and Roads told the NCOP that construction will start in 2017/2018, and is expected to take five years to complete.

The NCOP delegation has proposed that the national electricity supplier, Eskom, should enter into an agreement with Salga to get

these surplus engineers to the municipalities. Eskom management welcomed this proposal by the NCOP during the oversight visit to Kusile Power Station, under construction in the province's Nkangala District Municipality.

Acting Group Executive: Group Capital at Eskom, Mr Abram Masango, said they welcomed the idea of developing engineers for communities [municipalities], as Eskom does not have enough work for all the engineers it produces. "The future of the country needs educated people, we cannot import skills all the time, we need to develop our own skills," he said.

Mpumalanga Provincial Whip Mr Simphiwe Mthimunye said the NCOP was happy with the progress in the construction of Kusile, which will bring a major boost in the country's electricity grid when it gets fully operational in 2021.

When the delegation visited the Kusile construction site there was not much activity as workers were mourning the tragic death of a colleague in an accident involving a crane, which had left two other workers injured. The death of the 56-year-old man brings the number of fatalities to four since the beginning of the construction of the multibillion-rand project, a situation the NCOP said was very unfortunate.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the Department of Public Works told the NCOP delegation that the province has developed a provincial infrastructure master plan to focus on aspects such as ports and airports, roads, rail, water and

sanitation, electricity, information technology, human settlements, agriculture, health and education. The plan is aligned to the National Development Plan. The NCOP delegation also visited rural Nongoma to assess water and road infrastructure projects in the Zululand region.

Challenges in the district include housing, lack of alignment of Municipal Infrastructure Grant funding for bulk services, and transportation and construction costs. A site visit to road projects around the Nongoma area left the NCOP delegation angry as no officials from the Department of Transport were present to account. The department subsequently sent an official to address the delegation the following day at a venue more than 200km away from the actual site.

The KwaZulu-Natal NCOP delegation visited a R321m water project currently under construction. Once complete, the project will provide water to more than 150 000 people. The project has created hundreds of jobs, especially for young people. It is the biggest water scheme in the Zululand district area and is earmarked for completion by 2020.

With regard to the building of schools in rural KwaZulu-Natal, the NCOP Provincial Whip for that province, Mr Lewis Nzimande, said the highlight of the visit was a massive infrastructure project in a deep rural village of Ndumo, which falls under the Mkhanyakude District Municipality. The R1.6bn Inkululeko Development Programme will bring about the revitalisation of Ndumo village.

Mr Zakhele Mnqayi, senior manager for stakeholder management in the Premier's Office, said: "This is an integrated multi-purpose and multi-sectoral project led by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal that will address the critical social malaise of rural communities. The project aims to revitalise the rural Ndumo area, thereby creating a rural development strategy which will contribute towards the improvement in the quality of education, health, sustainable livelihoods, job creation and the quality of life."

The sub-projects of this development include the state-of-the-art Ndumo New Model High School, Ndumo Irrigation Reservoir, Ndumo Library, St Phillips Primary School, Maphindela Primary School, Thelamama Primary School and Ndumo Clinic. The huge R249m new model high school is 69% complete. A total of R169m has been spent on it so far.

St Phillips Primary School, with an initial budget of R33.98m, is complete. The construction of Maphindela Primary School is also done at a cost R18.3m. Thelamama Primary School is also complete at a cost of R23.2m. The clinic was completed in July at a cost of R27.8m.

The KZN NCOP delegation held a public meeting at the Ndumo Centre to hear the views of people in the area. People braved the scorching sun to attend the meeting so that their voices could be heard.

While they were overwhelmingly grateful to the government for its efforts aimed at revitalising their village, they did express a number of concerns regarding service delivery.

These included the lack of proper access roads, water, a community hall, a court, housing and a mortuary. They pointed out the shortage of medication and staff at the recently built clinic.

They pleaded with Parliament to help them with learner transport as their children walked long distances to and from school.

In the Eastern Cape, the delegation visiting the OR Tambo District Municipality heard about progress in developing the Integrated Public Transport Network Plan. District Mayor, Councillor Nomakhosazana Meth, said in the 2015-16 financial year the municipality has set aside R1.65m for the development of the plan.

The Department of Transport has promised to assist the municipality to develop the plan and the municipality has established the Roads and Transport Forum to ensure that there are sound working relationships among all role players. The leader of the delegation visiting OR Tambo, Ms Zukiswa Ncita, encouraged the municipality to include the Department of Transport and Roads in this plan.

Delegates visiting the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality were led by Ms Tabiso Wana. The municipality plans to establish a waterfront to stimulate new business. As part of a follow-up visit to the municipality, the NCOP delegation revisited the Sovuyiso Sewing Cooperative in New Brighton township to assess its progress. The delegation heard that it is not making much of a profit as yet,

but a strategy developed by the Department of Social Development might yield some positive results. In addition, the department wants to create a database and a network of all cooperatives, to introduce not only their business propositions to each other, but also to encourage them to do business with each other.

The NCOP delegation also revisited the Zwide Clinic to establish if it has made any progress in addressing challenges identified during a previous visit. The NCOP was angry to hear that most of the issues that were raised previously had not been addressed and conditions at the clinic are deteriorating.

"There has been a spate of vandalism incidents in our clinic. We raised this matter when you came last year, but our security condition has not improved," said the Acting Facility Manager of Zwide Clinic, Ms Dambisa Mretho.

The clinic also has no ambulances. "We were promised an ambulance service, but nothing has happened," she said. "Instead, we are forced to share a single ambulance with our feeder clinic. To alleviate this situation, we were provided with a car, but the car was stolen in June," she said.

As if that is not enough, the Zwide Clinic also has a shortage of critical medical personnel. "The problem is that we are still operating on an old organogram that does not speak to our current situation. For instance, the post of an operational manager is not reflected in the old organogram, but currently there is a need of this expertise to ensure that the clinic runs

smoothly," Ms Mretho said.

Ms Wana said: "The state of affairs of this clinic leaves much to be desired. The stories that you have told us about this clinic are not new to our ears. We heard them before when we were here last year. I am saddened by the fact that there is not even a slightest progress that has been made to address the challenges that this clinic has been faced with since last year. That is unacceptable. It is a bad reflection on our endeavour to create a better life for all and we will do something about this."

The delegation visiting the Amathole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape heard that 50% of the infrastructure in this metro is in bad condition. To that effect, R40m has been spent replacing water and sanitation infrastructure, said the leader of the delegation to Amathole District Municipality and Eastern Cape Whip in the NCOP, Mr Mandla Rayi.

