

PARLIAMENT: Following up on our commitments to the people.

# in session



Vol. 16 ISSUE 8 2016



Celebrating our Legacy  
*Parliament marks Heritage Day*



**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:** There is much to celebrate on Heritage Day. This embroidery by Maria Mongwe, who is part of the Kaross Project in Limpopo, is just one example of that rich and diverse heritage.

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**OUR IDEALS**

**VISION** An activist and responsive people's  
Parliament that improves the quality of life  
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**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

Strengthening oversight and accountability;  
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engagement in international fora; strengthening  
cooperative government; strengthening legislative  
capacity.

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Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Baleka Mbete

## MESSAGE FROM THE national assembly



**We** say that the 21st century must be an African century and we mean it! Despite what you see on television screens or read in newspapers about our continent, the mood and spirit on the ground is very different. It reminds me of the years of independence, the 1960s, when Africa was shedding the shackles of colonial rule to enter the world stage as a free and an independent continent.

Those were the years when we formed the Organisation of African Unity [OAU], which has since become the African Union, because we saw and continue to this day to see ourselves as one single people with a common destiny. The future and prosperity of Africa lie in our unity and continent-wide integration.

The ideological basis of African unity is Pan-Africanism, a political movement that emerged around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to unite all people of African descent in Africa and its diaspora. As a movement, Pan Africanism was an antithesis to colonialism, which had divided us, creating different countries where none existed before.

African unity is about Africa speaking with one voice in global affairs, in international negotiations or in the many bodies of the United Nations. We take pride in the fact that Africa is the most united continent in world affairs, in how we conduct ourselves and speak with one voice.

One big challenge to global Africa has to be singled out, however, and this is the result of asymmetric global power relations. These divide the world between the north, which wields so much power, and the rest of us who are the have-nots.

The United Nations is an assembly of all the nations of the world, but the same cannot be said of its Security Council, which is a closed club of the

privileged who have the power to make the decisions, undemocratically so, for all the rest of us. Thus, Africa is united in calling for the transformation of the Security Council to include us among its permanent members, especially as items on the agenda of this body are often about our continent.

The asymmetric global power relations account for the African condition. That is our challenge today. Our continent, during the years of colonial rule, was only a source of cheap labour and raw materials. This has been a battle for us since our independence, to transform and turn around our economies, including industrialisation and developing our human capital.

The key to claiming the 21<sup>st</sup> century is in industrialisation, to ensure that we add value, and reduce our dependency on the export of unprocessed raw materials. We need infrastructure that connects people within countries and between countries, from Cape to Cairo.

This strategic re-orientation of Africa is well articulated in Agenda 2063, a 50-year plan of the African Union that we adopted to take our continent to another level. Underlying this plan are the principles of self-reliance, responsibility, African ownership and transformative, democratic leadership.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century must be an African century, and we mean it! Peace is therefore a precondition. We must address the root causes and the various

manifestations of political instability and wars, in the Great Lakes, the Horn of Africa, or in any part of our continent that does not know peace.

The Community of Sant' Egidio has been a friend of Africa for years in the domain of peace and conflict mediation and resolution. We commend their work in Mozambique and the Great Lakes, to name just a few.

We know the root causes. We have the solution. Unlike in the past, we now take responsibility and lead in the resolution of conflicts on our continent through the African Union and our regional economic communities. We continue to strengthen our capability and means to silence the guns in Africa by the year 2020. Please join us! Let's work together towards this goal.

We accept that we must have leaders on our continent who put their people first, who are accountable, who eschew violence as a means towards a political end, and who are touched by the suffering of their people. I take comfort in knowing that many of our leaders of today are of this calibre and share our collective vision of a better Africa.

Africa has taken charge of its destiny. We need friends to work with us. This gathering is one demonstration of the goodwill in the world towards our continent, which gives us strength and makes us more determined to claim the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*This is an edited version of the speech delivered by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Baleka Mbete, on the challenges of global Africa on the occasion of the international meeting "Thirst for Peace: religions and cultures in dialogue", which took place in Italy from 18 to 20 September 2016. 🌍*

# Role of women in advancing implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goals



WORKING TOGETHER: National Assembly House Chairperson Ms Thoko Didiza.

We commemorate 60 years of the Women's March to Pretoria in which South African women from all walks of life were united in opposing the implementation of the repressive and discriminatory legislation by the then National Party regime known as the pass laws. It is important to note that this march formed part of the programme of action of the Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw) which was formed on the 17th of April 1954. The significance of Fedsaw was in its composition – in that it brought together women across the political, class and religious divide.

This commemoration of the historic march serves as a reminder that women before us fought for the franchise of all our people – and more particularly women. In the Women's Charter that they drafted and adopted were the aspirations of the South Africa they wanted. A South Africa where there will be gender equality, a country where working conditions – in particular of women – will be improved, and economic opportunities would be accessible to all.

There are many women in this province across the political divide that continued to fight for women's emancipation and their representation in decision-making structures of institutions that govern them. Stalwarts such as Ms Dorothy Nyembe, Florence Mkhize, Mama Kubheka and others are a reminder of the women's struggles in this province of KwaZulu-Natal.

During the period of negotiations,

women once again formed a coalition across the political, economic and class divide which fought for equal representation in the negotiations process. One of the gains that we can recall during that period was the inclusion of the Equality Clause in our interim Constitution and the final Constitution, which was adopted in 1996. Some of the women like our current Speaker Ms Baleka Mbete, Dr Frene Ginwala, the late Ms Faith Gasa and former Member of Parliament, Ms Sheila Camerer, to name but a few, were among those women who were critical in the making of a new South Africa.

It is important to note, however, that while women struggled side by side with their menfolk in pursuit of freedom, questions continued to be asked about the difference that women's participation and representation bring in parliaments and legislatures.

In answering this question, I wish to reflect on the words of Dr Frene Ginwala in the foreword to a handbook by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) titled *Beyond the Numbers*, in which she reflects on the essence of democracy. Dr Ginwala states that "the seed of democracy lies in the principle that the legitimacy of the power to make decisions about people's lives, their society and their country should be derived from a choice by those who will be affected".

Twenty-two years into our democracy, we can say with pride that the struggles by our forebears were not in vain. Women now occupy seats in the legislatures, parliaments,

councils, executives and the private sector's decision-making structures. As women appreciate the strides that have been made thus far on representation, it is concerning that the numbers of women in parliaments and legislatures are still low compared to the population of women in our countries and globally.

It is for this reason that the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians continue to strive for an increase in women's participation in parliaments and legislatures. In order to improve the situation, women through their multiparty caucuses in legislatures will need to look at legislation such as the Electoral Act and see to what extent the Act can be reformed to advance women's representation. Secondly, it is about looking at political parties' constitutions and policies and ensure that these too are transformed and that clauses or principles of equality are ingrained in such policy documents of parties. Thirdly, it is about advocacy, working with civil society to argue for increased participation of women.

Today we are gathered here to deliberate on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a country we have been part of the development of these goals. As members of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, we have also ensured that the goals will address the issues that are of concern to women. Goal Five for instance, talks to the gender equality issue.

In taking a cursory look at the SDGs, it is clear that there is a lot of convergence between these goals,

our National Development Plan (NDP) and the African Union Agenda 2063.

As parliamentarians and legislators we are the representatives of our people. Our primary responsibility is to make laws, hold the executive accountable and ensure oversight in the implementation of policies, laws and programmes of government. The vexing question, therefore, concerns how we exercise our responsibility as women legislators to ensure the implementation of the SDGs.

First and foremost, working with the Women's Caucus in Parliament we need to ensure that ratification of these goals is done if such is required as soon as it is possible. It is important that we popularise the SDGs among our communities, working in partnership with civil society organisations.

Secondly, it is necessary that the Women's Caucus should develop its own programme of action that will determine the areas of focus as it relates to women and girls. Monitoring and evaluation tools have to be developed in order to ensure that progress and impact on programmes can be measured.

I trust that this workshop will lay a basis in which the Women's Caucus can identify and develop their own programme of action as to how as legislators, they can ensure the implementation of the SDGs. 🌍

*This is an edited version of the address by Ms Thoko Didiza, Chairperson: Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (Africa Region) at the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature's Women's Caucus Workshop.*



**GOOD BEGININGS:** Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Mr Raseriti Tau, and a delegation of NCOP MPs meet children at an early childhood education centre in the Northern Cape.

## NCOP determined to make access to education and healthcare work for all

During the National Council of Provinces' (NCOPs') important Provincial Week programme, all the provincial permanent delegates to the NCOP returned to their respective provinces to assess the state of service delivery of basic education and health. The theme of the programme was "Following up on our commitments to make access to education and healthcare work for all". This year's Provincial Week programme aimed to establish the extent to which the provinces are meeting the National Development Plan's (NDP's) Vision 2030 goals on basic education and healthcare.

**Abel Mputing** covered the Western Cape's programme. The Western Cape's permanent delegates to the NCOP told the Western Cape's MECs for Health and Education that this year's NCOP's Provincial Week programme had a special focus on education and public health services because there is a

realisation that although progress has been made in redressing the legacy of apartheid in South Africa, the education system and the performance of our country's health system still carry the burden of apartheid neglect.

