

in session



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Parliament Calls on Men to be part of the solution to GBV



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Presiding Officers: Men must be part of the solution to GBV

The Presiding Officers of Parliament, led by the Speaker of the National Assembly (NA), Ms Thandi Modise and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), Mr Amos Masondo, join South Africans and the world in commemorating the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the negative impact that violence and abuse have on women and children and to rid society of abuse permanently. GBV has been described by President Ramaphosa as a “pandemic”, and like a disease, it continues to cripple our society, depriving women and children of their right to be safe and continue with their daily lives without fear of being murdered or raped, if not both. It is a human rights violation which can lead to psychological trauma on its victims.

This year’s campaign comes at a time when the world is dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic which brought along hard lockdowns in many countries, including South Africa. In South Africa, the country’s lockdown resulted in an increase in GBV cases because victims were locked in with perpetrators. Most perpetrators are close family members or friends of the victims.

“We cannot ignore the fact that gendered power inequality rooted in patriarchy is the primary driver of GBV. As a society, we need to deal with this as a matter of urgency so that the men of tomorrow understand that their gender does not entitle them to women’s bodies or make them inherently superior in any way to the other gender. Women should not have to fight gender-based violence alone; men must own up and be part

of the solution,” said the Presiding Officers.

In an effort to facilitate debates on gender issues, recently Parliament, in partnership with the South African National Aids Council and the Department of Social Development under the banner of the Takuwani Riime Men’s Movement, hosted a two-day Men’s Parliament. This event brought together about 250 men and boys from across the country to engage them to become agents of change and integral partners in the prevention and response in tackling the spread of HIV, GBV and femicide and other social ills.

“As Parliament, we are also currently processing three crucial Bills that will change the landscape in terms of how government departments, law enforcement and the courts deal with cases of violence against women and the vulnerable. The three Bills are the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill; the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act Amendment Bill; and the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill.”

“These Bills will, among other things, provide for how acts of domestic violence and matters related thereto must be dealt with by certain functionaries, persons and government departments, regulate the inclusion of particulars of persons in the National Register for Sex Offenders, introduce a new

offence of sexual intimidation, regulate the reporting duty of persons who are aware that sexual offences have been committed against children, and also regulate sentences in respect of offences that have been committed against vulnerable persons,” emphasised the Presiding Officers.

Parliament is confident that these Bills are a move in the right direction in an effort to fight this scourge. The law needs to be tightened to ensure that these perpetrators are taken out of society. Women and children cannot continue to die at the hands of those who are supposed to be protecting them.

Presiding Officers are calling out to every man in this country to stand up and fight this GBV pandemic. It has gone on for too long and it is time we all, by word and bold action, bring it to a complete end. 🇿🇦



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Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo

Health Committee Chairperson calls for unity in the fight against HIV/Aids

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, said World Aids Day which is commemorated on the 1st of December each year, is an opportunity for every community to unite in the fight against the scourge of HIV/Aids, and to show support for people living with HIV/Aids and remember those who have died because of the disease, **writes Yoli Landu.**

Dr Dhlomo said: "The theme for the 2020 World Aids Day is: 'We're in this together, Cheka Impilo!', a theme which calls on all South Africans to take

responsibility in knowing their health status and in keeping and maintaining a healthy lifestyle."

He added: "Our country has come a long way in the fight against HIV/Aids and we have made great inroads. South Africa has the world's largest anti-retroviral treatment (ART) programme, which has undergone an expansion with the test and treat guidelines, this shows that the life expectancy of South Africans is increasing."

According to Dr Dhlomo, in order to reach and achieve the 90-90-90 goals of the United Nation's programme on HIV/

Aids, which is based on the principle of universal test and treat guidelines, South Africa needs to work even harder towards implementing the strategy aimed at ending the Aids epidemic.

He said the Coronavirus pandemic has brought about a lot of challenges within the health sector as it had a negative impact on health programmes, such as ensuring that people continue to access tests and receive treatment. However, he said lessons need to be learnt from the pandemic and be implemented in strengthening our general healthcare system. 🇿🇦



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"OUR COUNTRY HAS COME A LONG WAY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS AND WE HAVE MADE GREAT INROADS."

- Dr Dhlomo

Multi-Party Women's Caucus calls for implementation of plans to fight gender-based violence

"In recent years, the government has witnessed the fast deterioration of some of its most important assets required to improve the quality of life of the people."

The Multi-Party Women's Caucus held a constructive meeting with several government stakeholders on how to provide responsive services in their fight against gender-based violence (GBV), particularly for the victims, **writes Rajaa Azzakani.**

The committee received virtual briefings recently from several structures on the integration

of the criminal justice information systems; effective functioning of sexual offences courts and Thuthuzela care centres; measures in place (including training of personnel) to ensure victim-responsive services and the effective investigation and prosecution of reported GBV cases; status report on the DNA backlogs and availability of testing kits at police

stations. Presentations were made by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DJCD) and the South African Judicial Education Institute (SAJEI).

The DJCD informed the committee that it is developing more child- and teenager-friendly courts, but that the current Thuthuzela care centres (TCCs), where rape survivors can find assistance, are

still underfunded and have insufficient staff. The NPA said it is battling to keep the 55 Thuthuzela care centres functioning optimally. Acting Special Director Mr Pierre Smith confirmed this, but said that with the funding allocated from the Criminal Asset Recovery Account, they hope to be able to open six more centres in the coming financial year.

Mr Smith said more than half of the victims are children and almost all of them were sexually assaulted. During the first quarter of the year,



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Editor
Brent Simons

Production editor
Mava Lukani

Design and layout
MIND TRIX MEDIA

Copy editors
Jane Henshall, Vusumzi Nobadula

Writers
Abel Mputing, Justice Molafo, Mava Lukani, Sakhile Mokoena, Yoli Landu, Musa Zamisa, Sibongile Maputi, Rajaa Azzakani

Photography
Mlandeli Puzi, Zwelethemba Kostile

Distribution & subscriptions
Jacqueline Zils

Publisher
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

Printer
Vision Enterprises

Section Manager: Publishing and Production
Shirley Montsho

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EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

Telephone 021 403 8738

Fax 021 403 8096

E-mail

insession@parliament.gov.za

Subscriptions

jzils@parliament.gov.za

Post

PO Box 15, Cape Town, 8000

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there was a decline in the finalisation of GBV cases due to the national lockdown, but since the lockdown regulations have been relaxed, this figure increased substantially. Since October, 132 cases were finalised, and according to the NPA report, the number has been increasing compared to August where only 67 cases were finalised. The committee was told that there was an increase of 97% in the performance of the courts on GBV cases.

Committee members Ms Judy Hermans and Wilma Newhoudt-Druchen both appealed for a “great footprint” for the TCCs, as victims in some areas have to travel long distances to reach their nearest centre. The SAPS told the committee that it is working towards a gender-based violence desk at every police station, with staff who are properly trained and rape kits available at every station.