"Capital funding for water and general municipal infrastructure is not sufficient and therefore alternative interventions should be sought. There is currently a budget shortfall of R992m for water and sanitation infrastructure projects. This is compounded by lack of strategic planning for bulk services to address infrastructure backlogs and illegal water connections," he said.

The Amathole District Municipality delegation recommended that the municipality make a submission to the Financial and Fiscal Commission for more sanitation infrastructure funding. "Through the parliamentary processes the district municipality should make a submission to the

Financial and Fiscal Commission, because it needs to invest more on infrastructure, in order to address issues of backlog. To that effect, the district municipality should engage the National Treasury to see how it can leverage the R631m earmarked for sanitation infrastructure services," Mr Rayi said.

In the case of the Western Cape Province, the NCOP Provincial Week kicked off with a briefing meeting held at the Western Cape Provincial Parliament that proved to be a success.

The NCOP delegation was pleased to receive a comprehensive report by the Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works, along with a briefing by the Department of the Premier on broadband roll-out.

The Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works presented their briefing on the state of infrastructure investment and development. Although happy, the members of the delegation had some questions.

Delegation member Mr Cameron Dugmore asked: "In terms of rural public transport, what are the plans of the department for infrastructure development? And how many work opportunities are being made available for the residents, regarding the upgrade of some of the roads?"

The Department of the Premier also told the NCOP about the provision of broadband in the Western Cape. The presentation was well received by the NCOP delegation as it provided insight into the plans by the Western Cape Government to instal free

access to the internet for the citizens of the province.

Mr Denis Joseph, a member of the delegation, was concerned about the implementation and maintenance of the project. "The department says this depends on the availability of electricity. Now having said that, how will the electricity crisis in the country affect the progress of this implementation plan? Once these projects have commenced, who will be responsible for the maintenance of the projects? Will the schools have to be responsible for their own maintenance?" he asked.

The NCOP Provincial Whip, Ms Cathy Labuschagne, thanked both departments for their openness and well-presented reports. Speaking to the Department of Transport and Public Works, she said: "I am quite happy with the presentation and I take it that the delegation will agree with me when I say that it was well put together."

Finally, the NCOP Chief Whip Dr Hunadi Mateme said the report of the programme will be debated in the fourth term when delegates return from the Parliament recess period. The report will then be sent to the Leader of Government Business so that it is tabled in Cabinet. Following that, she said the NCOP expects to get commitment from government on its plans to address the infrastructure challenges throughout the country. Her office will then ensure that the Committees of the NCOP follow up on the issues raised during the Provincial Week. 🇷🇵

NCOP Select Committees conduct oversight

Select *Committees of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) visited five provinces early in September to exercise Parliament's constitutional mandate of oversight and holding government to account, especially concerning service delivery. They visited the Free State, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. InSession writers travelled with them and filed these reports.*

The importance of bringing to life the meaning of the oversight week's theme, "Working together we can do more", dominated the visits to the Eastern Cape by the Select Committees on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Security and Justice, and Petitions and Executive Undertakings, writes Temba Gubula.

These three NCOP Committees visited the Eastern Cape to consider an application for the invocation of Section 139 (1)(b) of the Constitution against Grahamstown's Makana Local Municipality.

They also inspected the conditions at the Mthatha Correctional Centre and held public hearings emanating from petitions for intervention in upgrading roads and on claims of unpaid severance packages and pensions by the Transkei Road Transport Corporation (TRTC).

At the Mthatha Correctional Centre, Committee members said stakeholders such as Public Works, Correctional Services, and the National Prosecuting Authority, among others, should optimise the provisions of their existing Memorandum of Understanding to

improve the condition of the centre. Among the challenges MPs found at the centre, which were confirmed by Correctional Services Regional Commissioner, Mr Nkosinathi Breakfast, were overcrowding, dilapidated buildings, and water and plumbing challenges. Mr Breakfast revealed a 132% overcrowding rate in the remand section. He said that the facility housed 1 324 inmates, a number almost double the 720 number of inmates it is supposed to house.

During the public hearings held by the Select Committee on Petitions and Executive Undertakings, Committee members were displeased by the absence of the OR Tambo District Mayor, the MEC for Roads and Public Works and the MEC for Provincial Treasury, who were supposed to be respondents during the public hearings, which sought to deal with a petition on the poor state of roads in the Eastern Cape.

The same situation was also condemned during public hearings on a petition by ex-workers of the TRTC, who wanted the Committee to help them get their severance packages and pension monies due to the liquidation of the TRTC more than



two decades ago. At these hearings, there were no representatives or submissions from key invited stakeholders, such as the MEC of Transport, Safety and Liaison and the office of the Premier.

According to Committee Chairperson, Mr Setlamorago Thobejane, the unavailability of these key role players or their representatives has a potential to delay Parliament in finalising these petitions. He said such conduct was unacceptable.

Mr Setlamorago said a spirit of cooperative governance, intergovernmental relations and respecting parliamentary processes is not only enshrined in the Constitution, it is also a principle position the current government has adopted in ensuring that people's concerns are dealt with speedily and effectively.

Transformation at the University of the Free State was one of the concerns of



OVERSIGHT: A member of the Select Committees on CoGTA, Security and Justice as well as Petitions and Executive Undertakings, Mr Dumsani Ximbi (left), visits the Mthatha Correctional Centre in the Eastern Cape with an employee at the Centre.

the Select Committee on Education and Recreation on their visit to the Free State, writes Malatswa Molepo.

The Committee concluded that the institution is following a model that could be used by other institutions of higher learning that are grappling with the challenge of transformation.

“We are quite impressed with the work that has been done at this institution. It was unfortunate that the racial incident that occurred here a few years ago [when a group of cleaners was subjected to harassment by white students] thrust the institution into the spotlight. But we are impressed that good work has been done to integrate the institution and we encourage the continuation of this work,” said Ms Lungelwa Zwane, the Chairperson of the Committee.

The University’s Vice-Chancellor, Prof Jonathan Jansen, said that the university’s transformation programme is based solely on the idea that students

must embrace one another rather than just tolerate each other.

“We have to be aware that, while society sometimes accentuates differences, the institution is doing its best to teach our students about their similarities, rather than their differences,” Prof Jansen said.

Regarding the language of instruction, the university uses a dual-language model in which students can choose to be taught in either Afrikaans or English. The university also said it was doing its best to address the challenge of financial exclusion of underprivileged students by covering the shortfalls in allocation of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

The Select Committee on Social Services was also in the Free State to track progress with implementation of the Bucket Eradication Programme within formal settlements in the Free State. The Committee believes that all South Africans must have access to adequate

sanitation as per the Constitution. To this end, the 7 895 functional units delivered to the people of the province represent restoration of dignity to those citizens of this country who suffered humiliation as a result of the bucket toilet system.