Reflecting on the state of education

in the Western Cape Province, the Acting Head of the Department, Mr Brian Schreuder, said there are aspects to be proud of, such as better results in delivering an effective education system in the province, but there are stark challenges too. He said one of the challenges was the teacher-pupil ratio at schools, which he said is an ongoing concern. "Currently, at primary level one teacher has to put up with approximately 37.3 pupils and in secondary schools one teacher has to deal with 33.1 pupils," he said.

He said the increase to over 45 pupils in a class on average is not good and poses an undue burden on teachers. "If there are any cuts in the current budget,



which we experienced last year, we will not maintain the teacher-pupil ratio as expected and this will affect the quality of our education system. The demand for enrolment is not met by budget cuts, which we are currently experiencing. This situation is now exacerbated by the demands for free higher education," he said.

He spoke about the key drivers of the influx to students to Western Cape schools: "There is in-migration of learners from other provinces, but most noticeably, there is a significant proportion of influx of pupils entering the Western Cape from the Eastern Cape.

"In 2014, there were 19 378 pupils entering our system from the Eastern Cape and 27 941 from all other provinces combined. In 2015 there were 19 178 and in 2016 there were 18 636 from the Eastern Cape, while there were 25 863 from all the other provinces. The challenges this influx imposes on our resources is immense and makes planning difficult," he said. Mr Schreuder said there are support services to mitigate this influx to the province and these include the construction of new schools and expansion of existing ones to accommodate this influx, but the current budget does not cater for that.

"What also worries the department is that the gender parity index shows that boys in the Western Cape are more likely to drop out of school and be drawn into drug abuse or gangsterism. To mitigate this trend, the education department has come up with retention strategies," he said.

The Ukwanda Centre for Rural Health, which is part of the University of Stellenbosch's Rural Clinical School, was one of the healthcare centres that was visited by the NCOP delegates and Members of Provincial Legislatures (MPLs) in the Western Cape.

According to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University, Prof Nico Koopman, the centre is a new initiative that seeks to respond to the advancement of public health policies aimed at the ideals of the Bill of Rights. "We are now in the third decade of our democracy, which endowed us with the Bill of Rights, with the building blocks of justice and freedom for all. As Stellenbosch University, we recommit ourselves to be partners to the achievement of these ideals," said Prof Koopman.

The Ukwanda Centre for Rural Health gives sustenance to the vision of Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project that was launched by its late Rector, Prof Russel Botman, in July 2010.

"At Stellenbosch University, we believe that we are true builders of hope on the African continent, that we are set to blaze new trails with our science for societal strategy and that we can take on some of the world's toughest challenges by putting our strengths and expertise at the service of human need," said Prof Botman at the time.

**Mava Lukani** reports that the Provincial Week programme created an opportunity in the Northern Cape Province for the permanent delegates to the NCOP and the MPLs to assess progress made in the delivery of basic education and health services, particularly to the poorest of the poor, and the extent to which the province is meeting the NDP's goals in these services.

The Whip of the Northern Cape's permanent delegates to the NCOP, Mr Dikgang Stock, said the week-long oversight programme would be spent visiting education and health centres. "There are schools and health centres (clinics and hospitals) that have been identified to be visited and which will be visited," said Mr Stock.

Explaining the purpose of the Provincial Week programme at the start, the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Mr Raseriti Tau, assured the Acting Premier of the Northern Cape Provincial Government that the Members of the NCOP were not in the province for a witch-hunt or to criticise.

"We were elected by the Northern Cape Legislature to represent the legislature in the NCOP. In other words, we are the Members of the Northern Cape Legislature. So there is no way that we can become big brothers of the people who elected us to represent them," said Mr Tau.

Outlining the constitutional mandate of the NCOP, Mr Tau said the NCOP is the only House of Parliament that can call all the spheres of government under one roof to accelerate the delivery of services to the people.

According to Mr Tau, the Provincial Week programme is one of the NCOP's flagship programmes, which it uses for oversight purposes and to interact with other service delivery role players in the province. He said this programme and other programmes of the NCOP create strategic platforms of interaction between the service delivery role players to find solutions together to challenges that stand in the way of service delivery.

"For the people on the ground who should be the recipients of services, officials and politicians should work together and together turn the wheel of service delivery," he said.

The delegation split into two groups. The Upington-based one was led by Mr Stock and the Namaqualand region's Springbok-based one was led by Mr Charel de Beer, who is also a permanent delegate of the Northern Cape to the NCOP. The groups visited a mixture of poor- and best-performing education and health centres in both regions.

According to Mr Stock, certain centres of education and health were selected for oversight.

Briefing the NCOP delegates and MPLs about the challenges faced by basic education in the Northern Cape, the Head of the Northern Cape Department of Education, Mr Tshepo Pharasi, highlighted the problem of the widening gap between the historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools in the Northern Cape, and apportioned the blame to the current funding policy. He said the national norms and standards for funding public schools must be reviewed.

“Poor schools remain poor and rich schools remain rich in spite of the application of the policy which was envisaged to close the gap between the rich and poor schools,” he said.

Mr Pharasi also told the NCOP delegates and MPLs that scholar transport is still riddled with challenges, including corruption. A senior official of the Provincial Department of Education was facing disciplinary proceedings due to corruption in scholar transport, he said.

Asked by the delegates why the scholar transport was under the Department of Transport in the Northern Cape, but in other provinces it is under the Department of Public Works, Mr Pharasi said the province chooses the department it believes will render the service most effectively and, based on that, the Northern Cape chose the Department of Transport.

In spite of all the challenges that Mr Pharasi highlighted, he assured the NCOP delegates and MPLs that basic education is advancing in the Northern Cape. “We ensure that no child in the Northern Cape is denied access to basic education, notwithstanding the challenges that stand in the way,” he said.

The delegates heard that the Northern Cape Department of Health is beginning to strengthen the delivery of health services at clinic level to lessen the heavy burden on hospitals. According to the Northern Cape’s MEC for Health, Mr Lebogang Motlhaping, the new approach will also alleviate the burden of travelling long distances to access healthcare services.

**Nolizwi Nogwagwa** found that the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) delegation, led by Mr James Mthethwa, heard during the Provincial Week that the funding for appropriate implementation of inclusive education is not adequate in KZN because of the latest figures from the Census Report. According to the report, there is an increasing number of learners with disabilities who need access to education.

Shortage of staff at district and head offices in areas such as therapy and special education is another challenge facing the education department in the province. Only five districts out of 12 have district-based therapists. They are Uthungulu, Umzinyathi, Zululand, Pinetown and Umlazi.

Before embarking on oversight of the selected schools and healthcare centres, the delegation received a briefing from the Education and Health MECs. The MEC for Education, Mr Mthandeni Dlungwane, said this year has been different compared to previous years for the department. It had to start with a number of initiatives and strategies to improve results following the province’s poor showing in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results for 2015.

“It goes without saying that the challenge we found ourselves in last year should always be referred to in the past tense. It is safe to say that it is now all systems go for the NSC examinations in KwaZulu-Natal,” he said.

Mr Dlungwane said the province has the highest number of learners in the country with 2.8 million learners, “which is why it is crucial that we triple our efforts. Our commitment in making sure that we develop and improve our infrastructure continues. One of our main tasks as the Department of Education in this province is to ensure that we properly build and maintain our infrastructure. We are doing this with the aim of making sure that we build a strong foundation for our education system.”

Noting that the province has a programme of delivering sanitary towels in all schools before the end of the year, Mr Mthethwa commended the department for this undertaking as “it will go a long way in protecting the dignity of the school-going girls and to ensure that there are no interruptions to their education”, he said.

During the oversight visit in the district, the NCOP delegation together with the Gauteng Legislature were shocked to learn that the special needs children at Vulekani Special School in Umzimkhulu do not have access to healthcare services, according to their daily requirements.

The 269 learners, from Grade R to Grade 3, attend school daily without seeing professional nurses and therapists even though a school of this nature cannot function without specialists.

The delegation was also told that the school does not have a hostel on-site and learners are accommodated in a borrowed property that was reported to be in a very bad condition with no electricity and running water. The hostel is located a distance from the school and poses a serious challenge to these special needs learners, as the old school bus is also not in good condition and has been taken in for repairs since July 2016.

The Vulekani Special School was started at Umzimkhulu Mental Hospital in 1992. It was registered by the Department of Education in 1994. The late former president Nelson Mandela arranged for Shell to donate funds for the building of the school. The 2016 enrolment at the school has dropped due to the state of the hostel.

The delegation was told that learners had to be removed from a number of rooms due to cracks that were certified as dangerous. The delegation requested the Department of Public Works to provide a report on the status of the hostel for the school. The department indicated that plans for a new hostel at the school were undertaken in 2011. However, the awarded contractor had to be released because it could not meet contractual obligations. The process for the appointment of a new contractor is at an advanced stage and the R28m project was expected to commence in October 2016 for completion in 2018, according to the department.