The lack of rape kits at police stations has been raised many times by Members

of Parliament (MPs). Lieutenant General Moeketsi Sempe assured MPs that thousands of rape kits have been sourced and will be available. “So we can assure the committee that during the course of the festive season, no police station will be without rape kits.”

On the DNA backlog, the committee was assured that although challenges remain, the backlog is receiving attention with several interventions in place.

In welcoming the presentations, the Chairperson of the committee, Ms Nkhensani Kate Bilankulu, commended the plans but emphasised the importance of implementing them. She called on SAPS to provide support to GBV victims on a sustainable basis. She said the committee will closely monitor the implementation of the plans, as GBV in South Africa has the status of a pandemic. 🇿🇦

Debate about wisdom of opening Initiation Schools during the pandemic comes before committee

The current debate on initiation in South Africa concerns whether initiation schools should operate during the Covid-19 pandemic. Those who agitate for them to open, argue that it's a rite of passage that has a psychological and spiritual significance to boy children that cannot be deferred, writes Abel Mputing.

This debate came before the the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) recently when the committee was briefed on various issues around initiation, including the effect of the pandemic on the custom and illegal initiation schools. The committee was also updated on remodeling the Community Workers Programme (CWP) and implementing the recommendations of five forensic reports on the CWP.

The Deputy Minister of Cogta, Mr Obed Bapela, responsible for drafting legislation on the practice of initiation, reiterated that initiation schools are currently prohibited from operating during the pandemic. He told those who insisted the schools reopen in December that they must guarantee that they will take responsibility for any fatalities that may arise.

To those who insist that they will conduct initiation with or without government approval, the deputy minister said: “We love our culture, but Covid is currently a real threat to it.” He mentioned the government’s doubts about whether initiation schools will observe level 1 regulations if they reopen. “Will social distancing be observed?

Will initiates wear masks and observe all Covid-19 protocols at all times?

Mr Bapela further mentioned that the Eastern Cape provincial government has called for the reintroduction of initiation practices and in response to a request from the province for initiation schools to reopen in December, the national government asked the province to submit plans for how it will operate in light of the pandemic. The province’s response was not sufficient to convince national government that all the necessary protocols will be observed.

The Chairperson of the Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders, Chief Mwelo Nonkonyane, disagreed with Mr Bapela and insisted that the practice of initiation is not the domain of the government, but rather of traditional leaders. In any event, he said, “there are illegal initiation lodges mushrooming due to government prohibition”. He added: “As a province, we are, unlike others, the only one that has legislation on this practice. This takes into consideration the responsibility and accountability vested by this custom on traditional leaders. We should be given our powers and privileges as traditional leaders ... we will comply with health legislation and in the process we will

comply with the custom and the law.”

According to the Chairperson of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, Mr David Masoma, culture is a means to an end, not an end in itself. What is of most significance is the sanctity of life. “We don’t want to send our children to death in the name of culture,” he stressed. The commission recommends “that we need to set up structures that will oversee this practice and ensure that illegal lodges are outrooted and health protocols are observed and the lives of boys are saved.”

The Minister of the Department of Cogta, Dr Nkosazana Zuma, mentioned that the government has not said that no initiation schools will be allowed to take place. However, it does want provinces to submit plans to ensure that health protocols are observed to save lives, given the risk posed by Covid-19. If people die, the government will have to take responsibility. “That’s why we want to ensure that health protocols will be in place to save lives,” she said.

“Even before Covid-19, there were discussions on how those who head these initiation schools take responsibility for deaths. Hence, we need to ensure that these schools are



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registered and accredited, and we therefore need to know who is in charge of them. They must give us plans on how they will ensure that health protocols are observed; there can be no exception," insisted the minister.

Mr Bapela explained that many of the problems around initiation will be addressed by the national legislation currently in the offing. "We must say this legislation has taken long to come to fruition and it's not meant to legislate culture, but to ensure that legislation is meant to deal with deaths, amputation, lawlessness and criminality involved in this practice." He added that illegal initiation schools pose a major problem. "The Bill seeks to ensure that those charged with such

conduct will be subjected harsh jail sentence, because they are the ones who tarnish the reputation of this practice."

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Cogta, Ms Faith Muthambi, said that early next year the committee will hold a colloquium to bring together the various role players such as the government; the National House of Traditional Leaders; the Congress of Traditional Leaders; the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities; Isibazana; non-profit organisations and other stakeholders to consider South Africans' traditional and customary practices. 🌍



CELEBRATION: Welcome of the new young men at home.

Cogta Committee calls for implementation of Traditional Khoi-San Leadership Act

The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) has reiterated its call for the implementation of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, currently in the President's office. Parliament sent the Traditional and Khoi-San Bill to the President for assent into law after both Houses of Parliament, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, adopted it in February 2019, writes Mava Lukani

The committee's call was a response to an appeal from the Secretary General of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South African (Contralesa), Nkosi Zolani Mkhiva, for the recognition of Khoi-San leaders in South Africa. Nkosi Mkhiva argued that the Khoi-San are not aliens or refugees in South Africa; they are legitimate South Africans.

The committee had invited the National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) to discuss the work of this very important institution. The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and Contralesa, represented by its Secretary General, were also part of the meeting.

In response to the appeal for the recognition of Khoi-San leaders, the Chairperson of the committee, Ms Faith Muthambi, reminded Nkosi Mkhiva that the Bill, which is largely about the recognition of Khoi-San leaders, was adopted by Parliament and sent to the President in 2019.

The Bill aims to, among other things, provide for the recognition of traditional and Khoi-San communities; to provide for the functions and roles of traditional and Khoi-San leaders; to provide for the recognition, establishment, functions, roles and administration of kingship or queenship councils, principal traditional councils, traditional councils, Khoi-San councils and

traditional sub-councils; as well as the support to such councils.

The Deputy Minister of the Department, Mr Obed Bapela, who was also part of the meeting, told the committee that the Bill was signed by the President into law. However, according to him, the President could not write a letter for the commencement of the implementation of the Act, because certain non-governmental organisations oppose the Act on the grounds of a lack of public participation in the Traditional and Khoi-San Bill.

The Chairperson of the NHTL, Nkosi Sipho Mahlangu, told the committee that the NHTL is unable to carry out its mandate

because it lacks resources. He said the institution is not properly budgeted for by the Department of Traditional Affairs and, as long as that problem persists, the institution will continue to struggle and look like an "orphan in a polygamous family". Furthermore, the department has no capacity to support the institution.

The committee expressed its appreciation to the NHTL because in spite of its lack of resources, the NHTL did not abandon its role of serving rural people, even during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Traditional leaders were the voice of the government in their constituencies, especially

with communicating on how to live under the reality of Covid-19 – and by promoting adherence to health protocols.

The committee heard from the presentation it received from Nkosi Mahlangu that the Deputy Minister of Social Development, Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, has used a partnership between the Department of Social Development, the National Lotteries Commission and Change Richmond Foundation to provide personal protective equipment to traditional councils in Kwazulu-Natal.