While the Committee welcomed the provision of proper ablution facilities, it remains concerned by the high number of buckets still to be eradicated. Compounding this is the funding challenges that delay the completion of the programme.

“What was concerning was the admission that budgeting did not take into consideration unforeseen challenges, such as bulk sewerage, that might impact on available resources. The department must put aside contingency funds that will cater for any unforeseen challenges,” said Ms Cathy Dlamini, the Chairperson of the Committee.

Another element of concern to the Committee was the non-payment of

debts by municipalities, which impacts negatively on Water Boards. While the Committee is aware of the nationwide challenge faced by municipalities regarding low revenue collection, it has called for innovative strategies to reverse this phenomenon.

The theft and vandalism of water-related infrastructure was also a concern to the Committee, due primarily to the negative impact on already depleted resources, as municipalities divert money meant for other development initiatives towards replacement and repair of infrastructure.

The Committee called for the re-doubling of efforts to deliver bulk water infrastructure that will help create an enabling environment for the completion of the Bucket Eradication Programme. Furthermore, the Committee encourages residents to report any leakages.

The Committee also called on the Department of Water and Sanitation to speed up the provision of the necessary

support to Regional Offices and Water Boards to realise the aim of the eradication programme.

The Members of the Joint Select Committees on Land and Environmental Affairs, Mineral Resources, and Communications and Public Enterprises were impressed by South African National Parks' (SANParks') anti-rhino poaching initiatives reports Justice Molafo.

They met the management of SANParks and the Department of Environmental Affairs in a two-day meeting in the Kruger National Park (KNP), Mpumalanga, as part of their week-long oversight visit to the province.

Mr Olifile Sefako, Chairperson of the Select Committee on Land and Environmental Affairs, hailed the initiative as a move in the right direction. "We are aware that poaching is a global challenge and falls under organised crime, but the figures provided by the KNP show a trend into a positive trajectory," he said.

SANParks anti-poaching unit's Major-General Johan Jooste presented a briefing on the park's counter-poaching activities, in which he emphasised that the initiative is expensive and dangerous to human life. "Our anti-poaching rangers receive intensive training and require sophisticated safety gear in order to survive in the bush. It is dangerous to patrol because poachers go around carrying guns and not only do they resist arrest, they also fight back," he said.

According to Mr Jooste, the KNP has arrested 128 poachers in 2015 so far, compared to 70 in 2014, and 78 weapons were seized. He said KNP has discovered 482 dead rhinos, 82 more than they found in 2014.

Mr Jooste said 1 403 poaching cases were recorded in 2014. "There are at least 12 groups of poachers roaming the park at any given time," he said.

In their next stop in Mpumalanga, the Joint Select Committees held a meeting with Safcol Forestry in Sabie to consider its business sustainability, a new

TRACKING THE POACHERS: The kit that is required for just one member of SANParks' anti-rhino poaching unit.



business model and the impact of land claims on the business performance.

The land claims at Komatiland Forests, a subsidiary of Safcol, threatens the viability of the current operation, with 61% of the plantation being claimed by more than 50 groups of people.

At Safcol's office in Sabie, the Select Committee was addressed by Safcol Acting General Manager for Forests, Mr David Mbulaheni, who explained that Komatiland Forests wants the land claims process to be expedited, saying that the company was ready to provide training and development for claimants to ensure sustainability of its forests.

"Safcol has undertaken to cooperate fully with the regional Land Claims Commission in order to speed up the land claims process. We will focus on cementing a mutually beneficial relationship between the company and communities where we operate," he said.

Mr Mbulaheni told the Committee that Safcol had spent R40m on more than 130 community projects in the past four years. "The projects include, among others, 11 timber-frame structures, a school with 39 classrooms, six victims' centres, three ICT centres and providing 26 schools with computers," he said.

However in a separate meeting with the mayor and management of the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, land claimants and traditional leaders it became clear that Komatiland Forests does not have a good working relationship with the municipality and traditional leaders.

The municipal mayor, Ms Selina Mashego, and a traditional leader, Mr Mnisi, accused the company of not making meaningful community infrastructural investment in areas

such as roads, schools, clinics, skills development and bursaries. They also said that Safcol needed to empower local people economically through preferential procurement on projects such as harvesting.

The Committee has promised to return to the province before the end of 2015 so that the entire board of Komatiland Forests together with the municipality, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, land claimants and traditional leaders can be brought together to amicably create mutual solutions.

Sureshinee Govender joined the Joint Select Committee on Trade, International Relations, Business and Economic Development, which kick-started its week-long programme in KwaZulu-Natal with a visit to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

The park is one of South Africa's eight United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation world heritage sites. It spans 240km of South Africa's coastline and has the second highest dunes in the world. iSimangaliso has eight eco-systems and about 640 000 people living around the park.

Chairperson of the Joint Committee delegation, Mr Eddie Makue, commended the management of the park for their Rural Enterprise Programme, which ensures that the local community benefits from spin-offs from the tourism industry.

The programme started in 2008 with 48 entrepreneurs who were skilled in financial management, marketing, sales and business administration. Today this programme has over 150 entrepreneurs who provide a variety of services from tour guides to suppliers of goods and services to arts and crafts producers, all of which boost the local

tourism industry with iSimangaliso seeing over 600 000 visitors a year.

In a meeting with the beneficiaries of one of the projects, Mr Makue was delighted to hear that tour guide Mr Temba Mthembu is a local resident who underwent training with the park, and now owns a successful tour operator business. The park has ensured that 65% of its budget goes directly into projects rather than salaries and has received 12 clean audits. Mr Makue congratulated Mr Mthembu for his successful tour operations business.

The Select Committees went on to an oversight visit to the Durban Port Authority. The focus was on the Durban Port Expansion and the Durban Dig-out Port with an emphasis on maritime transport in relation to costs, efficiency and security.

They also visited the Widowed Women of South Africa, a non-governmental organisation based in eSikhaleni. This project is one of the Expanded Public Works Programme-funded projects in the uThungulu District Municipality.

Mr Makue commended the women of Widowed Women of South Africa for fighting against their circumstances to beat poverty and deprivation. The organisation's mission is to ensure that child-headed households and vulnerable women are protected.

The women earn an income from community-based projects that teach them farming and craft skills.

Mr Makue said: "These women deserve the full support of government for more land for agriculture, as they just did not sit back and wait for a hand-out from government, but took the initiative and formed an organisation to help themselves." 🌱



SAFETY AT SEA: South Africa's navy patrols the country's marine areas.