The department was lambasted by the delegation for lack of cooperation during the visit, which led to the delegation requesting a full report on all issues raised at the four schools visited in the district (Vulekani Special School, Zwelinzima High School, Glengary Primary School and Thukeyana Primary School). The department presented the report to the delegation on Friday, 16 September 2016. On the issue of the bus at Vulekani Special School, the department reported that a service provider had been authorised to repair the bus and was expected back at the school in September 2016. The delegation appealed to the department to ensure all issues raised are dealt with.

Healthcare centres visited included St Margaret TB Hospital, Usher Memorial Hospital, Polela Community Health Clinic and Underberg Clinic. Inadequate infrastructure, cross-boundary and cross-border challenges, high turnover due to disparities caused by allowances, water supply and transport (ambulances)

were some of the common challenges witnessed at the visited centres.

The Portfolio Committee on Health of the KZN Legislature was asked to continue with the oversight visit to the visited healthcare centres to ensure that the highlighted problems were attended to.

In Mpumalanga province, **Sakhile Mokoena** found that the NCOP's Provincial Week programme coincided with the province's "Taking Legislature to the People" (TLP) programme and based on that, both programmes were jointly held. Lawmakers from both institutions conducted oversight and held meetings with communities to assess the levels of service delivery in the province.

Members of the NCOP and the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature spent a week meeting with communities and visiting government projects and public service delivery points in Lekwa Local Municipality, which was the hosting municipality for both programmes.

**HEALTHCARE:** A group of NCOP delegates and MPLs visit a healthcare centre in KwaZulu-Natal.



During the meetings with the communities, the permanent delegates from Mpumalanga to the NCOP heard that most clinics in Lekwa Local Municipality (Standerton and surrounding communities) only operate from 7am to 4pm on weekdays and according to the people of Lekwa, there is a complete shutdown of primary healthcare services on weekends.

One concerned resident, Mr Stanley Hadebe, said the closure of clinics on weekends was unfortunate and needed to be changed to allow communities access to primary healthcare every day of the week. "People don't stop getting sick because it is on a weekend, we need our clinics to be opened every day," said Mr Hadebe.

The people highlighted other challenges that hamper the provision of healthcare services in the province. Those challenges included the shortage of doctors and ambulances that do not arrive on time when responding to a call.

Also according to Lekwa residents, the provincial policy on ambulance services says an ambulance must not take more than 45 minutes to respond to a call in a rural area and 15 minutes in an urban area. They told the joint delegation of the NCOP and the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature that ambulances take up to two hours to arrive after a call had been made and people sometimes die before an ambulance arrives.

When asked to respond to the problems that were mentioned by the residents, the MEC for Health, Mr Gillion Mashego, who was present at most of the healthcare sites that were visited by the NCOP and MPL delegations, said he instructed emergency medical services managers in the province to find out the causes or reasons for delayed ambulances. "Our policy is that an ambulance's response must not be more 45 minutes in rural areas and 15 minutes in urban areas," he said.

Ms Sipho Motau, the Deputy Director-

General for Primary Health Services in Mpumalanga, said the department was inundated with complaints about misuse of ambulances in the province.

"As a result, we are developing a system to control the management of ambulance use. The system will be able to track the whereabouts of an ambulance. We also know there are loopholes in terms of response times, and hope the system will be able to address that," she said during a visit to the Morgenzon Clinic.

Provincial health officials also made a plea to the NCOP to make interventions during the budget process to help the province with the ideal clinic initiative. They said most of the province's clinics will not meet the deadline of the Ideal Clinic Initiative of 2020. "Most of our clinics will not meet the status because of the state of the infrastructure and because of budget constraints. We are not able to address that challenge and we appeal to the NCOP to escalate our matter to national level," said Ms Motau.

**SUPPORTING EDUCATION:** A group of NCOP delegates and MPLs visit a school in KwaZulu-Natal during Provincial Week.



Furthermore, Ms Motau said the province has only 21 clinics that meet the requirements of the Ideal Clinic Initiative and about 286 that still need to be upgraded. The Ideal Clinic Initiative is a programme of the government to improve primary healthcare facilities and the quality of care that they provide.

NCOP House Chairperson for Committees and Oversight, Mr Jomo Nyambi, said the issues raised by the people of Lekwa will be followed up by the relevant Committees in the NCOP. "We will follow up on the commitments and promises made by the MECs here to the people of Lekwa. This is not a talk shop. The issues raised here will be discussed in Parliament's Committees and during questions time with ministers," he said.

On the last day of the joint programme,

Mpumalanga Premier Mr David Mabuza had an opportunity to respond to the issues raised by the community and questions asked by Members of the NCOP and the Provincial Legislature. He said they have heard about the clinics that only operate on weekdays.

“Now I can tell you that we will open the Morgenzon Clinic every day and that means we will be employing more people,” said Mr Mabuza.

In North West province, **Tebatso Mabilisa, Tshupo Makhanye** and **Esther Mohube** report that the Whip of the North West’s permanent delegates to the NCOP, Mr Boingotlo Nthebe, told the leadership of North West Provincial Government that the purpose of the NCOP Provincial Week was to identify challenges with service delivery in the provincial basic education and health sectors.

He said he hoped the delegates would work with other role-players to find solutions to the challenges. The Provincial Week also offered the delegates and MPLs an opportunity to establish what progress the North West Provincial Government is making in meeting the goals of the National Development Plan.

The delegates and MPLs visited certain selected schools and health centres in the Kagisano Molopo Local Municipality’s Ganyesa area and surrounding villages. On education, the delegates heard that early childhood development schools are funded for, among other things, the provision of outdoor play, indoor equipment, learning and teaching materials for mathematics, and languages and life skills.

The scholar transport and nutrition programmes provide services to learners, especially in the historically disadvantaged rural communities.

According to the briefing the delegates received, transport and meals are provided to almost 650 000 learners. The delegates heard that in 2015 North West province’s matric pass rate was 81.5%, third in the country.

On health, the delegates heard that the provincial disease profile showed that TB remained one of the major public health challenges in the North West and co-infections with HIV were on the rise.

According to the presentation made to the delegates, the Provincial Department of Health applies several strategies to reduce the burden of HIV/Aids, TB and alcohol abuse in the North West. Those strategies include door-to-door campaigns, interactive sessions with multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) cases and public awareness education.

Also, the Provincial Department of Health is implementing rapid testing quality improvement initiatives for HIV Testing Services (HTS) to improve the quality of testing. To deal with alcohol abuse, according to the presentation, the department provides counselling services and referrals to alternative therapeutic services. The presenters said there is currently a Hospital Revitalisation Programme that prioritises maintenance projects at seven hospitals in the Northern Cape.

The Kagisano-Molopo Local Municipality was told by the permanent delegates to the NCOP to play its part in addressing the challenges that were highlighted to ensure that there is accelerated delivery of effective basic education and healthcare services in the Kagisano-Molopo Local Municipality communities.

In the Eastern Cape Province, the permanent delegates to the NCOP under Mr Mandla Rayi, who is the Whip, heard that the Eastern Cape Provincial

Government has taken steps in strengthening primary healthcare in the province. According to the briefing from the Eastern Cape Legislature (MPLs) got from the Acting Premier, Ms Thozama Marawu, the strengthening of primary healthcare has been achieved through, among other things, the enhancement of broad community-based outreach services.

Ms Marawu told the delegates and MPLs that the Provincial Department of Health takes health services to rural communities through enhanced mobile clinics. She said 241 primary healthcare sites were assessed to determine their ideal clinic status and 15 of them were awarded the ideal clinic status, including clinics in formerly disadvantaged areas such as Amahlathi, Nkonkobe, Intsika Yethu, Elundini, Maletswai, Qaukeni and Mthatha Local Municipalities.

An ideal clinic is defined as one with good infrastructure, adequate staff, medicine and supplies, good administrative processes, and sufficient bulk supplies. It uses applicable clinical policies, protocols and guidelines, and harnesses partner and stakeholder support. An ideal clinic also collaborates with other government departments.

“The province is showing good progress in the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) programme. The OR Tambo District Municipality is the nationally identified NHI pilot site and the Alfred Nzo District Municipality is the provincially identified one,” said Ms Marawu.

She told the NCOP delegates and MPLs that significant groundwork has been achieved in ensuring that the sites start operating, and that includes stakeholder consultations, local clinic teams and infrastructure development for healthcare facilities.

However, Ms Marawu highlighted challenges which she said remain in the way of the delivery of healthcare services in the Eastern Cape. Among those challenges are water, sanitation and electricity.

On basic education, she told the delegates and MPLs that the Eastern Cape Department of Education has a commitment to offer quality education in the province by transforming schools into centres of community activity. She said in the 2016 academic year, the province saw an increased access to schooling for Grade 9 learners – an improvement she said was largely due to strong advocacy programmes that were implemented in the province.

Ms Marawu said the scholar transport system, though still requiring some improvement, continued to provide transport services to learners in disadvantaged communities. She said School Governing Bodies are active in the Eastern Cape and play their role in ensuring that learners are at school on time and taught.