According to Nkosi Mahlangu, the equipment enabled traditional councils to continue with their support to rural people, notwithstanding Covid-19. Mr Mahlangu said Ms Bogopane-Zulu was a selfless servant of the poor and an agent of assistance to the people.

Ms Muthambi commended Ms Bogopane-Zulu for supporting the work of traditional leaders at a difficult time. "We note Ms Bogopane-Zulu's gesture of support to traditional leaders with appreciation and we praise her for being a servant of the poorest of the poor," said Ms Muthambi.

Both Contralesa and the NHTL

told the committee that the NHTL's mandate is not just constitutional; it is also organic and originates from creation itself. They said the capacitation of the institution is not a matter of begging for help, but a matter of a must. Nkosi Mkhiva said the institution does not exist by accident, and that its leadership should be part of the processions of national ceremonies, such as the State of the Nation Address.

They called for the government to pay qualitative attention to rural communities because, they argued, if attention is poor, nothing will be done for rural and traditional communities. They said the infrastructure in rural communities is crumbling in front of the eyes of the government. Nkosi Mkhiva

said: "The government must apply strategies, like the rapid electrification strategies that were applied by the first administration in 1994 for the electrification of villages to deal with the rural infrastructure and service delivery to the villages."

Another issue which both the NHTL and Contralesa brought before the attention of the committee, was the issue of the tradition of initiation of boys, which halted due to the implementation of national lockdown regulation. They argued that since the country has moved to lockdown level 1, summer season initiation must be allowed to take place before the people defy regulations against initiation and do them anyway. "There is no hope that we will be able to convince the people to

continue with the stoppage of the initiation of their children. To avoid that the government must allow initiation to take place under strict health protocols," emphasised Nkosi Mkhiva.

Ms Muthambi wanted an explanation from the NHTL on its lack of involvement in the correction of section 25 of the Constitution, particularly on the appropriation of land. "I don't see your involvement in the hearings that are brought to the communities by Parliament's Ad Hoc Committee on the amendment of section 25 of the Constitution. What is your contribution in that very important process?" asked Ms Muthambi. She also asked the NHTL to say more on its financial report for the 2019/20 financial year. 🇱



Mr Faith Muthambi, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

Debate on SABC seeks a solution to looming retrenchments at the public broadcaster



The South African Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC) is in a quagmire of a looming massive retrenchment process due to its unhealthy financial situation, attributed to its bloated wage bill. The Inkatha Freedom Party's Member of the National Assembly, Ms Zandile Majozi, urgently brought a motion before Parliament to debate this matter to see if a solution cannot be brokered to avert its catastrophic effect to many households at a time when the economy is constantly shedding jobs, a predicament further exacerbated by the devastating effect of Covid-19 on the global economy, writes Abel Mputing.

Ms Majozi said: "We have resolved as a party that an action must be taken to resolve the escalating crisis of the imminent retrenchment of SABC employees. The problem of decades of mismanagement at the SABC is not sustainable. The bailouts cannot be seen as a solution to the SABC problems. This crisis is indicative of government's hesitation to address the core problems facing the SABC. The restructuring and cost-cutting measures cannot be avoided." She further decried the lack of effective leadership at the SABC over the years. "The current instability at the SABC is a result of recurring poor

leadership, as the SABC has over a short space of time been under the leadership of well over nine government ministers. It is also unfair that the SABC gets only "2% of government grants while other state-owned enterprises get constant bailouts that amount to billions of rands." In her view, there is a need for a collaborative effort to get the SABC back on track to ensure that it is fit for purpose. [It must] be restructured for the purpose of its continuity. She said to achieve all this, there is a need for an independent human resources consultant to manage the restructuring of the SABC and to pay attention to complaints about its top-heavy structure

that accrues 30% of the 40% costs of compensation at the national broadcaster. "Let's put our political differences aside for the sake of its employees, and we can't allow a blackout at the SABC," she said. Taking part in the debate, the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Communications, Mr Makhosonke Maneli, said there have been ongoing problems at the SABC since the 5th Parliament, and the SABC has been a subject of investigations by various entities which produced audit reports that underscored mismanagement and

maladministration as the main causes of its inefficiencies. Subsequent to that, he said the Committee on Communications came up with its own recommendations, but these recommendations were simply not implemented, that is why the SABC is where it is today. He said the retrenchment of workers at the SABC would be the last and grave option. "If preventable, it must be prevented. That is the view of the committee," he said. He said the need to reposition the SABC cannot be overemphasised. "The SABC should look at various ways of optimising its competitiveness, grow its revenue streams and

upskill its personnel to be self-sustainable and operate competitively in its market. Currently, the SABC has not exploited its full potential and it must discover that potential before it even considers embarking on retrenchments." The Democratic Alliance's Ms Phumzile van Damme said: "We feel the pain, anxiety, sorrow and depression of hard-working SABC employees, who need to put bread on the table for their families. And we hope that the impending retrenchment process will be done with the empathy and dignity it deserves. We know that this process has brought so much uncertainty



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and unease to many employees at the national broadcaster. But we won't lie, retrenchments were always looming at the SABC. Those who were negating (denying) them were only playing to the political gallery. They were simply telling a lie." She said today the government seems to care about the problem of rising unemployment when it does not care at all. "Where was the government when many journalists in radio and print were laid off by many media houses during the hard lockdown? Parliament can do nothing about the impending retrenchments at the SABC. It is a process governed by the Labour Relations Act and it (Parliament) can't interfere." The Economic Freedom Fighters' Mr Vuyani Pambo said even if the minister attempts to take the SABC's management to court, [the minister] must personally pay for such action because he minister will lose the case and can't expect the public to pay for that. According to him, the impending retrenchments are tantamount to an emotional abuse of SABC's employees by the government. He said all the blame for the financial problems now faced by the SABC should be put on the door step of the government's intentions to reduce the public servants' wage bill to support its neoliberal financial policies. He said what is needed now is an immediate capital injection at the SABC to save jobs and to turn the public broadcaster into a healthy institution that is capable of withstanding competition from its competitors. Mr Steven Swart of the African Christian Democratic Party said the major problem at the SABC is political interference. He said: "The 5th Parliament came up with recommendations on how to turn the SABC around, but due to political interference, those recommendations were never implemented. Political interference is at the heart of SABC's current problems." Mr Nqabayomzi Kwankwa

of the United Democratic Movement said the SABC is where it is today because it has never received adequate funding to conduct its public mandate. He said. "To this day, no one has quantified the financial viability of the SABC to carry out its mandate to serve the public." According to Ms Thandiswa Marawu of the African Transformation Movement, among other things, the failure to ensure that the SABC evolves and embraces the economic benefits of digital migration, must be seen as the cause of the public broadcaster's current financial crisis. She said: "Had the SABC migrated, it would have maximised its revenue streams and margins and would have been in a position to withstand competition and would be financially sustainable by now. And it would not have found itself where it is currently." Also participating in the debate, the Minister of Communications, Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, said the SABC is a victim of state capture. She said: "We are all to blame for that. Contrary to views expressed by others, the government is doing all it can do to save jobs at the SABC." She added that they went as far as requesting payment holidays for the SABC, to keep it afloat, and they have recently injected more than R2 billion to that effect. She said this crisis comes at a time when the Communications Ministry is in a process of remodelling the SABC funding and operational model to ensure that it withstands competition from its competitors, which have huge financial muscles. This, she said, is to ensure that the SABC does not die a natural death. She said part of the remodelling is to determine the cost of its unfunded public mandate, to look at staff optimisation, upskilling of its personnel, and how all of these combined can contribute to its viable revenue streams. "In addition to that, we are looking at reviewing policies and legislation that will optimise its value chain so that we can have a healthy

SABC. This starts with you by paying your TV licence to swell its revenue and to ensure that the SABC is in a position to conduct its public mandate in a sustainable and profitable manner in order to avoid these

predicaments in future," said Ms Ndabeni-Abrahams.