National Assembly Committees conduct oversight countrywide

Committees *of the National Assembly recently conducted a week of oversight around the country on the theme "Working together we can do more" to assess government service delivery and administration. The InSession team travelled with them and reports on the activities of a few of the delegations.*

The shortage of teachers, challenges with centralised procurement, infrastructure backlogs, unpaid teachers' salaries, the progression policy, shortages of therapists to assess learners with special needs and a hesitation to re-employ teachers who have resigned from teaching, even where there is a need, were some of challenges highlighted during a recent oversight visit of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education to Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, reports Rajaa Azzakani.

However, it was not all doom and gloom for the Eastern Cape Education Department. The Committee heard from schools that there is great appreciation

for the school nutrition programme, which now ensures that learners who would have gone hungry, are now fed and attend school regularly. The Extended Public Works Programme also received praise, as funds from this programme are used to pay for items that schools would not have been able to afford otherwise.

The Committee visited the northern areas of Port Elizabeth as media coverage had suggested many problems are being experienced at schools there. Committee Chairperson Ms Nomalungelo Gina said: "The main objective of the visit is to understand the impact of disturbances at affected schools, how

schools are able to cope with the situation and any assistance or support the Portfolio Committee could give. Added to this, the Committee would also like to understand how these affected schools are coping with the start of the Annual National Assessment and Examination Readiness for 2015, as well as the overall readiness for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination for 2015," she said.

The Committee heard that challenges in filling teaching positions in the Port Elizabeth district include delays in payment of appointed educators (in some cases up to six months), non-appointment of non-teaching posts, insufficient working tools and the movement of files between different departments.

During a meeting with organised labour, unions highlighted an unwillingness to reappoint educators who resigned and took their pension. The Provincial Department of Education said it prefers to give young graduates the opportunity of employment. It was, however, willing to consider re-employing former teachers in instances where they are unable to find a replacement, such as with Afrikaans.

The Committee heard that 14 centres

and 607 learners were implicated in “group copying” in the 2014 NSC examinations. The hearings for seven centres and 133 learners have been finalised and sanctions instituted. The rest of the schools have appointed lawyers and the hearings in those schools have started.

The Acting Head of Department in the Provincial Education Department said that since last year the province had made great progress in appointments for vacant posts. He, however, acknowledged that there are pockets of vacancies still not filled.

The Committee then visited Charles Duna Primary School in New Brighton. The school was established in 1962 and around 80% of its 1 062 learners come from unemployed households. Under the leadership of the principal, who joined the school in 1998, it has grown and partnered with the private sector for computers, a library, sporting facilities, re-skilling of educators and various educational programmes for learners. Members of the Committee commended the leadership of the school.

At Bethelsdorp High School and Van der Kemp Primary School, both in Salt Lake, social ills were also highlighted. Because of gangsterism and substance abuse in the surrounding areas, these challenges manifested themselves in the school environment.

The Committee also had a heated meeting with education forums and school governing bodies from the affected schools. The Committee heard that the challenges mentioned above have been highlighted over the past two years, with very little intervention. Leaders said there was no political will to address the challenges. Ms Gina

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT ROUNDUP

More than 20 of the National Assembly’s Portfolio Committees, along with two Standing Committees, visited provinces throughout the country to fulfil their mandate of conducting oversight over the executive. Space prevents comprehensive coverage of all the oversight visits, but *InSession* considers in detail the visits of the Portfolio Committee (PC) on Basic Education and the PC on Telecommunications and Postal Services.

It also reports on an unprecedented cluster oversight visit by all PCs involved in safety at South Africa’s borders – Police, Defence, Military Veterans, Home Affairs and International Relations as well as the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence.

In addition to these visits, the PC on Energy went to the Free State where it conducted oversight at the Letsatsi PV Power Plant and commended Letsatsi for the social responsibility programmes it has implemented.

The PC on Human Settlements looked at housing delivery progress in the Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan municipalities of the Eastern Cape, while the PCs of Arts and Culture, and Tourism and Environmental Affairs together embarked on oversight to KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

The PC on Water and Sanitation joined forces with the PC on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and spent two weeks in KZN and Eastern Cape (EC). They assessed national government initiatives on drought relief interventions in KZN, and evaluated the impact of water and sanitation projects, with the focus on the eradication of the bucket sanitation system in the EC.

The PC of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries was also in the EC, while the PC on Labour visited farms in Mpumalanga to check on the conditions of farm workers.

The PC on Sport and Recreation visited KZN to assess the use of the Division of Revenue Act grant allocated to the province for the implementation of sport and recreation programmes and for providing sport opportunities to communities.

Other PCs that undertook oversight visits included Economic Development, Health, Social Development, Rural Development and Land Reform, Women in the Presidency, Mineral Resources, Transport, Science and Technology, Higher Education and Training, Justice and Correctional Services.

▷ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

assured the meeting that the Committee understands the frustration of the parents and that it will do everything within its power to assist them.

The Committee also visited Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal over two days to focus, among other things, on the implementation of sports in schools. The Committee met with both the Provincial Department of Education and Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation, as well as various stakeholders such as the United Nations Children Fund, provincial sports federations and organised labour.

Regarding school sports in the province, Ms Gina said it became clear that although some strides have been made, a lot remains to be done. She called for greater collaboration between the departments and all stakeholders who have an interest in uplifting talented learners through sports.

The lack of transformation, especially

in historically predominantly white sports, was highlighted as a challenge. The Committee heard that physical education needed to be introduced from the early childhood development stage and that by giving more funds to Sports Focus Schools, the already empowered schools, mostly former Model C schools, were being further empowered.

Both provincial education departments indicated they were ready to administer this year's NSC examinations and have put stringent security measures in place.

Slow Internet speed, poor mobile phone and broadcasting signals coupled with non-payment of staff members were some of the challenges faced by the Portfolio Committee on Telecommunications and Postal Services during its week-long oversight visit to Limpopo Province, writes Justice Molafo.

The Committee visited several internet connectivity projects and Post Office outlets in three district municipalities, namely Vhembe, Mopani and Greater Sekhukhune.

The Committee Chairperson, Ms Mmamoloko Kubayi, said that poor signal and Internet service undermined people living in the rural areas and perpetuated the inequalities of the past.

The Committee further expressed unhappiness with the fact that there are five secondary schools in Mhinga Village, but none of them has access to the Internet or a library. However, some schools, including Xikundu Secondary School in Xikundu Village, Ntepane Primary School in Ga-Riba Village and Mokapane Multipurpose Centre in Mokopane, have Internet connectivity, although it is slow.