The challenges that are still facing basic education in the Eastern Cape include school rationalisation – where evidence shows that there are up to 2 060 schools in the Eastern Cape that are not viable and that should be rationalised.

The delegates were unhappy with the presentations that were made to them by the officials of the Provincial Departments of Health and Education and expressed their dissatisfaction. Both presentations, according to the delegates, lacked information on the service delivery sites that were selected to be visited.

In the Free State, **Modise Kabeli** found that more than 51 000 people residing in the Mantsopa Local Municipality have a good chance of finding the medication

they need when they visit the Lady Brand's Seniorita Ntlabathi District Hospital. The pharmacist at the hospital told permanent delegates to the NCOP and MPLs who visited the hospital as part of the Provincial Week programme that the hospital has 98.3% medicine availability for patients who visit the hospital.

The Whip of the permanent delegates to the NCOP, Ms Lydia Moshodi, expressed satisfaction with the progress made in service delivery at the education and health services' projects the delegation visited during the Provincial Week in the Mangaung Metro and Mantsopa Local Municipality.

As in other provinces, the Free State delegates went to the province during the Provincial Week to assess the state of basic education and health services in the province and also to establish to what extent the province meets the National Development Plan's goals on basic education and health, specifically. The projects that were visited included Bainsvlei Hostel, the Bainsvlei Clinic, the Grassland Primary School and the Seniorita Ntlabathi Hospital.

"I am very impressed with the progress made with the projects we visited since the start of this NCOP programme. I would gladly present myself for admission at this hospital, it is very clean and has top-notch facilities," she said.

The hospital was built to replace the old Mantsopa Hospital which serviced 51 056 people who live in the five towns that form the Mantsopa Local Municipality, namely Ladybrand, Hobhouse, Tweespruit, Thaba-Phatswa and Excelsior. Eighty-two percent of the population (or 41 866 people who reside in the area) are medically uninsured, according to the 2011 census.

The delegation was also impressed with

the education centres that were visited and those centres included hostels for learners. "The hostel we visited is contributing positively to the provision of a conducive learning environment for the learners in the Bainveis area. The school stands a much better chance of maintaining the 98% matric pass rate it achieved last year," said Ms Moshodi.

**Justice Molafo** reports that in Limpopo the permanent delegates to the NCOP concluded the Provincial Week programme disappointed after a visit to Lefakgomo Secondary School, which achieved 37.3% matric pass results in 2015 and 32.1% in this year's mid-term examinations. The school, which is located in Ga-Selepe, has a total of 693 learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12 this year.

The delegates left the school concerned about the fact that, unlike the other schools in the area that faced challenges of overcrowded classrooms and lack of properly qualified teachers, the Lefakgomo Secondary School's principal said the school had enough infrastructure and teachers, but still performed below average.

The Whip of the delegates, Ms Tsepame Mampuru, expressed a deep concern about the school's poor performance. She said the poor performance of the school diminishes the efforts of the continuing struggle for the liberation of the downtrodden communities from the chains of poverty and inequality. She said the state of affairs in this school do not reflect the words of our late President, Tata Nelson Mandela, who once said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

"It is clear that there are people in the circle of role players of the Provincial Legislature, Provincial Department of Education, School Governing Body,

parents, learners and the principal who do not do her or his work," said Ms Mampuru.

Ms Mampuru emphasised that it is a serious concern when the future of young people is taken for granted. The delegates were unimpressed with the two-page report format presented by the school principal, Mr Tjapo Thobakgale, in which he omitted crucial information such as staff profiles, learner profiles, the analysis of Grade 12 final examination results per subject, Grade 12 overall learner performance between males and females over the past five years, intervention strategies for Grade 12 learners and an improvement plan time table. Mr Thobakgale failed to present to the delegates that crucial information, which was required.

Delegates could not understand why Lefakgomo Secondary School could achieve such dismal results even though it had enough teachers and classrooms, whereas at the nearby Ga-Manotwane village, Tlouputi Secondary School achieved a 69.64% matric pass rate, with limited teachers and classrooms and achieved a 100% pass rate in four subjects, namely Sepedi, English, life orientation and tourism.

The delegates also visited certain health centres and hospitals. Delegates were unhappy with St Rita's Hospital in Glen Cowie, where conditions are deteriorating at the maternity ward, laundry section, kitchen and surgical departments. "The hospital is untidy and although I am not a qualified medical doctor, it is common knowledge that patients require a clean environment for healing. Management needs to really put more focus on the cleanliness of the institution," said Ms Mampuru.

The other hospitals that were visited included Dilokong, Jane Furse and HC Boshoff public health centre.

The delegates appealed to the Limpopo Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Health to conduct frequent visits to the hospitals with challenges to ensure that all the issues the delegates raised with management are followed up.

The Gauteng's Provincial delegation to the NCOP led by its Whip, Ms Tasneem Motara, focused on basic education and health and also checked the extent to which the provincial government meets the goals enshrined in the National Development Plan on basic education and health. Certain education and health centres were selected and visited for oversight.

On health, the Gauteng's permanent delegates to the NCOP and MPLs heard that Gauteng has the second highest life expectancy in the country at 61.3 years for males and 65.8 years for females. According to the Gauteng Provincial Government's MEC for Health, Ms Qedani Mahlangu, both of these figures are currently above the national average.

Ms Mahlangu told the delegates and MPLs that every two years, the Gauteng Department of Health conducts a quality of life survey with specific questions related to health. According to Ms Mahlangu, the findings of the survey conducted in 2015 revealed that around 60% of the people in Gauteng access healthcare services through public facilities and a further 9% utilise both private and public facilities.

She said 73% of respondents who participated in the survey are satisfied with the services provided at healthcare facilities. That, according to her, shows that most of the people in the province have access to healthcare services. She said because of the good quality of the services provided by public health institutions, 34% of the people who have medical insurance continue to use public healthcare facilities because they

provide the best treatment available, while 7% used public facilities because their medical insurance did not cover their treatment.

Ms Mahlangu told the delegates and MPLs that the challenges facing the provincial department include budgetary constraints and the big sizes of the institutions with less resources.

On education, the MEC for Education, Mr Phanyaza Lesufi, indicated that the priorities for education in the province are driven by, among other things, the National Development Plan 2030, the Gauteng 10 Pillars Programme of Transformation, modernisation & reindustrialisation, provincial strategies and frameworks including Gauteng Accelerated Social Transformation Strategy and Township Economy Revitalisation Strategy.

Mr Lesufi told the delegates that the department faced challenges with budget limitations that make it difficult to respond to the constitutional obligations of the department, the lack of involvement of parents in the education of their children and the influx of people from other provinces to Gauteng.

The delegation told Mr Lesufi that the province should consider investing more in education, considering the fact that Gauteng is the economic hub of the country and that, for this reason, migration is unavoidable.

On the problem of the lack of involvement of parents in their children's education, the delegates said the province should put strategies in place to ensure that parents become actively involved. They also urged Ms Lesufi to ensure that his department accelerates replacement of all buildings made from asbestos, as they pose a significant health hazard. 🌱

# Smugglers exploit smaller border posts in Mpumalanga

**A** recent parliamentary oversight visit to Mpumalanga province by the Portfolio Committee on Public Works has uncovered how smaller border crossings were increasingly targeted by smuggling syndicates because of poor infrastructure and lack of advanced detector equipment, writes *Sakhile Mokoena*.

Officials at the Jeppes Reef and Mananga border posts between South Africa and Swaziland can only manually search vehicles leaving and entering the country, a practice they say is not completely infallible in detecting illegal goods.

Historically the most frequently smuggled item is marijuana from Swaziland, but lately border post staff are struggling to deal with the illegal importing of skin-lightening creams, which are banned because they contain dangerous chemicals.

Mr William Mothiba, responsible for port health at Mananga border post, told the Portfolio Committee that the skin-lightening creams are sometimes hidden among legal goods, such as sugar, which makes detection difficult.

“People living in villages are also responsible for transporting these creams in smaller packages through the illegal foot crossings along the border line. What is more, the border post does not have a warehouse and incinerator for confiscated fruits and other items. We end up dumping them, which becomes illegal import when people pick up the items,” Mr Mothiba explained.

Confiscated skin-lightening creams are transported to Pretoria where there is a dump for hazardous materials.

The Portfolio Committee was also concerned about the use of asbestos structures for office space and staff accommodation and the lack of shaded areas for officers to conduct searches, in a region where temperatures can reach 40 degrees in summer. Furthermore, the access control area is also used for staff residences, which border officials said was a breach of border security.

Committee member Mr Freddie Adams said it is “criminal” and a “health hazard” for government to keep people in asbestos structures. “For [the Department of] Public Works to continue keeping people in asbestos houses and offices disregards the law. This situation needs urgent attention. It should be followed up at the highest level. It is illegal for people to continue working and staying in asbestos structures. The next thing people will get sick and there will be claims against the state,” he said.

Committee member Ms Diane Kohler-Barnard said the Department of Public

Works, responsible for providing infrastructure, must put up shades for the border officials. “This area is extremely hot and it can be difficult for officers to conduct search services in the sun. Please put up shades for the officers working in the sun,” she said.