Summit considers various policy frameworks to achieve inclusive growth

The Inclusive Growth Oversight Summit, which was held at Parliament recently to assess how women can participate in South Africa's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, considered various policy frameworks and imperatives needed to achieve inclusive growth and alleviate the plight of women, writes Abel Mputing.



In his opening address, the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Lechesa Tsenoli, proclaimed that the summit stood in solidarity with the world yesterday against another pandemic: gender-based violence.

This summit sought to come up with ideas on how the three spheres of governance can utilise their interrelated yet

independent and distinct constitutional mandates to come up with oversight framework to deal with this scourge, the Deputy Speaker said. He quoted the late Cuban President, Mr Fidel Castro, to convey the gist of his message. He said: "The condition for full development of women in society needs a material base and the economic development of women should be used as such base.

"We have witnessed unacceptable levels of violence, poverty, unemployment and inequality endured by women and hope that the New Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan is sufficiently responsive to all these ills that women endure."

A representative from the United Nations Development

Programme, Dr Ayodele Adusola, gave a broad contextual analysis of the impediments to inclusive growth. One of these is the low levels of growth and continued disinvestment in the economy. He also decried what he referred to as “big companies’ syndrome” from which the South African economy is suffering. “The over concentration and dominance of the South African economy by big corporates has stifled inclusive economy over time because it has squeezed out small and medium enterprise from economic activity, most of whom create jobs for less skilled labour force currently unemployed.”

He blamed this on the over-regularisation of the South African economy, which impeded growth and investment. “There is a need to liberate the South African economy from over regularisation in sectors such as banks and telecommunication to allow for new entrants in these markets to stimulate growth and investment.”

He commended the inception of the New Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan as a step in a right direction. “If its intent to engage and preserve, recover and reform, reconstruct and transform can be followed through, it can translate into concrete development.”

He said this calls for need to move from strategy to action to have policy directives that are risk proof and can withstand any economic shock waves in future. According to him the new economic plan should be supplemented by a capable state. “The building of a capable state is one of the prerogatives needed to bring about inclusive growth and to arrest state capture. To create an ideal environment for the new plan.”

This imperative “would ensure that state-owned enterprises play a critical role

in contributing to the ideals of the new economic plan.” He also flagged the link between skills and education as a critical contributing factor to economic growth. “South African education system must ensure that it produces graduates that are needed by its labour market.”

He further illustrated how the United Nations Development Programme contributes towards inclusive growth in South Africa. “We have incepted an entrepreneurship hub for young graduates that exposes them to skills of entrepreneurial innovation, and banks for funding and markets to sell their products. We hope this will in a long run contribute to inclusive growth and curb youth unemployment and wealth inequality.”



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We can't blame Covid for our economic problems, summit hears

At the Inclusive Growth Summit, the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission for Gender Equality, Dr Nthabiseng Moleko, dispelled any inclination to blame the current economic woes on Covid-19. “Our economy has been bleeding way before the advent of Covid-19. Low growth has been the story of South African economy since 1994, with few exceptions.” Abel Mputing reports.

The problem is that “our economic pathways have not changed since pre-1994. It favoured those with assets and has not created wealth or distributed wealth to those who don’t have assets”. Furthermore, “Even our monetary policy doesn’t focus on employment creation.”

Dr Nthabiseng spoke during a virtual Inclusive Economic Growth-Oversight Summit hosted by Parliament themed “Accelerating women’s participation in South Africa’s economic reconstruction: maximising the growth potential of provinces, districts, and localities”.

Women bear the brunt of this economic scenario, Dr Nthabiseng said, and most of them now depend on social grants, making these temporary measures a permanent fixture of the fiscus. As a result, many South Africans have been reduced to dependents.

“We need to do things differently in a climate where

private sector is averse to investment. “That cannot be denied. Our private sector is in investment strike. It sits with millions of rands that it affords to mortgages rather than in direct investment that can bring about economic growth.”

Not only that, she alleges that the private sector is also guilty of tax hoarding. In her view, the New Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan has not been well received by the markets. On the back of its announcement, we are now faced with down-grading that will plunge South Africa into sub-investment grade. However, she commended the idea of preferential procurement for women by government departments. “This must be measured to determine if it’s a universal principle and how it’s linked to budget allocation in various departments.”

In addition, there should be a targeted investment in enterprises owned and managed women. These measures could go a long way

to institutionalising gender parity.

Also participating in the summit, the Auditor-General, Dr Risenga Maluleke, mentioned that the statistics paint a bleak picture of poverty, unemployment and inequality, a picture far removed from inclusive growth. Women “still earn lesser than men for the same job. This shows that women are more vulnerable in our labour market than men. It’s even worse for black and coloured women.”

Because salary determines expenditure, women continue to be the ones most vulnerable to poverty, unemployment and inequality. “Due to these gender disparities in the work place, statistically, women tend to be poorer than men. As a result, women headed-household experience more poverty than that of their counterparts.” Compounding the problem, girls are likely to leave school earlier than boys. This is due to the care-giver responsibilities

that they often shoulder.

Social grants, she said, have played a major role in alleviating poverty in these women headed-households. "The role of grants in reducing poverty in many house-holds is evident in our research outcomes." 🌍



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Speaker congratulates new IPU President on his election

National Assembly Speaker Ms Thandi Modise congratulated Mr Duarte Pacheco on his election as President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the world's oldest and largest global parliamentary forum.



Ms Thandi Modise - Speaker of the National Assembly

Mr Pacheco has been a member of the Parliament of Portugal since 1991 and has played an active role in the IPU for many years. He takes over from a Mexican parliamentarian, Ms Gabriela Cuevas Barron, who was elected as IPU President in October 2017.

Mr Pacheco's election happened at a meeting of the IPU's Governing Council, which Ms Modise attended with a multiparty delegation of Members of Parliament (MPs). The members of the delegation were: Ms Shahidabibi Shaik (from the National Council of Provinces), Mr Thlologelo Malatji (African National Congress member of the National Assembly)

and Mr Michael Waters (Democratic Alliance member of the National Assembly). Parliamentarians from 140 IPU member Parliaments elected Mr Pacheco as the IPU's 30th President through an unprecedented virtual electronic secret ballot held across different time zones. About 40% of voting members were women MPs and 27% were younger than 45.