The Committee also did not take kindly to the non-payment of Post Office staff members in Mungomani and Burgersfort, and requested that the matter be resolved urgently. In addition to non-payment of some staff members at the Post Office, the Committee noted various issues ranging from lack of security, vandalism and office space.

During its week-long visit in the Province, the Committee visited Mhinga and Xikundu in Malamulele, Mutale and Mungomani in Vhembe, Ga-Riba and Ga-Nkwana in Burgersfort. It also visited the Giyani Nursing College as well as Mokopane Multipurpose Centre to see connectivity projects as well as postal outlets.

South Africa's borders are sometimes criticised for being porous and places where crime and corruption frequently occur. With this in mind, Parliament undertook to investigate the reasons for this state of affairs by sending a delegation of Members of Parliament belonging to a cluster responsible for overseeing the country's peace and security, writes Temba Gubula.

The delegation visited ports of entry and land borders in KwaZulu-Natal to assess

COMPUTERS FOR THE PEOPLE: The Portfolio Committee on Telecommunications and Postal Services checks on connectivity at a project in Limpopo.



the effects of crime and corruption in the effective management of South Africa's borders. Due to the multi-faceted aspect of South Africa's border environment, which requires the involvement of a large number of departments to ensure effective safeguarding of the land, air and maritime borders, it therefore followed that a number of Parliamentary Committees should be clustered to conduct a joint oversight visit to the ports of entry.

This unprecedented and inaugural cluster oversight visit comprised Committees on Police, Defence, Military Veterans, Home Affairs and International Relations as well as the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence. All these Committees cover an array of focus areas related to border management.

While the delegation did not deny that there were challenges at the country's ports of entry and land borders, the situation was not entirely bad. The delegation said they were also able to see plans on how to improve the functionality of the country's border management. Key among those plans, according to delegation leader Ms Connie September, was the establishment of the Border Management Agency (BMA), which will see South Africa move towards a coordinated border management approach.

Ms September said it is through the BMA that South Africa hopes to address the many challenges confronting its borders. The need for a BMA was highlighted by President Jacob Zuma in his 2009 State of the Nation Address (SONA) and is also contained in the National Development Plan (NDP).

Ms September also said that the existing challenges cannot wait for the implementation of the BMA. They must be attended to urgently so that when the BMA starts in late 2016 and early

in 2017, it does not inherit unnecessary challenges that could be solved by the existing border management system.

On the matter of crime and corruption, identified at Golela and Kosi Bay borders for example, MPs called on respective departments and organs of state to be rigorous in uprooting any criminal and corrupt elements harming South Africa's efforts to secure its borders. Members said crime- and corruption-fighting strategies would yield nothing without the full participation of community members. They called on border management to ensure the public was involved in ridding South Africa's borders of the scourge of crime and corruption, such as drug-smuggling and bribery.

To this end, the delegation held public hearings in the Pongola and St Lucia Bay areas of KwaZulu-Natal. MPs called on community members to take pride in their country and forge a partnership with security agencies by always alerting those in power to criminal and corrupt incidents.

While the delegation understood and was willing to assist with some of the challenges confronting this border line, it urged the border management to be proactive in addressing some of the issues.

The delegation, for example, did not understand how a person who is on the wanted list could not be apprehended because of unavailability of a warrant of arrest or investigating officers and urged the South African Police Service to sort this out immediately.

Concerns at airports included gaps in radar coverage of the South African airspace, a lack of effective policing of airfields and airstrips, as well as a lack of information sharing between the Air Traffic and Navigation Services and the South African Airforce were some of

the challenges the delegation wanted addressed.

To achieve safe and secure waters, delegation members believe the role of the South African Navy in maritime border preservation needs to be strengthened. They also want the lack of maritime sensors to be addressed, as it affects the country's ability to effectively patrol waters.

The delegation highlighted the lack of a bulk scanner to identify and detect illegal items passing through borders. The delegation said this will have to be attended to because relying on manual searching of cargo was unreliable and puts the economy and security of the country at risk. MPs said they will have to engage the Minister of Finance to see if procurement of such scanners could be prioritised during budgeting processes.

With South Africa sharing borders with other countries, those involved in border management said there was a need to formalise and strengthen relations with neighbouring countries to ensure joint operations and to combat border-related crimes. The delegation undertook to engage the Department of International Relations and Cooperation to get an understanding of how this could be achieved.

On the issue of the lack of human and operational resources as well as legislative gaps, delegation members representing Committees that oversee respective departments involved in border management were tasked to follow up on these matters with those departments.

Areas visited included King Shaka International Airport, the Durban Harbour and Naval Station, Richards Bay Harbour and Airport, Kosi Bay Port of Entry, iSimangaliso Wetland Park, and the Pongola and the Golela port of entry. 🌍

Defend SA's heritage



While most Members of Parliament from the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) called on South Africans to celebrate their heritage by preserving their culture, languages, indigenous knowledge and writing their own histories during a debate in the NCOP to mark Heritage Day, other Members warned of a clash between tradition and human rights in modern society, writes *Sakhile Mokoena*.

Some members of the NCOP felt that land is an important part of the country's heritage that is still contested. Eastern Cape delegate to the NCOP Mr Lennox Gaehler (United Democratic Movement) spoke out during a debate on the theme "Our Indigenous Knowledge, Our Heritage: Towards the Identification, Promotion and Preservation of South Africa's Living Heritage". He said that South Africa still suffers from the effects of the 1913 Natives' Land Act.

"It is this statute that was used to dispossess black people of their land, livestock and all forms of production, robbing them of their livelihood, trampling on their dignity and violating their human rights and indeed their heritage," Mr Gaehler said.

The Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi, said colonialism had caused havoc with the cultural traditions and customs that had kept intact the social and economic fabric of South Africa's pre-colonial societies for centuries.

"Colonial rulers knew that military subjugation of indigenous people was not going to lead to total subjugation and the ultimate achievement of the colonial agenda. They, therefore, systematically eroded and corroded indigenous cultures by projecting and portraying them as backward. A large number of people began to despise these cultures and traditions and got assimilated into the Western ways of living," said the Deputy Minister.

Ms Lungelwa Zwane of the African National Congress (ANC) and representing KwaZulu-Natal said that in observing cultural practices and traditions, society must make sure that human rights were not violated.

"Over time, it has become evident that some cultural practices deeply infringe on human rights, such as marriage by abduction (*ukuthwala*). In its current form, *ukuthwala* is tantamount to gender-based violence and the practice now often involves the rape of young women and girls who are usually under

the age of marriage while the men are usually much older," she said.