She also recommended that the Committee ask the Department of Public Works to give a full report about the situation at Mananga border post. She said: “People coming in literally drive into those going out.”

On the plus side, the Committee was impressed with the latest infrastructure development in Mpumalanga that will see the province boasting its own high court and a traffic training college for the first time. The Mpumalanga High Court is currently under construction in the provincial capital of Mbombela, while a traffic training college is being built in Bushbuckridge. Both projects were over 90% complete and were expected to start operating in 2017. Committee member Ms Patricia Kopane commended the involvement of black contractors in the development.

“We are excited that black contractors are involved. You only become an expert when given an opportunity to participate,” she said.

During the week-long oversight visit to Mpumalanga, the Committee was also briefed about progress on the





**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS  
CHAIRPERSON: Mr Ben Martins.**

R4m Ehlanzeni City Improvement Project and renovations at Rob Ferreira Hospital in Mbombela.

The Committee also visited projects in Barberton prison and magistrates offices. In a meeting with the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), the Committee was not impressed that the board did not have systems to identify and blacklist contractors who did shoddy work.

The Committee advised the board to have a database of negatively listed contractors to prevent giving jobs to companies that do not deliver to a certain standard. "There should be a register where such contractors who perform shoddy work and are dismissed from projects are negatively marked," said Committee Chairperson Mr Ben Martins.

The Committee also heard that the systems of the provinces were not linked, making it possible for a contractor to continue getting jobs in one province after doing shoddy work in another.

Mr Martins told Department of Public Works officials that the Committee's job was to hold them accountable and to assist the department for the development of the country. "Where there is room for improvement, it is our responsibility to point it out without fear or favour and where there is excellence, we shall say so. We are not going to interact with you once or twice when the department presents its annual report. We will continue to interact with you," he said on the last day of the oversight visit. 🗣️



## Technical training colleges under-resourced

**The** Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training visited technical training colleges during its week-long oversight visit to Johannesburg. It sought to establish progress in the artisan development and training sector by visiting various training academies, including the Putco training academy and Eskom's training academy in Midrand, as well as the South West Gauteng College in Soweto, writes **Sibongile Maputi**.

The Chairperson of the Committee, Ms Connie September, led the Committee to various institutions where it was established that funding was a challenge. At the Soweto Community College, the Committee heard that students lacked textbooks. "We can't even make use of the local libraries. We do not have them here in Tladi. Those that are in other townships

are too far. Even if they were close by, what would we use in class?" a student asked.

A departmental official told the Committee that part of the challenge is that during the migration of the function of adult learning from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to the Department of Higher

Education and Training (DHET), funding did not follow the function.

Ms September said financing needed to be part of the migration process. "It will be ideal if we can meet with the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education and get clarity on what the package of migration needs to be when it is rolled out. The entire migration programme needs to be addressed," she said.

Close to the Soweto Community College is the South West Gauteng College, which has more than 30 000 artisan students in technical and vocational fields. The Committee



**OVERSIGHT:** Portfolio Committee on Higher Education Chairperson, Ms Connie September (left), and Committee member Ms Fridah Nkadamang (middle) visit the Putco bus company headquarters in Gauteng.

The Committee was also informed that challenges in the sector included inaccurate results, backlogs in issuing of certificates, lack of practical training, amateurism in the sector, and training of students with special needs.

The college principal, Mr Dan Nkosi, said over and above inadequate funding from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), National Student Financial Aid Scheme and other private donors, students are unwilling to pay fees.

Ms September said Parliament needed to engage the DHET on the syllabus. "We are not sending students to colleges for the sake of it. We have to respond to the needs of the economy and balance it with the needs of society," she said.

The Committee visited the Institute for the Development of Learnerships, Employment Skills and Labour Assessments (Indlela), an entity tasked with certification and assessing the competency level of artisans. The Committee heard that the entity was unable to deal with fraud and corruption, as it still used manual methods for all its administrative functions.

"We still do all our administration manually and upgrading our IT system will cost about R35m," an Indlela official said. Indlela told members that it was mandated, in line with the objectives of the National Development Plan, to produce about 30 000 artisans by 2030.

Committee member Prof Belinda Bozzoli wanted to know about plans for filling vacancies at Indlela. "It appears there is a challenge of ageing staff and how do we know that those artisans not certificated by Indlela are

not using dubious means to attain certificates?" she asked.

Ms September said the situation at Indlela was undesirable and said Indlela needed to inform the Committee on improvements going forward. "The absence of an IT system should not be an excuse, and the blame could not wholly be apportioned to the Sector Education and Training Authorities. There are still inherent problems and you need to brief the Committee in two months' time on what you are doing to turn the situation around.

"This is important for the Committee. Parliament and the department cannot be throwing money into an unstable institution. Things are not well here," she said.

The Committee also went to inspect Eskom's training academy, which trains about 600 artisans, and the Putco training academy. The Committee heard that over R1bn had been spent on training artisans in the transport sector in diesel mechanics and auto electrical engineering, among other things.

The Putco bus company said it was faced with an ageing workforce and a scarcity of women who are experienced in the field. They struggle to find women qualified in the industry, which makes recruitment a challenge. However, training programmes are directed to addressing the gender imbalance in the sector.

Ms September said the Committee is satisfied that it was able to visit places that had never been visited by a Committee of Parliament. "However, much work still needs to be done to improve the services accorded to the people who need them most," she said. 🌍

heard how the lack of qualified teaching staff, lack of sanitation, reluctance to attend to labour matters, outdated curriculum, inadequate government funding, lack of lecture halls and generally overcrowding hampered the sector.

The Student Representative Council President told the Committee that the curriculum was outdated and did not suit the industry's needs. He suggested that a new curriculum be devised as per regional needs of where colleges were situated.

"Lecturers pay is something that needs to be looked at if we are serious about this sector. The sector is unable to attract qualified engineers because salaries are too low. Now we end up being taught by unqualified people. What kind of output would you have if the person teaching you is not qualified?" he asked.

# SA National Defence Force not adequately resourced

**The** *Chiefs of the South African Air Force, 1 Military Hospital, Gauteng Regional Workshop and Special Forces of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), and their Senior Commanders, emphasised the implications of the annual budget cuts on the safety of the Republic of South Africa to the members of the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans in Pretoria during the National Assembly's recent Oversight Week, reports Mava Lukani.*

During its week-long oversight programme, the Committee visited some military bases in the Pretoria area. The bases included 1 Military Hospital, the Gauteng Regional Workshop, Air Force Headquarters and Air Force Base Waterkloof, as well as the Special Forces Headquarters.

In separate briefings, the Generals and Commanding Officers highlighted the impact of budget cuts on the defence of the Republic of South Africa. They underlined the sentiments of the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans in her 2016 Budget Speech that the Defence Force needs to be adequately resourced for it to continue executing its constitutional mandate. If this is not done, it runs the risk of losing some of its defence capabilities.

The first port of call for the Committee was the Gauteng Regional Workshop, which is responsible for the repair and maintenance of military vehicles in the area. Through Operation Thusano, engineers and mechanics of the Cuban Defence Force are assisting SANDF members with repair, maintenance and preservation of military vehicles. The Cubans have

extensive knowledge in this area. The contract between SANDF and the Cubans has been hailed as a major success, as the SANDF will be able to save an estimated R1.75bn in the four years of the contract.

It is expected that if the contract is extended to five years, about R2.173bn could be saved. Members of the Committee boarded an Oryx helicopter and flew to 4 Vehicle Reserve Park in Wallmansthal, where they could personally observe the work being done by the Cuban and SANDF members. The Committee expressed its approval and encouraged the department to enhance this operation.

The Committee also visited the SA Air Force Headquarters, where it was briefed by the Air Force's Lieutenant-General Zimphande Msimang, and the Commanding Officers, 21 and 28 Squadron at Air Force Base Waterkloof. According to Lieutenant-General Msimang, the 21 Squadron is responsible for the transport of important people such as the President, Deputy President, the Minister and Deputy Minister of Defence and other official dignitaries.

The Committee was briefed on the status of the various aircraft such as the Presidential aircraft "Inkwazi", a Boeing 737. Colonel M C Moathse briefed the Committee on 28 Squadron and its activities. According to him, the Squadron is responsible for Medium Air Lift transport of personnel and equipment to operational areas as well as to assist with training for paratroopers and air cargo drops.

The overall impression was that budget cuts impact on all activities, especially on flying hours for pilots, which often lead to them leaving the Defence Force after money has been spent to train them. The chiefs also highlighted the negative impact of the lengthy procurement processes and budget constraints on the procurement of spares for the Air Force's planes.

The Chief of the Special Forces, Brigadier General (Brig-Gen) Stephen Maloma, gave an overview of the role of the Special Forces, especially as it pertains to its role in the 2015 Defence Review. He spoke specifically on the expectations in Milestone 1 of the Review to enhance and extend their role and what is required to achieve this milestone.