Previous IPU Presidents have won Nobel peace prizes, such as IPU founders Frédéric Passy and William Randal Cremer. The IPU President, who must be an MP for a term in office, is the political head of the IPU, chairs its statutory meetings and represents it at global events.

The South African Parliament has been a member of the IPU since South Africa became a constitutional democracy and hosted the 118th IPU assembly in Cape Town in April 2008. These biannual meetings currently bring together about 1 500 parliamentary delegates from 179 national Member Parliaments and 13 regional parliamentary bodies in a world assembly.

The meetings add a parliamentary dimension to global governance, including work of the United Nations and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The IPU, with its permanent observer status at the United Nations General

Assembly, has broadened the role of parliaments in global affairs.

The governing council, which ended its deliberations on 4 November, is the IPU's main decision-making body. On its agenda are the budget and programme of work for 2021 and decisions on several issues. These include alleged human rights violations against several parliamentarians, election of exco members and consideration of a report on the outcome of the virtual segment of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and the 13th Summit of Women Speakers. 🌍



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PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM 140 IPU MEMBER PARLIAMENTS ELECTED MR PACHECO AS THE IPU'S 30TH PRESIDENT



Expropriation Bill before Parliament

The Expropriation Bill is now before Parliament and the relevant committees that have direct or transversal constitutional mandates on it must now determine its constitutionality; writes Abel Mputing.

This was the business of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure recently, particularly the policy and legal interpretation of the meaning of the term “expropriation”, and how such a process would be undertaken.

From a policy point of view, the Minister of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Ms Patricia de Lille, made it clear that besides the powers vested in the President to undertake this process, relevant ministers would have a prerogative to determine how and what land would be expropriated and for what reason.

She added that the expropriation of land is but one way of addressing land reform. “It’s a mechanism that will be utilised when needed, but should not be perceived as the only one. There are many others that are currently in existence,” she explained.

In a bid to quell the controversy often associated with the Bill, the representative of the department stated that the expropriation of land is a prevalent practice worldwide. It should not be considered controversial. Ms De Lille referred to similar laws in the United States of America and other countries. “These laws, as with this one, are aimed at appropriating land for public good,” she said.

This implies that even in those countries, private property is subjected to the constitutional dictates of the notion of public good. She made an example. “If there’s a disaster and the only way to fix it is for the state to appropriate private land, this law will come into force, based of course on the dictates of the law, which clearly stipulates such interventions and private infringements.”

The issue of equitable compensation was also raised. Ms De Lille said such remedies would be determined by the courts, which will also determine the applicability of that provision.

The Bill has resulted in much public debate in all sectors of society because of the possibility that it will impact on the economy.

The need for a coherent register of state land was raised by a member of the committee, Ms Madeleine Hicklin. “We can’t consider the allocation of land when we have no clue of how much land the state has. If this is not sorted out, the process is doomed to fail,” she contested. The Minister replied: “A land register has been developed. The process is almost done.”

Ms De Lille said according to the Auditor-General’s report, what needs to be addressed is the value of this land and a determination has since been made in this regard. “Now we have agreed with the National Treasury that we should be allowed to utilise municipal valuation to determine a value of a given land.”

According to this Bill, what would happen to those who acquired land illegally, asked another member of the committee, Ms Mathapelo Siwisa. The department explained that the Expropriation Bill does not deal with that, but it’s common cause that the remedy is to reverse such illegality.

The department added that in cases of forced removal, the courts have given judgements on those cases and it believes that those who benefited from such acts should compensate the victims.

To give effect to the constitutional dictates of a legislative process, as stipulated in the Constitution, the committee has devised its own plan to facilitate public consultations to ensure that the public expresses its views

on the Bill before it is made into law.

The public participation process will be preceded by an advertisement campaign calling for public comments on the Bill, in print and on radio, which will run in December and January respectively. Thereafter, there will be public hearings in all nine provinces. This process will ultimately have a bearing on the shape and form of the final version of the Bill passed by Parliament. 🗳️



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Committee on Transport to increase oversight over Prasa

The Portfolio Committee on Transport has promised to enhance oversight of the portfolio, with a special eye on the Passenger Rail Authority of South Africa (Prasa) in an attempt to improve audit results, writes Sibongile Maputi.

The Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) briefed the committee recently and noted a slight improvement of the audit in the year under review. AGSA Business Executive Mr Polani Sokombela told the committee that outstanding audits may still influence the 8% improvement in the portfolio, realised mainly at the Drivers Licence Card Authority and the Road Traffic Management Corporation.

The South African Maritime Safety Authority and Prasa were singled out as the worst performing entities, with Prasa only achieving 17.5% of targets and receiving a disclaimer for the second year in a row. Prasa’s challenges relate to disrepair of its assets, record keeping, repeat areas of concern, the Swifambo contract and signalling problems.

Committee Chairperson Mr Mosebenzi Zwane said it is important for the committee to assist in getting Prasa on the correct path. “The committee appreciates this report and acknowledges the improvement as noted by the Auditor-General. Recommendations to the committee are most welcomed. Although issues at Prasa are historical, the committee will ensure that Prasa does not fail,” Mr Zwane said.

Mr Sokombela said Prasa’s

management is complacent and has failed to address the root causes of its problems. “The issues span governance, financial management and the limitation of scope. Irregular expenditure is very high in the portfolio and Prasa alone accounts for about 27% of irregular expenditure in all government entities.

“This is unacceptable. Billions of rands are being pumped into this entity to make sure the working class is able to go to work. Concrete action needs to be taken on Prasa. Instability of management at Prasa is exacerbating these challenges. This has resulted in a culture of impunity. I request the committee to enhance oversight,” he said.

Mr Solly Segoa, the leader of the Auditor-General’s delegation, said: “In the absence of action to the findings, the Auditor-General will get to a point where it issues Prasa with a certificate of debt.” He indicated that the Special Investigations Unit is investigating.

Other matters of concern highlighted by the AGSA include liquidity challenges at South African National Roads Agency (Sanral) due to unsuccessful e-tolls, and Covid-19-related risks at entities such as the Airports Company of South Africa and the Road Accident Fund.

Committee members acknowledged Prasa's challenges and Mr Zwane agreed with other committee members that enhanced oversight is required. Matters at Sanral must also be resolved before they impact on performance. "The committee needs to ensure that Sanral is not put in a situation that it fails, especially arising out of an issue that is of not of their making. We will take this up with the department," said Mr Zwane. 🇿🇦



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Mineral Resources and Energy Committee makes oversight visit to PetroSA refinery

The Portfolio Committee on Mineral Resources and Energy conducted an inspection at the PetroSA Gas-to-Liquid (GTL) refinery in Mossel Bay recently. There it learned more about PetroSA's turnaround plans, writes Justice Molafo.