Ms Zwane also spoke about the practice of virginity testing for the Zulu tradition of the annual reed dance ceremony where young maidens dance before the king. Only virgins are allowed to dance. She said the negative aspect of the practice is that it subjects young maidens to virginity testing without their consent and can lead to victimisation, depending on the results of the test.

Ms Cathy Dlamini, Chairperson of the Select Committee on Social Services and a member of the ANC, said South Africans should not just celebrate heritage, but should tell stories that will move the country forward, and further reflect on the lessons learnt from the icons of the liberation struggle.

"The honest reflection on our history will assist us to use the past to build a society that is imbued with the principle of moral generation and social cohesion. I encourage the youth to become archaeologists, anthropologists and all studies related to heritage and culture. Our history must be told by those who walked it and who experienced it," she said.

She also called on living struggle icons to write about who they were and their role in the struggle. "We must rewrite our history and fill the gaps that are the manifestation of colonial dominance in our country," she said.

Representing the Eastern Cape, Ms Phindiwe Samka (ANC) said: "Cultural and indigenous knowledge is being eroded while values of *ubuntu* have seemingly been thrown out of the window. We therefore wish to propose that for indigenous knowledge to survive, the social and economic context in which it is found has to be nurtured, maintained and protected." 🌍

Durban residents ask MP to come to their rescue

The residents of Kenville, a suburb of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, approached African Independent Congress Member of Parliament Mr Steven Jafta to help them resolve their problems that have plagued them for a number of years, writes **Cedric Mboyisa**.

The buildings they live in are in a terrible state of disrepair and residents live in fear that they could collapse at any moment. Not only do these worried residents have to live in dilapidated buildings, they have challenges of getting access to basic services, such as water and electricity.

Mr Jafta's constituency office in Durban set up a meeting with the residents so that the MP could receive the information from the residents themselves. After executing his duties in the National Assembly one Thursday afternoon, Mr Jafta flew to KwaZulu-Natal the same day so he could meet with the residents the following morning. The meeting was held in one of the dilapidated structures bristling with illegal electricity connections.

"It is very unsafe here, especially for children. We have no choice but to resort to illegal connections because the council (eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality) cut off our electricity and water," said one resident, Mr Kenneth Vilakazi.

He said they had no idea who the actual owner of the dilapidated buildings was. They stopped paying rent after their water and electricity were cut off by the City.

Illegal electricity lines are everywhere. A walk around these buildings is like

navigating landmine-infested terrain, with one having to be always on the alert and carefully minding one's steps. Fortunately, nobody has been electrocuted so far, but residents live in constant fear that the illegal lines could one day have deadly consequences for the innocent children who live there.

The cracked walls indicate structurally unstable and unsafe buildings. "These buildings can collapse any time. We should not live here. We are the same as people who live in shacks. We need decent housing. We have been overlooked many times for decent housing," said another resident, Mr Simphiwe Madlala. Residents pleaded with the Member of Parliament to help them get decent housing.

The residents also told Mr Jafta that at least 15 people shared one toilet and some have to use the nearby bush to relieve themselves. They implored Mr Jafta to request the council to provide them with clean water. Another issue that came up was crime.

"Crime is a big problem here, but we are fighting crime as a community. We are not under siege in terms of crime," said Mr Vilakazi.

Mr Jafta assured the residents that he will help address and resolve their problems. He explained that as part of his constituency work as a Member



AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CONGRESS: Mr Steven Jafta (in blue).

of Parliament, he has to attend to the concerns and problems of people in his constituency area. "Constituency offices are there to help bring Parliament close to the people, so we are here to serve all the people in my constituency. As citizens of this country, you have a constitutional right to basic services and decent housing," said Mr Jafta.

He noted that residents have no choice but to resort to illegal connections. He stressed this was still against the law. He said he will write a letter to the council explaining their situation. He said he will also investigate who the owner of the buildings is so that they could explain themselves for allowing the buildings to descend into such a decayed state. If need be, some issues would find their way to the provincial government. He will also raise their problems through the Members' Statements in the National Assembly.

He assured residents that he will keep them informed about developments. A feedback meeting will be arranged in the near future. The residents said they are hopeful that Mr Jafta's intervention will bear fruit. For a long time those in authority have turned a blind eye to their suffering, they said. A spirit of optimism was clearly visible on the residents' faces after a meeting with the MP, who undertook to do all he can to help them find solutions to their challenges. 🌟

Advancing women's developmental agenda

In her keynote address to the Women's Roundtable Discussion held at Parliament recently, the Chairperson of the Multiparty Women's Caucus, Ms Masefele Morutoa, said that the representation of women in Parliament is a significant indicator of the country's commitment to gender equality. **Abel Mputing** spoke to Ms Morutoa recently about women parliamentarians who are using their experiences and expertise to remodel political and legislative frameworks to bring about new and innovative perspectives on gender equality.

The Multi-Party Women's Caucus has brought together women parliamentarians to work towards a common gender trajectory that will make their voices heard and that will change the shape and form of our country's political and legislative framework, Ms Morutoa explained.

"The re-establishment of a Multi-Party Women's Caucus (MPWC) in the South African Parliament in 2008 was borne of the need to create a platform for female parliamentarians to advance gender equality as a collective, across party lines. Women's representation

in Parliament had previously been focused on the number of seats occupied by women, with little attention being given to the facilities, support and collective advocacy necessary for the advancement of women's rights."

Since its inception, the caucus has carved a position in the forefront of women's issues, she said, and has strengthened its endeavours to influence the shape and form of our country's legislative framework. If the caucus succeeds in promoting women's legislative priorities and

increase their influence in Parliament, this will increase the likelihood of women's issues being discussed and articulated in legislation, which will promote a legislative sector that is gender-sensitive.

"The caucus serves as a focal gender point at Parliament to ensure that gender issues and perspectives are included in all of its deliberations and decisions."

Unlike the Portfolio Committee on Women, the MPWC has no oversight mandate. "The caucus is representing



CHAIRPERSON OF THE MULTIPARTY WOMEN'S CAUCUS: Ms Masefele Morutoa.

the interests of women Members of Parliament. It seeks to promote the discussion of women's issues in Parliament and to make submissions to the relevant Committees for consideration. One of the main objectives of the caucus is to introduce a women's perspective in parliamentary activities to be included in the programming of debates and to consider any other matter within its mandate referred to it by either House," she said.

She pointed out that the competitive advantage of the caucus is that it has harnessed the experiences and expertise of women from other parliamentary Committees.