Outlining the impact of budget cuts, he said these should not be to the detriment of the safety of the country. "You need to understand the meaning of the defence and safety of the country and the military realities



**HERE TO SERVE:** Committee Chairperson, Mr Malusi Motimele (ninth from left) and Lieutenant-General Zimphande Msimang (eighth from left) with other Committee members and members of the Defence Force.

before you can make a determination to cut the defence budget of the country," Brig-Gen Maloma told the Committee.

On the issue that no women have qualified as Special Forces operators, Brig-Gen Maloma told the Committee that the type of training that is applied in the Special Forces can never be compromised for the purpose of accessibility. "Training for Special Forces is not normal; it is like torture," he said.

He said they normally recruit about 1 000 men and women but that, on average, only 42 would be successful and become Special Forces operators. "We train a soldier that can meet the conditions which not everybody can meet." Assurance was given, however, that the selection process remains open and females are

encouraged to join the service.

The Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Malusi Motimele, thanked the leadership of the Special Forces for ensuring that in spite of budgetary constraints it is committed to its work and encouraged it to continue in this manner. He assured them that they have the support of the Committee. Mr Motimele said the Committee would ensure that it does what is within its ability to ensure that the budgetary challenges and the red tape on procurement are given the necessary priority by the department and National Treasury. He said the Committee is going to engage the relevant authorities within government for the alleviation of the highlighted problems.

On the visit to 1 Military Hospital, the Committee expressed its satisfaction

with the demolition work done by the Defence Works Formation at the hospital. The Defence Works Formation took over some aspects of the repair and maintenance work of the Department of Public Works at 1 Military Hospital.

However, the Committee expressed concern about the slow pace of the procurement processes that have resulted in significant delays in the completion of the Renovation and Maintenance Programme (Ramp), especially in the pharmacy and theatre areas.

"We understand that the services of a medical technologist still have to be procured before the project can be completed. We will raise this with the management of the department and eventually with the minister to speed up this process," said Mr Motimele. 🗣️

# Committee visits Vuwani to check progress after protests



**EDUCATION OVERSIGHT:** Committee Chairperson Ms Nomalungelo Gina (centre) with Committee members Ms Sonia Boschoff and Mr Timothy Khosa visit a school in Vuwani.

**The** Portfolio Committee on Basic Education conducted a week-long oversight visit to education districts in Limpopo where it monitored, among other things, readiness for the Grade 12 final examinations, while also monitoring overall infrastructure and education in the province. It also visited Vuwani in the Vhembe district, to check up on the situation there in the wake of the widespread protests that took place in the town earlier in the year, writes *Rajaa Azzakani*.

The principal of Khwara High School, Mr S Ratshisevh, said his school is one of the 29 that were burnt during the months-long community protest in Vuwani. Although the Committee's programme had been delayed by about two hours due to visits elsewhere and it was getting

dark, Mr Ratshisevhe had patiently waited so that he could share his experiences to try and improve the situation for his learners. Books were burnt, computers, science kits, school records, furniture and the staff room previously built by the parents themselves were not spared. There is hardly a fixed window in the school, he told the Committee.

He said the school re-opened in August after the local government elections and was still awaiting teacher learner guides that were destroyed in the protests. He thanked the department for the two mobile classrooms they have since provided, one as a staffroom and one as his office.

"I have given up the one that was supposed to be my office so that the Grade 12 learners can use it. They are 66 and were now forced to use one classroom," said Mr S Ratshisevhe as he sits in a room that serves as a kitchen, books storage facility and his office. He says although the school was still awaiting books, schooling has started and when teachers need extra resources, they make use of the large number of old books that are stored here.

Committee members indicated their sadness for the situation. Mr Timothy Khoza said: "There are so many challenges. The environment here is not healthy." Ms Sonia Boschoff wanted to know how the Limpopo Department of Education can expect a 100% pass rate when there are no textbooks for some subjects. Committee Chairperson Ms Nomalungelo Gina agreed and said although the building could not be fixed overnight, certain quick fixes could be made such as providing learning materials.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Limpopo Department of Education indicated that some furniture, learning guides and other necessities will be forthcoming soon from fundraising that had occurred specifically because of the Vuwani protest.

At Mariadze Primary School, the administration block of the school, with all its records and policies, was targeted. The school caters for 29 learners with various disabilities, but has no physical infrastructure or specialised teachers to facilitate teaching these children. Ms Boschoff asked for urgent intervention.

At Marude High School, which struggled with examination paper leakages last year, several enhanced security measures have been introduced to prevent a repeat. Committee member, Mr Hlamalani Khosa stated the school needed to address the question of students arriving late with their parents.

At Mbilwi Secondary School Committee members heard that this school produced the top mathematics and physical science learner in last year's Grade 12 examination and boasts of many other subject distinctions and university passes. The Portfolio Committee express its appreciation and gratitude for this "school of excellence" as Ms Gina called it.

Mr N Lidzhade, the principal of the school, said in last year's matric examinations, the school obtained 40 distinctions in mathematics, 43 in physical science, 42 in life science, 232 in life orientation and four in Afrikaans. Several of its educators have also been acknowledged by the Department of Basic Education with

awards for excellence in teaching.

The Committee heard the school has a high enrolment rate, between 65 and 70 learners per class, due to its reputation. Mr Lidzhade said they provided extra classes on Saturdays for learners and therefore they are "more than ready for the exams."

He said that the school was not immune to the problems of drug and alcohol abuse facing other communities, but they dealt with the challenge with the help of parents. He pleaded for the Committee's intervention regarding high property rates as the school currently owes R1.6 million to the municipality.

Ms Gina said the Committee was pleased with the progress made with the catch-up plans and commended the province's accelerated programmes in attempting to get learners in areas of the Vhembe district who were affected by protests ready for the examinations.

The Committee also visited printing and storage facilities to monitor the standard of the upcoming Grade 12 examinations and to ensure that the examination paper leakages of the past are not repeated. "The Committee is pleased that this facility carries the approval of the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, as the security of these papers is of the utmost importance," said Ms Gina.

The Committee also expressed appreciation to stakeholders, such as Section 27 and Basic Education for All, who partnered with the Limpopo Department of Education and collaborated on fund-raising efforts to swiftly replace much-needed vandalised items. 🌟

# ‘How do we implement free education?’

**The** National Assembly has joined the ongoing national campaign by South Africans to try to find solutions to the university fees crisis currently facing the country. Inkatha Freedom Party Member of Parliament, Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa, proposed the debate in which MPs from different parties shared views and possible solutions to the crisis, writes Abel Mputing.

Opening the debate in the House, Mr Hlengwa said: “Almost 10 months ago, the #FeesMustFall Movement gained momentum and swept throughout the country, with genuine concern that higher education is inching closer and closer to becoming the preserve of the rich.

“We must now confront the reality that in a desperate attempt to alleviate the anxieties of students, a 0% fee increment was proposed,” he said. This kneejerk reaction from government was done in the absence of a clear plan and set into motion a legitimate expectation that fees would be abolished.

“This has not materialised and as a result the fires have been re-lit. An incorrect precedent was set and, once again, the chickens have come home to roost. In condemning the violence and destruction of property, we must take the time to hear the voices of the students,” he said.

He called the commission established by President Jacob Zuma to investigate fees a “compromised exercise” and said its objectives were questionable, because it was not set up to legitimately adjudicate the fees question.

“It is common cause that free education is possible and most importantly,

necessary. The issue before us now is how do we implement free education? The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is not free education. NSFAS is poorly and corruptly managed and has been a major letdown for the poor,” said the IFP MP.

He proposed that the parliamentary Budget Review and Recommendation Reports (BRRR) process, scheduled to commence in the next term, must focus on redirecting funds to higher education. A full audit must also be done to assess whether the costs involved in higher education are justified.

Prof Belinda Bozzoli of the Democratic Alliance said everybody agreed that government has messed up on the funding of higher education. “Even the Minister of Higher Education acknowledged to the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training recently that it had been a mistake to expand the higher education system so rapidly without sufficient funding. We estimate that the higher education system at present only receives half the funding it needs.

“We have a million students crammed in 26 underfunded universities. Half of them never complete their degrees and most of them cannot afford to pay fees



that the universities need to charge to close the gap,” she said.

Prof Bozzoli believes only the state can afford to pay the core funding for a quality higher education system. “We accept that schooling must be state-funded and we continue to fund schooling generously, in spite of its severe weaknesses and its massive dropout rate. But when it comes to higher education, the doors of Treasury are closed,” she said.

Ms Leigh-Ann Mathys of the Economic Freedom Fighters accused the government of not having an interest in building an educated nation. “Students are protesting all over the country for good quality, free education. The fact that students resolved to protest is proof that we have a government that has no interest in building an educated nation,” she said.





**UNIVERSITY FEES:** Students took to the streets outside Parliament in 2015 to register their demand for free higher education.

Ms Mathys said the current level of public spending on universities was around 0.8% of gross domestic product, which is low by global standards. Only 5% of South African families can comfortably afford to pay university fees for their children. "This means that without strong intervention by the state to ensure access to higher education, the majority of bright, young black people will never realise their dreams of accessing university education," she said.