The upstream consists of exploration, rigging and transportation of natural gas from the coast to the refinery plant. The middle stream involves the process of transforming and refining natural gas into products such as petrol, diesel, paraffin, alcohol and distillates. The downstream refers to the stage where a finished product is stored in tanks, marketed and distributed to the market.

PetroSA's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Pragasen Naidoo, told the committee that the turnaround plan was necessitated by low productivity levels due to depleting feedstock, which affect profitability. Mr Naidoo said the GLT refinery in Mossel Bay depends entirely on natural gas to operate.

"The depleting reserves of natural gas meant that production at the refinery had to be reduced to a minimal level in order to keep operating for a period of time until a solution is found," he

said.

Mr Naidoo further said other challenges include equipment that has not been maintained for a number of years, meaning that the refinery would be unable to operate optimally, even if there were high reserves of natural gas available. Accordingly, part of the plan is to sell non-core assets, valued at about R100 million.

The committee expressed its confidence in the turnaround plan, and said it is encouraging that it required no financial assistance from government. The plan outlines interventions at different streams, including the importation of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to operate the refinery and the acquisition of certain things on the downstream in order to operate at that level.

Mr Naidoo said preparations are ongoing to invite proposals on how best to bring LNG to the refinery. In 2012, PetroSA, a subsidiary



of the Central Energy Fund (CEF), embarked on a R14.5 billion exploration initiative, Project IKhwezi, that did not yield any positive results.

The committee asked to be provided with a list of names of individuals involved in the project who are still with the department, PetroSA and the CEF, as well as a consequence management report. They further noted an undertaking by the board of PetroSA to make a presentation on the project losses. The committee further undertook to support the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), CEF and PetroSA in order to ensure that the turnaround strategy is implemented in full, so that the company can return to profitability.

A member of the committee,

Mr Mikateko Mahlaule, said: "It has now become clear as to what PetroSA is doing currently and where it wants to go. One can tell that the turnaround plan is well thought through and I am happy that even the Auditor-General seems to recognise your work, as you moved from a qualified to an unqualified audit opinion."

While on the same oversight visit, the committee also inspected two facilities where the DMRE has stored 2 000 solar water geyser units. The committee noted that although this project started in 2013, the units were only delivered in April 2019 and only five have been installed in a pilot training scheme.

The committee also met with the Mossel Bay Local

Municipality, where the municipal manager expressed concern about PetroSA, as the municipality believes that the company's closure will negatively affect the local economy. Noting the concern, the Chairperson of the committee, Mr Sahlulele Luzipo, said bilateral engagements must take place between the chief executive officers of PetroSA, the CEF, and the mayor of the Mossel Bay Local Municipality. 🇿🇦

Departmental transfers funding for SAA business rescue plan

Government took a crucial decision to fund the South African Airways (SAA) business rescue plan (BRP), as prepared by SAA's business rescue practitioners. The BRP was in response to events that put SAA in severe financial distress, writes Musa Zamisa.

The 2020 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) tabled a proposal to fund the implementation of the BRP with a budget of R10.5 billion. The National Treasury opted to source the funding within government departments. This is in line with the government's fiscal consolidation stance. The funding decision affects a significant number of departments, although their contributions differ in size.

The research brief gives an overview of how much each department contributes to the R10.5 billion budget for the implementation of the BRP. The brief has the following two sections:

- Section 1 tabulates each department's contribution.
- Section 2 concludes by giving a quick analysis of focal points and pertinent issues.

Section 1: A breakdown of departmental transfers

1. Public Enterprises: R3.5 billion
2. Police: R1.2 billion
3. Higher Education and Training: R1.1 billion
4. Basic Education: R275.9 million
5. Cooperative Governance: R255.4 million
6. Transport: R681.3 million
7. Health: R694.2 million
8. National Treasury: R362.3 million

9. Human Settlements: R345.4 million
10. Correctional Services: R308.2 million
11. Public Works and Infrastructure: R234.3 million
12. Water and Sanitations: R200.9 million
13. Justice and Constitutional Development: R194.6 million
14. Trade, Industry and Competition: R109.5 million
15. Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development: R171.5 million
16. Home Affairs: R98.3 million
17. Environment, Fisheries and Forestry: R95.8 million
18. Mineral Resources and Energy: R91.3 million
19. Science and Innovation: R87.1 million
20. Sports, Arts and Culture: R55.9 million
21. Military Veterans: R54.2 million
22. Statistics South Africa: R45 million
23. Employment and Labour: R39.8 million
24. Communication and Digital Technologies: R38.5 million
25. International Relations and Cooperation: R28.7 million
26. Small Business Development: R27.4 million
27. Public Service and

- Administration: R21.6 million
28. Tourism: R17.2 million
29. Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities: R7.5 million
30. The Presidency: R6.7 million
31. Government Communication and Information System: R5.9 million
32. National School of Government: R2.2 million
33. Traditional Affairs: R1.9 million
34. Civilian Secretariat for the Police Service: R1.7 million

Source: National Treasury (2020)

Section 2: A quick analysis of focal points and pertinent issues

In response to the government's decision to fund the SAA business rescue plan (BRP), the National Treasury opted to source the funding within government departments as part of its fiscal consolidation plans. This affects a significant number of departments, although their contributions differ in size. The biggest contribution is from departments such as Public Enterprises (R3.5 billion), Police (R1.2 billion) and Higher Education and Training (R1.1 billion).

The National Treasury, in consultation with line departments, has made all the important considerations; but the final decision rests with Parliament. It is crucial then that Parliament fully understands the circumstances, context and potential implications surrounding the proposed method of the implementation of the BRP. Parliament should have in-depth discussions with the National Treasury and the affected departments. 🌐

PBO advises MPs to hold government accountable on public money

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) advised Members of Parliament during the Inclusive Economic Growth Summit held in Parliament recently to use their oversight role to prevent illegal and unconstitutional conduct in government and to hold the government accountable on how public money is spent, writes Sakhile Mokoena.



Addressing the summit, Dr Dumisani Jantjies, a Deputy-Director at PBO said the legislature can, through its oversight role, ensure that government's vision, policies and plans and the associated budget processes are aligned with government's constitutional obligations and benefits society.

"Through oversight, the legislature has to prevent illegal and unconstitutional conduct on the part of the government, to hold the government accountable on how money is spent and to

assess whether government's budget transforms society and promotes equity and reduces poverty and unemployment," said Dr Jantjies.

He added that Parliament and the provincial legislatures must protect the rights and liberties of citizens, and detect and prevent abuse. He argued that effective oversight can help make government operations more transparent and increase public trust in the government. This can be done by including public participation and opinion in its oversight role.

The virtual summit was held on the theme: Accelerating Women’s Participation in South Africa’s Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan - Maximising the Growth Potential of Provinces, Districts and Localities.