"The members of the caucus come from different Portfolio Committees and they bring with them experiences about how different departments deal with gender issues or which departments have adopted gender mainstreaming and those that lag behind."

A key focus for the caucus is the 50/50 threshold. This is a significant starting point considering that women's representation has gone down one percentage point at Parliament.

"We have a lot of laws that seek to promote gender equity. As a result, there are now many women who are judges and chief executive officers of big companies, but nonetheless gender mainstreaming still remains very slow. One of the caucus's main aims is to enrich the gender equity legislation to ensure that women's representation in legislatures does not decrease, but meets the 50/50 threshold. The agitation for a woman President is our ultimatum against

piecemeal changes in the gender equity discourse."

Ms Morutoa thinks that gender equity has not received the attention it deserves. "Ours is a very old and tolerant struggle, and it exemplifies our endurance. But our patience has been tested and it has now reached its ceiling. Our tolerance has come to a head because we are of the view that we have not been taken seriously and we want that to change."

Because little has been achieved on women's issues to date, the MPWC now seeks to invoke the Women Charter, which was adopted in Gauteng in 1954. Gender equity is a human rights issue that supersedes partisan politics and the non-partisan nature of the MPWC is essential in forming legitimate, cross-party solidarity in order to promote a single, common goal, Ms Morutoa said.

"Our united voice as a caucus is important in building women's consensus. But most significantly, it shows that our collective plight as women supersedes our party politics. In fact, ours is not only a political matter, but a human rights issue as well. As such, the success of our caucus will stem primarily from our capacity to rally the support of women parliamentarians around this common objective. That is what informs the strength and uniqueness of our caucus. We seek to harness that as its competitive advantage in its advocacy of the women's cause."

The caucus supports the belief that gender mainstreaming will have little success if responsive gender budgeting (RGB) is not taken seriously. This means RGB must be

part of the key performance areas of government departments.

"If there is no government planning, programming and budgeting that contribute to the advancement of gender equality and the fulfilment of women's rights, gender mainstreaming will not be realised," she said.

"For RGB to be effective, we also need focal persons who understand the budgetary frameworks and cycles of departments and who will be able to assess the impact of RGB in respective departments.

"In all departments, we need focal persons who will be responsible for RGB. We don't want RGB to be an add-on responsibility of departments, but one of their focal areas. Such persons must be informed about budgetary frameworks and cycles of departments to be able to evaluate and monitor them."

Linked to RGB are Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which compel governments to have practical solutions to women's issues. "Having women represented and participating in decision-making is very important for human development. Because it is mostly women who are vulnerable to poverty, maternal complications and other health risks, and have restricted access to resources, any programme that advances the status of women contributes to the development of society as a whole," she said.

The caucus is now looking for ways to use the #365 campaign of the Ministry of Women in the Presidency to embed women's advancement in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. 🌍



Drug abuse a major threat to our society

The National Assembly (NA) recently debated potential solutions to the impact of substance abuse on South African society. During the discussion on the topic “Socio-economic impact of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse on our communities and on local government and the solutions thereto”, Members of Parliament (MPs) lamented the damage caused by substance abuse in communities and to the country’s economy, writes **Sakhile Mokoena**.

Members of the National Assembly called on the government to make resources available to fund rehabilitation centres and for anti-drug-use education programmes to be rolled out and maintained in schools, communities and places of employment in both the public and private sectors.

Ms Cynthia Majeke of the African National Congress said rural communities continued to be plagued by alcohol abuse and the

number of children born with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder is a grave concern. She said: “There is a real need for treatment centres, more age-appropriate services, including psychological and medical care for young people. There is a need for effective interventions that target South African youth. Prevention programmes that are grounded in evidence that have shown to be effective are needed both at school and after school, like family strengthening programmes.”

The Democratic Alliance’s Ms Patricia Kopane said drug, alcohol and substance abuse is a major threat to our society, economy and South Africa’s democracy. “We must be willing to do more together to fight this major social problem in our country. Because of drugs, many of us, also in this House, have lost our children. Many of us have lost our families. Many of us are divorced, or are in the process of getting divorced. Many of our children are in and out of jails. Many of our children are school dropouts. Many of our children are in an out of rehabilitation centres. The fact is that drug and substance abuse does not know any political affiliation, doesn’t know any social status and doesn’t know any race,” she said.

She added that the devastating effect of substance abuse on our communities was clear in the theft, rape, murder, child abuse and drunken driving that occurred every day. “Law enforcement is struggling to deal with this scourge as resources are limited. We have seen a steady increase in drug-related crimes from 63 000 in 2004 to more than



DRUG ABUSE: The effects of addiction of prescription drugs can be just as debilitating as addiction to illegal substances.

260 000 last year and these crime statistics are but a small indication of the extent of the social impact of substance abuse," said Ms Kopane.

The Department of Social Development's Central Drug Authority Dr Ray Eberlein said the estimated cost in 2011 to treat substance abuse was over R130bn a year.

Economic Freedom Fighters' MP Mr Sam Matiase said the tax paid on the purchase of alcohol and tobacco did not begin to cover the government's expenditure to deal with their effects. "The governments allocated more than R17bn to deal with the direct consequences of alcohol abuse. Only R890m in revenue was collected from these industries. That's less than 5% of the cost to fight alcohol and substance abuse.

"Alcohol abuse is the third largest contributor to death and disability. It is the main reason for work-related injuries and absenteeism, as well as high employee turnover, yet we talk about abuse of alcohol without

reflecting on the industry itself. It is a fact that alcohol and drugs industries are killer industries and until society starts viewing it in that way, the impact will continue to be appalling," he said.

The Inkatha Freedom Party's Ms Liezl van der Merwe was concerned that many municipalities are failing to implement the National Drug Master Plan and there are not enough public treatment centres for addicts who want to recover. "Our greatest offensive and defensive action should be that of ensuring that this government is up to the task of creating jobs. This would be the very first step in turning the tide against this crisis, which is destroying our nation," she said.

Also lamenting the estimated R17bn that alcohol abuse costs the government each year, Mr Sibusiso Mncwabe of the National Freedom Party said studies showed that alcohol abuse was the third largest contributor to death and disability, after the transmission of sexually transmitted infections and inter-personal violence, both of which were influenced by

alcohol consumption. "The causes of substance abuse are multifold. They range from our porous borders, which invite an inflow of drugs into our country, to the glamorous image the media creates of alcohol use and the extreme helplessness that people feel because of poverty and unemployment," he said.

Mr Mncwabe commended the government's National Drug Master Plan. "This is to be commended and supported. However, we believe that any attempt to change social behaviour will be fruitless unless a climate is created that will address the socio-economic circumstances in which alcohol and drug abuse flourishes.