She said South Africa will need at least R96bn per year to fund higher education, calculated on the current 800 000 undergraduate university students, at an average cost of R120 000 per student.

The National Freedom Party's Prof Nhlhlanhla Khubisa said his party believed that the state, business and

civil society need to assist tertiary institutions to deal with the fees crisis without interfering with universities' autonomy and academic freedom. "For this country to move towards the ideal of free quality education, the economy of the country must grow first to create jobs and allow people to have money in their pockets. Business must have an environment in which it thrives and corruption, greed, nepotism and cronyism must be punished," he said.

Mr Elvis Siwela of the African National Congress said: "Free education based on unequal social and economic structures ends up reproducing the very same system it aims to transform. As government considers free education for the poor, it must also consider the following: a viable funding model that does not reproduce the imbalances of the past and clarity on what type of outcome is needed from the

considerable funding that is put into the higher education sector."

Ms Cynthia Majeke of the United Democratic Movement said the current crisis can be successfully addressed in a multi-faceted approach involving government, the private sector, institutions of higher learning and civil society revenues.

The Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Mr Mduduzi Manana, also participated in the discussion, making an appeal for society to give the fees commission a chance to finish its work. "We appeal to all stakeholders, and particularly the students, to allow the commission of inquiry to do its work without any disruptions so that the views of members of society on possible options can be captured. He said the country's higher education system remained acutely underfunded. 🇿🇦

# Major effort to address working conditions of farm workers

**The** *National Council of Provinces (NCOP) debate on “Working together to address the working conditions and treatment of farm workers” highlighted the socio-economic challenges farm workers still face despite legislative interventions to alleviate their plight, reports Abel Mputing.*

In his opening address, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Labour, Mr Patekile Holomisa, emphasised that while workers in other sectors

benefit from being members of strong trade unions, this has not been the case with farm workers. “Unions that organise in this sector are often

fragmented and not as effective as they should be. Consequently, farm workers’ rights are often violated every day by some employers who would never accept similar working conditions for themselves.

He emphasised that the government has revisited every aspect of the labour law that unwittingly constrains South Africa’s constitutional obligation

**WORKING TOGETHER:** NCOP MPs held a debate to address the working conditions of farm workers.



to foster social justice. "The spirit and tenor of our labour laws are an expression of our obligations in this respect. We have constantly used social partners, including organised labour, as the sounding board on what needs to be fixed in the legal framework that governs labour relations," he said.

"In keeping with the theme of this debate, we have committed ourselves to develop and drive a campaign to educate farm workers of their rights. We have convened *izimbizo* with farm workers with the sole purpose of listening to them in order to craft interventions. We have also produced publications such as "*Know Your Rights*" for farm workers. The department is examining the possibility of translating these booklets into the predominant languages spoken in our country's various provinces."

The consistent politicisation of the challenges that farm workers face is not taking us anywhere, said Democratic Alliance Member in the NCOP Mr Jacques Julius (Gauteng).

"During a briefing to the Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Land Reform on the living conditions of farm workers commissioned by the International Labour Organisation, it came to light that farm workers in the Western Cape were by far the best paid in the country. Farm workers in other provinces are paid far less than the legally required minimum wage."

The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Mr Senzeni Zokwana, said: "It is very irresponsible to consistently play the blame game

and ignore the real problem. In an attempt to create a platform for dialogue among the various stakeholders, my department led the National Vulnerable Workers' Summit in 2010.

"The resolution of that summit proposed four areas in addressing the plight of vulnerable workers, which include the social determinants of health for vulnerable workers, their working and living conditions, their security of tenure, and training and development.

"Amid the rolling out of the implementation of the set resolutions, a farm workers' strike that changed the face of South African history in the agricultural sector erupted in De Doorns, Western Cape. This strike was a confirmation of the analysis made during the summit. In an attempt to resolve the strike, the former Deputy President, Mr Kgalema Motlanthe, tasked the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to expand the already existing forum of vulnerable workers into an interdepartmental forum to allow negotiations to take place among the different stakeholders," said the minister.

South Africa was liberated in 1994, but this liberation has not yet arrived for some farm workers and their families, said Mr Mntomuhle Khawula (Inkatha Freedom Party, KwaZulu-Natal). "Lack of effective monitoring of the implementation of legislation is the major culprit. In the case of minimum wage determinations, progressive strides have been adopted, but only on paper. Practically, conditions remain

very poor in some areas. Conditions and circumstances under which some farm workers live also leave a lot to be desired."

He added that towns and cities are usually far from where farm workers live and they end up having to service a debt in a local farm shop to be able to survive.

The nature and structure of the agrarian economy is premised on the exploitation of black workers and this has been the case since South Africa passed the Natives' Land Act of 1913, said Ms Nkagisang Koni (Economic Freedom Fighters, Northern Cape).

"What the Natives' Land Act did was to criminalise any form of ownership of land by black people outside of the designated reserves, only making their presence acceptable on farms as workers of the white farmers, the very same farmers who had acquired land by brute force," she said.

"Many studies have been done on the condition and treatment of farm workers in general. We need to make sure, among other things, that farms are open to collective bargaining methods as allowed by the relevant labour laws and regulations," said Mr Lennox Gaehler (United Democratic Movement, Eastern Cape).

"Workers that are not unionised cannot protect their fundamental rights. Social benefits and basic services for farm workers who stay on farms should not be regarded by employers as a goodwill or kindness. They must regard them as basic conditions of employment," he concluded. 🗣️

# ‘Education programmes must help the poor’

**The** National Assembly recently held a debate on “The impact of pro-poor programmes on enhancing the performance of basic education”. Most Members of Parliament (MPs) commended the existence of government policies assisting children from poor families to access to quality education. However, they were concerned about the shoddy management and poor implementation of such policies, saying it made a mockery of government’s efforts, reports **Sakhile Mokoena**.



**PRO-POOR:** Members of the NA debated the impact of programmes in basic education to assist the poor.

Inadequately skilled teachers and the maladministration of government’s programmes, such as school nutrition, scholar transport and other projects, are undermining the objectives of the country’s pro-poor policies that seek to improve the quality of education and expand access to it, especially in impoverished areas.

Mr Gavin Davis of the Democratic Alliance lambasted teachers for what he called “prioritising union work over the education of children. We can praise government all we like

for increasing access to schooling, for rolling out nutrition and for upgrading infrastructure, but all this is meaningless if our schools continue to fail our most impoverished learners where it matters most – in the classroom, because of unskilled teachers and those who prioritise union work,” he said.

The Economic Freedom Fighters’ Mr Zolile Xhalisa proposed that the existing pro-poor programmes must include the supply of sanitary pads to school girls. “Because we know

girls suffer humiliation during their menstrual cycles. Our schools must also have proper sanitation and well-trained teachers,” he said.

The school nutrition and the scholar transport programmes also came under scrutiny from Members of the National Assembly, who called for better management of these schemes. Prof Themba Msimang of the Inkatha Freedom Party said while government discouraged the transportation of learners in commercial vans and bakkies, it failed to provide a substitute, especially in rural KwaZulu-Natal. “Government seems to be against the transporting of learners by commercial vans, but no substitute has been provided, and bad roads in rural areas are the cause of most accidents involving learners.

“Another pro-poor programme that requires improvement is the feeding scheme. People who are appointed do not have resources, and even those who have resources wait too long before they are reimbursed by government. The entire scheme requires proper coordination,” said Prof Msimang.

He complimented the Gauteng Department of Education that has sourced funds to provide learners with computers, an important requirement of the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) system. “The OBE system of education demands the use of technology, especially computers which are not readily accessible to learners from poor and impoverished families. One would encourage every

department to follow suit because it is inconceivable these days to think about education without technology," he said.

Mr Sicelo Mabika of the National Freedom Party (NFP) was more concerned about the lack of reliable instruments to measure the effectiveness of pro-poor programmes. "The pro-poor programmes are both necessary and relevant. However, we have a concern about efforts to measure the effectiveness of these pro-poor programmes, as there are no reliable objective instruments in place to provide us with statistical analysis and references. The no-fee schools component of the pro-poor programmes has, without any doubt, made a huge contribution to making basic education accessible to the poorest of the poor. The question we ask ourselves is: has the quality of the education improved, and does the quality of education complement pro-poor programmes?"

"We agree that high levels of school attendance, gender parity in both primary and secondary education and pro-poor school policies are achievements. These achievements, however, contrast with the poor quality of our education and whilst the quality of our education remains poor, the effort and money spent on maintaining our commendable pro-poor programmes will be negated," he said.

Mr Fish Mahlalela of the African National Congress said as part of the re-engineering of public healthcare, the Department of Health adopted a policy on school health services. In 2011, working with the Departments of Basic Education and Social Development, the Department of

Health developed guidelines for the implementation of the school health policy. "Since then the department has given special focus on schools in quintals 1 and 2, which are the poorest schools and also selected a range of services which impede the learning ability of a child," said Mr Mahlalela.