Dr Jantjies also highlighted the importance of the budget system in service delivery. “It is arguably the most important component of public service delivery. The budgeting system is fundamentally part of the process by which a government turns its development vision, policies and plans into implementable programmes and projects, including the delivery of public goods and services. Policies or plans cannot be concretised into deliverable government programmes and projects without the availability of capacity (human, institutional and capital),” he said.

According to the PBO Deputy Director, economic success depends on the ability of government to employ limited resources with maximum effect, and effective management and procurement. He also told the summit that the process of budgeting requires strategic direction provided by the State of the Nation Address, the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement and other policies.

He also spoke of the need to ensure the alignment of policies and plans with budget programmes, as well as alignment of capacity and resources across spheres of government. Dr Jantjies says South Africa has over the years used fiscal policy to improve service delivery in society, including increased access to electricity, improve education attendance across the country, provide social support to poor households.

However, higher unemployment and poverty continue to put pressure in the

progress made, with women-headed households in rural areas experiencing disparities in access to services. The South African economy was already growing more slowly before Covid-19, and the situation has worsened with unemployment and poverty reaching very high levels. The Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan proposes measures to address economic and societal challenges, with both social and economic infrastructure spending being one of the expected key drivers also given potential multipliers.

“South Africa’s public spending levels are not matched by high levels quality or efficiency in the services delivered. Preliminary findings on spending reviews, which form part of the budgeting process, indicate that many policies are adopted without considering their total costs and affordability. Multiple institutions share overlapping responsibilities or mandates leading to duplication of

work,” said Dr Jantjies.

Also participating in the summit, the Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Ms Nomalungelo Gina said Covid-19 revealed South African’s vulnerability to imported pharmaceuticals, ventilators, machinery, PPEs and medical devices. She said this has also highlighted the need to deepen South Africa’s productive base so as to create local jobs, investment and value addition, and to ensure that citizens have access to critical equipment and medication, especially as SA has the ability to produce sophisticated medical and pharmaceuticals.

The Deputy Minister said government has planned programmes to drive industrialisation through localisation, which seeks to achieve the following strategic objectives: reduce the proportion of imported intermediated and finished goods, improve the efficiency of local producers, and

develop export competitive sectors that can expand the sales of South African made products on the continent and beyond.

“Developing a local productive base is linked to deepening mutually beneficial linkages with the Southern African Development Corporation and the continent, through cross-border trade that supports industrialisation and infrastructure development.

“South Africa will support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement from next year to enable the expansion of South African exports and investment on the continent. Government will review trade agreements and pursue strategic partnerships to secure new markets for South African products”, said Deputy Minister Gina. 🇿🇦

Residents of Stutterheim vote for good governance

The declaration of a state of national disaster by President Cyril Ramaphosa at the end of March and the national lockdown that followed to curb the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic stopped everything that fell outside what was categorised as essential services. One casualty of this was the Independent Electoral Commission’s (IEC’s) regular schedule of countrywide by-elections, writes Mava Lukani.



Ms Jenene Reabow

However, when the country eventually moved to lockdown level one, by-elections did take place on 11 November in 96 wards across 461 voting districts nationwide with strict new Covid-19 protocols in place, aimed at ensuring the safety of all involved.

These protocols included

social distancing, both in and outside voting stations, along with the use of hand sanitisers as voters entered and exited the voting station. Voters were also required to wear a mask at all times, with the sign “no mask, no entry” prominently displayed. The IEC sanitised the pens used to vote after each use, but voters were urged to bring their own pens

to mark their ballot papers.

The residents of Amahlathi Local Municipality’s wards 1,13 and 19 voted to fill the vacancies of councillors in those wards, by choosing councillors who will place the interests of their wards above those of their political parties and work to restore the principles of good governance

in the Amahlathi Local Municipality.

This municipality is one of the Eastern Cape’s 14 distressed local municipalities. According to the MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Xolile Nqatha, the Eastern Cape government is pleading for a national bailout for Amahlathi and

13 other municipalities. The municipality, which incorporates Cathcart, Kei Road, Keiskammahoek and Stutterheim, is currently unviable and unable to pay its staff and councillors.

In wards 1 and 13, residents were looking for councillors and administrators with the interests of the people

at heart and the conviction to turn the distressed municipality around. The first mayor of the democratically configured Amahlathi Local Municipality and its first municipal manager, Mr Chris Magwangqana, said the municipality's problems are finance and governance. These problems "arise from the lack of principles of good governance and planning. If the fundamental problems of governance and planning are not dealt with, the problem of financial mismanagement, which is secondary, will continue for ever," he warned.

Mr Magwangqana said Amathole District Municipality, which is supposed to provide support to the local municipalities under it, is unable to do so as Amahlathi is now deteriorating. Amahlathi received a qualified audit report for the 2018/19 financial year, while the district got a disclaimer audit report.

One residents who turned out to vote, Ms Jenene Reabow, said: "We are here to elect a councillor who will ensure that the municipality regains its former glory." 🇿🇦

The Children's Amendment Bill And The South African Central Authority



The South African Central Authority is mentioned at least 75 times in the Children's Amendment Bill [B18 – 2020] that is currently before Parliament for processing against the backdrop of the 16 (to 365) Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children Campaign.

Adv. Petunia Seabi-Mathope, the Chief Family Advocate commented on the Children's Amendment Bill and stated that "Children are the future of our society and should be taken care of. The recent developments in legislation have highlighted the constitutional rights of children in a more articulate manner. Amendments to the Children's Act enhance the level of care and protection that the State is giving to the rights and well-being of children."

Who is the South African Central Authority? South Africa ratified the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction that came into operation in 1997, and in terms of this Convention, a member state

is duty-bound to set up an administrative body known as the "Central Authority". One of the main functions of the Central Authority is to assist in cases where children have been wrongfully removed from South Africa or wrongfully kept in a foreign country, as well as cases where children have been wrongfully brought to or kept in South Africa. Trafficking of humans is a criminal offence.

The Chief Family Advocate, a legally qualified official, is appointed by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to fulfil the role of the Central Authority. The Family Advocate has to promote and protect the rights of children guided by the supreme principle of what is in the best interest of the child.

What does the Office of the

Family Advocate do?

In addition to assisting with cases involving the international abduction or trafficking of children, the Family Advocate also provides the following services:

- Conducting enquiries and furnishing the court with recommendations where there is a dispute or disagreement regarding guardianship, contact or care of a child(ren);
- Assistance with the drafting and registering of parental plans or parental responsibilities and rights agreements;
- Amending or terminating parental plans or parental responsibilities and rights agreements registered with the Family Advocate;
- Mediating disputes about parental rights and responsibilities of unmarried fathers of a child(ren) born

out of wedlock; and

- Conducting inquiries as to what is in the best interest of the child as a result of court cases.

Who pays for the services of the Family Advocate? The Family Advocate provides services to the public free of charge at the State's expense. However, parties may be required to pay for additional expert reports such as psychological evaluations, and other tests that are critical to determine the best interest of the child(ren).