"We suggest that a renewed focus on job creation and economic prosperity would be a suitable starting point. We also wish to see increased police action, enforcing the laws of our country, in particular, the laws that regulate the licensed sale of alcohol and the laws that prohibit under-age drinking of alcohol," he said. 🗣️

NCOP debates deaths of police officers

The *South African Police Service (SAPS) management has adopted a new National Police Safety Plan aimed at pushing back the frontiers of violent crime and ensuring the safety of the public and police officers, the Deputy Minister of the SAPS, Ms Maggie Sotyu, told the permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) recently during a debate in the NCOP on the killing of police officers in South Africa. Mava Lukani reports.*

According to Ms Sotyu, the new strategy is based on four pillars that include proactive and reactive interventions to reduce the attacks and swiftly arrest the police killers. There are also measures in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the National Police Safety Plan and to determine whether the strategy is effective in reducing unnatural deaths of police officers.

“In addition, appropriate security measures will be put in place at all police stations in order to effectively control and secure the environment in which the police officers work, thus limiting risk of injury or death to our police officers as well as members of the public,” said Ms Sotyu.

Furthermore, Ms Sotyu assured the permanent delegates that the established multi-disciplinary Police Safety Committee will meet frequently to ensure an integrated plan for police safety is implemented.

Ms Sotyu highlighted what she called an “unbalanced reaction” by members of the public when a civilian is killed by a police officer – and when a police officer is killed. “There is a deafening silence when a police officer is killed, but when a police officer kills a civilian, there is a drowning noise accompanied by a host of unfounded criticism and sinister recommendations against the government and police management,” said Ms Sotyu.

She told the NCOP delegates that in order to curb police killings, the support of Members of Parliament (MPs) is urgently needed to help align all their operational instruments by reviewing and amending all the relevant national policies and legislation accordingly. She said the National Development Plan, the National Employee Health and Wellness and the Farlam Commission’s recommendations call for the revamp of the policing protocols for a professionalised SAPS.

Ms Sotyu told the NCOP delegates that so far this year “we have lost more than 60 police officers. These are human beings we are talking about, who have a unique mandate to protect the whole country,” Ms Sotyu said.

Some delegates to the NCOP attributed the killing of police officers to the appointment of a civilian to the position of National Police Commissioner (NPC).

Mr Lennox Gaehler of the Eastern Cape delegation and a United Democratic Movement member said the position of the NPC should be filled by someone with police experience. Furthermore, Mr Gaehler believes the appointment of an NPC should be done by a special majority in Parliament, as happens when appointing the Inspector-General of Intelligence.

Mr Gaehler said there is an urgent need to strengthen local policing forums as this would improve the safety of citizens. He said that police killings demand that the SAPS leadership improves the way in which the use of force by the police force is managed.

The Free State’s permanent delegate to the NCOP, Mr George Michalakis of the Democratic Alliance, said in 2011 the then minister of police, Mr Nathi Mthethwa, announced a 10-point plan in Parliament aimed at combating the killing of police officers. He said a large part of the plan was about monitoring and reporting the deaths of police officers rather than ensuring the safety of the police officers, which Mr Michalakis said should be at the centre of any strategy about combating the killing of police officers.

Mr Michalakis told Ms Sotyu that one of the points that Mr Mthethwa mentioned was the improvement of the training of police officers. “Not enough has been done to achieve this and as a result the number of police officers who have lost their lives since the announcement of the plan four years ago has not declined,” Mr Michalakis said.

Mr Michalakis said the Institute for Security Studies has indicated that plans for promoting police safety are not being implemented by the SAPS. He said that there is a shortage of bulletproof vests, and poor managerial supervision and accountability at police stations which make police officers vulnerable to criminals.

Members of the NCOP also mentioned poor intelligence-gathering as a problem contributing to the deaths of police officers. Members of the NCOP told Ms Sotyu to ensure that strategies are put in place, including the 10-point plan, and that they are then strategically and properly implemented. 🌐

tribute *to* Kenneth Mubu

15 June 1953 – 31 August 2015

The *fifth Parliament has lost a giant among its Members of the National Assembly (NA). A skilful debater and an extraordinary representative of the people, Mr Kenneth Mubu passed away on 31 August after a short illness. Mr Mubu was an MP with the Democratic Alliance and was the Shadow Minister of Public Works in the fifth Parliament.*

His former colleagues in the NA described Mr Mubu as a patriot and a selfless representative of the people. He was always prepared to go the extra mile in ensuring that the quality of work in Parliament was the best it could be for the benefit of all South Africans.

During a session for NA MPs in the National Assembly, MPs delivered motions of condolence after Mr Mubu's death. One after the other, NA MPs from different political parties said Mr Mubu brought a rich experience to the fourth and fifth Parliaments. His experience enriched his contribution to the debates that took place at both parliamentary Committee and House levels.

Mr Mubu was born in Lusaka, Zambia, on 15 June 1953. He was a scholar who held several degrees, post-graduate qualifications, diplomas and certificates, which all bear testimony to his fine intellect. He was a graduate of the University of Zambia with a Bachelor of Arts degree in education, majoring in English and geography. He also held a Master of Arts degree in journalism/public relations from Ball State University in the United States, and a post-

graduate diploma in management from the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa.

In 1990 he moved to Geneva, Switzerland. While there he worked as the editor of the Ecumenical Press Service, a news agency of the World Council of Churches, compiling and distributing news to agencies, publications and electronic media around the world.

Mr Mubu played a crucial role in voter education in the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, visiting communities to tell them about their voting rights.

In 1995, Mr Mubu was appointed International Relations Officer at the University of Fort Hare where he managed all partnership and student exchange programmes between the University and other institutions. During this time, he achieved a number of significant engagements, one of them being the Southern Sudan Capacity and Institution Building initiative, a project designed to train South Sudanese public officers in various civil service skills.

Mr Mubu joined Parliament in 2009



and was sworn in as an NA MP after the 2009 general elections. As an NA MP of the fourth Parliament, Mr Mubu served on the International Relations and Labour Portfolio Committees. His constituency was Hammanskraal.

After the 2014 general elections, Mr Mubu became an NA MP in the fifth Parliament. He served on the International Relations, Labour and Public Works Portfolio Committees where he left an indelible mark.

Preceding his role as Shadow Minister of Public Works in the fifth Parliament, he served as Shadow Minister of International Relations in the fourth Parliament. His fellow MPs said he always made his presence felt with dignity in the NA and set an example for many to follow. 🇿🇦



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