The United Democratic Movement MP, Ms Cynthia Majeke, told the House that the benefits generated by early childhood development (ECD) programmes were large enough to justify investment. "The integration and prioritisation of the early childhood development programme as part of a seamless education system is therefore one area of policy intervention.

"The no-fee school policy has helped to attract poor, orphaned, disabled and vulnerable children to school. Pro-poor programmes must ensure that teachers have received the training they require, continuously improve their capabilities and are confident of their profession. These programmes must be comprehensive and talk to all factors that determine the quality of our education and its products," she said.

According to Ms Deidre Carter of the Congress of the People, the narrow pro-poor policies supporting basic education will have limited effect unless the poverty and inequality that affect society, particularly in rural communities, were addressed. "We must reduce the deficits that are holding back children from poor communities. Despite the implementation of the no-fee schools policy some years ago, one quarter of premature school leavers cite 'a lack of money' as a reason for not studying. It is the poor rural schools

that still feel the effects of a lack of access to the Learner and Teaching Support Material. The national school nutrition programme is still blighted by evidence of corruption, mismanagement and unreliability in the administration of the scheme," she said.

Mr Lulama Ntshayisa of the African Independent Congress called for proper monitoring of school nutrition. "Service providers (bus operators) are not paid on time, in some instances it takes three to six months for payments to be made. In other cases payments are made when no work has been done. Unpaid service providers have stopped transporting children to school and the poor management of the scholar transport programme is impacting negatively on the department's performance.

Ms Cheryllyn Dudley of the African Christian Democratic Party said South Africa spends a bigger share of its gross domestic product on education than any other country in Africa. "A no-fee schools policy has abolished school fees in the poorest primary schools across the country, which helps ensure greater access to school for poor, orphaned, disabled and vulnerable children.

"Performance levels, however, remain lower than many other countries in the region. High levels of school attendance, gender parity in both primary and secondary education and pro-poor school policies on their own, have not produced a better quality education. Irregular attendance by students, absent teachers, teenage pregnancy, school-related abuse and violence, less than suitable facilities and limited provision of ECD and special education, are just some of the remaining challenges," she said. 🌍



# Land ownership can help speed up change

**The** *High Level Panel (HLP) on the Assessment of Key Legislation and the Acceleration of Fundamental Change assessed the Land Redistribution and Restitution Acts and asked members of the public in the Northern Cape to identify unequal patterns of land ownership and how they can be addressed to achieve fundamental change, writes Abel Mputing.*

“Submissions should focus on the impact of the government’s land redistribution and/or restitution programmes. Members of the public are requested to present factual information on how restitution or redistribution programmes have impacted on their lives. We need you to present real-life examples of the impact of some of the laws,” said a member of the panel, Rev Malcolm Damon.

The HLP’s Chairperson, former Deputy President Mr Kgalema Motlanthe, explained the purpose of the HLP and why it has been established. He said: “The Legacy Report of the fourth Parliament, which ended in 2014, called for an assessment of the quality of legislation passed since 1994 and the lived impact thereof on people across South Africa.”

Mr Motlanthe added that the fifth Parliament prioritised this assessment and resolved that a panel be

established to look at the efficacy, equality and implementation of legislation on poverty, inequality and unemployment, equitable distribution of wealth, land reform, nation-building and social cohesion and how they have impacted on the lived experiences of South Africans.

“We are here to listen and take notes so that we can integrate your experiences into the final report. Our preliminary report is expected in March 2017, and the other will be submitted in June 2017 and will then be made public,” he said.

He told the people of the Northern Cape that the HLP began with an outreach programme in the Eastern Cape. The Northern Cape is the second leg of the nationwide outreach programme. “We are glad to announce that this programme has received support from the United Nations Development Programme. We

are keen to learn from this process because it has never been done before. We are here to assess which legislation serves as an impediment and which as an enabler. I hope you will find this experience meaningful to you. We want to hear from you nothing else but the truth,” he said.

The Ixun and Khwe Communal Property Association’s Mr Jafta Kapunda said there is legislation on multilingualism, but Ixun and Khwe’s languages are still discriminated against. “We are all Africans, but some of our languages are still discriminated against. Often our elderly people who are not educated find it difficult to express themselves at hospitals and that often hinders their access to healthcare. That in turn puts their lives at risk,” he said.

The Vice-Chancellor of Sol Plaatje University in the Northern Cape, Prof Yunus Ballim who also spoke during the hearings, lamented the disrespect meted out to indigenous languages. “The normal is not normal in this country. People who were here for generations cannot greet each other in their indigenous languages. That only happens here, not in other parts of the world,” he said. 🌍

# Grondeienaarskap kan beslis help om verandering te bespoedig

**Die** *Hoëvlak Paneel (HVP) oor die Evaluering van die Vernaamste Wetgewing en die Bespoediging van Grondliggende Verandering het die wette wat handel oor die herverdeling van grond en grondherstel geëvalueer, en het die lede van die publiek in die Noord-Kaap versoek om ongelyke patrone betreffende grondeienaarskap uit te wys asook hoe om aandag te skenk aan sodanige patrone sodat grondliggende verandering teweeggebring kan word, skryf Abel Mputing. Vertaal deur Dr JA Nel.*

“Voorleggings moet die klem laat val op die uitwerking van die Regering se programme vir die herverdeling van grond en grondherstel. Lede van die publiek word versoek om feitelike inligting te verskaf oor watter uitwerking sodanige programme vir die herverdeling van grond en grondherstel op hul lewens het. Ons het nodig dat jy voorbeelde moet verskaf betreffende sommige van die uitwerking van sodanige wette wat ‘n wêreldlike uitbeelding is van jou daaglikse bestaan,” sê ‘n lid van die paneel, eerw. Malcolm Damon.

Die Voorsitter van die HVP, die voormalige Adjunkpresident, mnr Kgalema Motlanthe, het die doel van die HVP verduidelik en ook verwys na waarom sodanige paneel op die been gebring is. Hy het verduidelik: “Die Nalatenskapsverslag van die Vierde Parlement, wat in 2014 beëindig is, het ‘n oproep gedoen om ‘n evaluering te doen oor die gehalte van daardie wetgewing wat sedert 1994 deurgevoer is, en ook watter geleefde uitwerking dit op die mense regoor Suid-Afrika het.”

Mnr Motlanthe het bygevoeg dat die Vyfde Parlement voorkeur

verleen aan dié evaluering en besluit het om ‘n paneel op die been te bring sodat daar gekyk kan word na die doelmatigheid, gelykheid en toepassing van wetgewing oor armoede, ongelykheid en werkloosheid, billike verspreiding van rykdom, grondhervorming, nasiebou en maatskaplike samehorigheid en sodat die uitwerking van dié dinge op die geleefde ervarings van Suid-Afrikaners ondersoek kan word.

“Ons is hier om te luister en om aantekeninge te maak sodat ons jou lewenservarings in die finale verslag kan insluit en saamvat. Ons voorlopige verslag word in Maart 2017 verwag, en die finale verslag sal in Junie 2017 ingedien word en dan eers sal dit aan die publiek vrygestel word,” het hy belowe.

Hy het aan die mense van die Noord-Kaap vertel dat die HVP met ‘n uitreikingsprogram in die Oos-Kaap begin het en dat die Noord-Kaap as die tweede been van die landwye uitreikingsprogram dien. “Ons is besonder bly om aan te kondig dat dié program die steun van die Verenigde Nasies se Ontwikkelingsprogram ontvang. Ons is bereid om lesse uit dié

proses te leer, aangesien so iets nog nooit vantevore aangepak is nie. Ons is hier om ‘n evaluering te doen oor watter wetgewing as ‘n struikelblok dien en watter wetgewing eintlik geleenthede bied of mense bemagtig. Ek hoop u sal dié ervaring sien as betekenisvol vir u spesifiek. Ons wil van u hoor en dan ook niks anders nie as die waarheid,” het hy gesê.

Die Ixun en Khwe Gemeenskaplike Eiendomsvereniging se mnr Jafta Kapunda het aangevoer dat daar nou wel wetgewing oor veeltaligheid bestaan, maar dat daar steeds teen die Ixun en Khwe se tale gediskrimineer word. “Ons is almal Afrikane hier, maar daar word steeds teen sommige van ons tale gediskrimineer. In baie gevalle bevind ons bejaarde persone, wat nie formeel opgevoed is nie, hulle in situasies waar dit moeilik is om hulself in ‘n ander taal uit te druk, veral wanneer hulle hospitale besoek en in baie gevalle verhinder dié situasie hulle om behoorlike toegang tot gesondheidsorg te verkry. Dit, op sy beurt, plaas weer hul lewens in gevaar,” het hy beweer. Die Visekanselier van die Sol Plaatje Universiteit in die Noord-Kaap, prof Yunus Ballim, het die gebrek aan respek wat aan inheemse tale opgedis word, betreur. “Die normale is abnormaal in dié land. Die mense wat al vir generasie op generasie hier woon, kan mekaar nié in hul inheemse tale groet nie. So iets gebeur net hier ter plaatse, en nie in ander dele van die wêreld nie,” het hy gesê. 🌍



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