How to contact the Chief Family Advocate?
Chief Family Advocate: Adv PI Seabi-Mathope
Tel: 012 357 8022, Fax: 012 357 8043, E-mail: NationalOffice-FA@justice.gov.za or PeSeabiMathope@justice.gov.za
Postal Address: Private Bag X81 PRETORIA 0001
Physical Address: 329 Pretorius Street, Momentum Building, West Tower, Pretoria

Each province also has its own office: https://www.justice.gov.za/FMAdv/OFA_English.pdf

References:
<https://www.justice.gov.za> 🇿🇦



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"CHILDREN ARE THE FUTURE OF OUR SOCIETY AND SHOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF."



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Committees in Brief

As the year draws to an end, more than 200 committee meetings (virtual, hybrid and physical) took place in November. These meetings considered the annual reports of government departments' and their entities', they considered Bills, and listened to government departments on a range of issues to ensure accountability:

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education wished the more than one million candidates enrolled for the 2020 National Senior Certificate (NSC) well for the examinations.

Committee Chairperson, Ms Bongwiwe Mbinqo-Gigaba, said: "We would like to wish all candidates the best of luck with the upcoming final examinations. We urge them to continue working hard and to keep their focus. These examinations are the culmination of the last 12 years of schooling. We know it has been a challenging academic year, but we support you no matter what."

The combined examinations for National Senior Certificate (NSC) candidates makes this the largest cohort, 1 058 699 candidates, sitting for the examinations from 5 November to 15 December 2020. The June examinations for both full- and part-time candidates had to be cancelled due to the outbreak of Covid-19.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) has urged the South African Police Service (SAPS) to heighten cooperation with other relevant state organs and government departments in the fight against corruption within SAPS. SAPS appeared before the committee recently to present a progress report on cases of supply chain management corruption involving SAPS officials. The committee welcomed the

work SAPS has done internally to reduce corruption while acknowledging General Khehla Sitole for the significant strides taken and urging him to sustain the momentum of cleaning the rot in the SAPS.

The Select Committee on Petitions and Executive Undertakings received a briefing from the Minister of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu, on progress made in respect of commitments she made in her budget vote speech in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) on 22 July 2020.

The committee described the update received from both the

Minister and the departmental Director-General as "thorough and detailed". Furthermore, it commended the department for implementing their commitments and for playing a pivotal role in pushing back the frontiers of poverty.

The committee also expressed its displeasure and disappointment over the corruption that affected the department's good work when it implemented its programmes, especially of food distribution to vulnerable people during the hard lockdown.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Police, Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson, condemned the barbaric killing of seven people and injury of two more in Gugulethu, Cape Town. The Chairperson called on the South African Police Service (SAPS) to leave no stone unturned in investigating these heinous crimes in an effort to bring the perpetrators to book.

"The killings are concerning in the context of the worrying upward trend in murders in general in the country. Also, the shooting follows similar

killings of six people in Khayelitsha in September, five people in Joe Slovo in October and the killing of seven people in Phillipi in July," Ms Joemat-Pettersson said.

The Chairperson emphasised the importance of collaboration between the police and the community to fight crime in our communities. The situation on the Cape Flats requires all stakeholders to rally together and fight crime head-on. Furthermore, the Chairperson also called on the SAPS and its Anti-Gang Unit to come up with strategies to prevent such attacks, especially as the festive season draws near.

The Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology has voiced its concerns regarding the delays in the finalisation of the audit of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

The committee was briefed by the Auditor-General (AG) on the audit outcomes of the Department of Higher Education and Training and all entities falling within its portfolio. The committee was informed by the AG that there is a delay in finalising

the NSFAS's audit, largely due to the unnecessarily long turnaround time taken by the NSFAS to provide the information requested by the auditors.

Committee Chairperson Mr Philly Mapulane said it was disappointing that this is the second year in a row that the audit of the NSFAS's financial statements is delayed, mainly as a result of the inefficiencies within the entity.

The Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation has called on the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (Dirco) to account for an unexplained R188 million in an account, as identified in its annual report.

The committee Chairperson, Ms Tandi Mahambehlala, said she would follow due process until the matter of the unexplained R188 million is brought to the attention of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The committee received a briefing on the department and its entity, the African Renaissance Fund's, audit outcomes. The department has ongoing problems with irregular expenditure, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

The Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation has called on the Department of Human Settlements to find a balance between achieving targets and an unqualified audit opinion. The committee considered the department's annual report as part of the Budget Review and Recommendation process.

"The committee was unanimous in welcoming the unqualified audit opinion for the department, but were similarly critical that the department only achieved 63% of its set targets. While we welcomed the achievement in relations to good governance, we are concerned that tangible service delivery is not happening with the associated



required level. The department must urgently work to find a balance in this regard," said Ms Machwene Semanya, the Chairperson of the committee.

The Joint Constitutional Review Committee received briefings for the amendment of Section 100 of the Constitution that deals with provincial departments being placed under administration by national government.

The committee was briefed by the education lobby group Equal Education and the Equal Education Law Centre. They cited examples of national government intervening in 2011 to place the Eastern Cape Education Department under administration, along with several provincial departments in North West, which were placed under administration in 2018.

The committee heard that currently no clarity exists on the roles and responsibilities once such an intervention is made by national government. Some of the concerns raised by presenters included the lack of clear rules and poor reporting to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) on such matters; the lack of oversight by the NCOP and the lack of clarity on when the intervention will end or whether it was effective. 🌿

Prof Bozzoli passes on

Parliament has lost one of its Members, Prof Belinda Bozzoli, who passed on recently after a long battle with cancer. Prof Bozzoli joined Parliament in 2014 as a Member of the National Assembly. She served on the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology; writes Mava Lukani.

Parliament's Presiding Officers, led by the Speaker of the National Assembly (NA), Ms Thandi Modise and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), Mr Amos Masondo, extended their heartfelt condolences to the Bozzoli family, friends and close relatives of Prof Bozzoli.

"Parliament is left poorer with the passing on of a formidable scholar and a renowned writer who used her knowledge and expertise in the service of the people and advancement of the oversight work of Parliament. She was passionate about the education sector, and despite her ailing health, she continued to serve and contributed immensely to the oversight programme of the committee," said the Presiding Officers.

They said she leaves behind

an indelible mark, which will always be cherished, as it represents the dedication, selflessness and patriotism that South Africa needs to advance development.

The Chairperson of the higher education portfolio committee, Mr Philly Mapulane, said as a member of the committee with extensive and thorough knowledge of the higher education sector, Prof Bozzoli used her knowledge and expertise to conduct thorough and effective oversight over the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

Mr Mapulane added: "Her passion and commitment to her work made her a valuable asset to the committee. The committee will miss her and the frank and straightforward manner in which she conducted her work." 🌿



Prof Belinda Bozzoli



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"HER PASSION AND COMMITMENT TO HER WORK MADE HER A VALUABLE ASSET TO THE COMMITTEE. THE COMMITTEE WILL MISS HER AND THE FRANK AND STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER IN WHICH SHE CONDUCTED HER WORK."



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

