

# in session



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**BROUGHT TO  
YOU BY  
PARLIAMENT  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF  
SOUTH  
AFRICA**

*Africa Month  
Edition*

*Following up on our  
commitments:  
Making your future  
work better*



# Africa Day - Presiding Officers appreciate “efforts to mainstream Africa in the global fight against Covid-19”

*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, joined South Africans and the world in commemorating Africa Day.*



**Ms Thandi Modise, Speaker of the NA & Mr Amos Masondo, Chairperson of the NCOP**

Africa Day is intended to celebrate the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963. The OAU's main objectives were, amongst others, to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonisation and apartheid, to promote unity and solidarity amongst the African states, and to promote international cooperation. In 2002 the African Union (AU) was launched following a decision by the OAU to create a new continental organisation, as there was a need to refocus attention away from the fight for decolonisation and ridding the continent of apartheid, and towards increased cooperation and integration of African states to drive Africa's growth and economic development.

The Presiding Officers said Parliament paid “homage to all the founding forebears

of the African Union (AU) who spared no effort, and sacrificed lives and livelihoods to attain the liberation and freedom we now enjoy across Mother Africa. As we celebrate this day, we are acutely conscious of the ideals our forebears struggled for, which included the battles against poverty, inequality, wars and conflicts, and limited share of resources.”

They added: “The Covid-19 pandemic continues to ravage societies with almost five million positive cases recorded and about 127 000 deaths, while there is only less than 2% of the vaccinated world population in Africa. We have noted with appreciation efforts to mainstream Africa in the global fight against Covid-19, with efforts to break barriers to access to life-saving interventions and vaccines.

We expect the vaccination programme to gain the requisite momentum towards the necessary herd immunity that will break the back of the pandemic.”

Noting the just over 24 million doses administered on the continent, the Presiding Officers expressed their hope that AU member states' collaborative efforts on the drive to vaccinate their citizens against Covid-19 will place the vaccination drive on a higher trajectory. They encouraged Africans to heed the call and get vaccinated, as rollouts are steadily gaining momentum across the continent.

Parliament has adopted the theme: “The Year of Arts, Culture and Heritage – Building a better Africa and a better world in the midst of Covid-19”, which articulates the current challenges facing

our continent, and provides a good framework for our own interventions and mobilisation of international support. These efforts include strengthening the execution of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, mobilising the nations of the world to remove patent barriers to the production of sufficient vaccines to fight coronavirus, and financing African economies to enable their remodelling and recalibration.

The Presiding Officers said: “We noted with appreciation the resolutions of the summit of the heads of state that met earlier this month in France to finance African economies, using global financial firepower to replenish depleted coffers of the African economies and ramp up a slow vaccine rollout in the continent. We strongly believe in human solidarity across the world, driven by an understanding that we can only be safe from the pandemic when all of us are safe, and when Africa and other developing nations are enabled to access and produce requisite quantities of vaccines to protect their people.”

The Presiding Officers also affirmed their confidence that “other major priorities of the continent, as part of striving to reach the Agenda 2063 development goals, will receive critical attention. The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) is meeting this week to build greater integration and collective efforts to place Africa on a higher development path. These include:

- The mainstreaming of gender, anchored by the emancipation of women and children from the yoke of economic exclusion, violence and abuse.
- Promoting good governance and fighting the scourge of corruption and illicit financial flows that rob Africa's peoples of billions of dollars earmarked for development and growth.
- Silencing the guns and eliminating conflict that

depletes and diverts deeply needed resources such as budgets, human capital and infrastructure, for accelerating the development of the continent.”

“Let us continue to practise all the health and safety protocols in order to protect ourselves and our loved ones against Covid-19. Let us protect Africa and its children against all enemies of development. Let's spare no effort to accelerate the rise of Africa as a giant so that she can play her role as an equal among the continents of the world,” said NA Speaker Modise and NCOP Chairperson Masondo to mark Africa Day. 🌍



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# AFRICA DAY – NCOP reflects on economic development, peace and stability in Africa

*The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) commemorated Africa Day by hosting a lecture on the theme Pioneering Africa's Inclusive Economic Recovery and Free Trade: Levers to building the Africa we want. Sakhile Mokoena reports.*



Mr Fikile Majola, Deputy Minister

parties," said Ms Lucas. She added that this cutting-edge agreement should be recognised as the largest trade agreement since the World Trade Agreement in 1994.

The Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Development, Mr Fikile Majola, delivered the keynote address at the lecture. He told the session that Africa Day is an opportunity to reflect on shared commitments towards the renewal of the African continent for the benefit of all her peoples. "The theme for today's event instructs us to move with speed towards building a strong foundation for Africa's inclusive growth. And the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement further provides us with the platform to advance this objective," he said.

Mr Majola believes the ratifying of the AfCFTA agreement by 54 out of the 55 African countries is a major achievement, which will connect about 1,3 billion people with a combined gross domestic product of US\$3,4 trillion.

The promotion of intra-Africa trade is a fundamental factor for sustainable economic development, employment generation and integration of Africa into global economy. "This economic flagship seeks to address the challenges of Africa's low levels of participation in the global economy and world trade, which stands at 3 %, despite the fact that Africa accounts for approximately 16 % of the world's population," Mr Majola said.

AfCFTA brings the continent closer to realising the vision of an integrated market and creating a basis for increasing intra-Africa trade. However, Mr Majola warned that the full potential of the continent will not be realised if we don't address the challenges posed by poor infrastructure, small and fragmented markets, underdeveloped production structures and inadequate economic diversification.

"We must compliment and consolidate parallel African Union work on infrastructure and industrial development pillars, build supply capacity to take advantage of more open African markets," he said. "The success of the ACFTA depends on our collective efforts and coordinated action to effectively implement the programme and achieve the vision that our forebears set out for us decades ago."

Gauteng Provincial Whip in the NCOP and former South African Ambassador to Libya, Syria and Lebanon, Mr Mohammed Dangor, addressed the lecture on peace-keeping in Africa and the possible threat of conflicts to the trade agreement. He said peace and stability was crucial for economic development, as investors and innovators will not invest in countries that are unstable due to civil or regional wars. "One of the key threats and impediments to the successful implementation of the agreement is our continent's history of war and conflict, which results in consistent political and economic instability. Political

Africa Day is marked on 25 May each year across the African continent to celebrate the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), predecessor to the African Union (AU). On 25 May 1963, the OAU was formed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with 32 countries. More countries joined over time, with South Africa becoming the 53rd member in May 1994, after the end of apartheid. In 2002 in Durban, the organisation was remodelled and renamed the AU. Africa Day is also an opportunity to reflect on the continent's socio-economic development and its efforts to find peace and stability.

The NCOP lecture's main focus was the recently enacted African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, an economic integration agenda

for the continent, which seeks to promote intra-Africa trading and investment among African countries.

Delivering opening remarks at the virtual lecture, the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP Ms Sylvia Lucas said thanks to the AfCFTA, the African continent is finally on a growth trajectory and unified under a common purpose to collectively reverse the legacy of Europe's scramble for Africa's wealth.

"If effectively implemented, the agreement will promote and advance the attainment of sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development across the continent. It will also serve as a conduit for advancing gender equality and enable the structural transformation of state



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Editor**  
Brent Simons

**Production editor**  
Mava Lukani

**Design and layout**  
MIND TRIX MEDIA

**Copy editors**  
Jane Henshall, Vusumzi Nobadula

**Writers**  
Mava Lukani, Abel Mputing, Sakhile Mokoena, Sureshinee Govender, Sibongile Maputi, Rajaa Azzakani, Yoliswa Landu

**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

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

**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

## OUR IDEALS

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

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

**BOOK A TOUR**  
To tour Parliament  
**Telephone** 021 403 2266  
**E-mail** tours@parliament.gov.za



instability results in economic instability,” said Mr Dangor.

Africa has been successful in ensuring political emancipation from colonialism and apartheid. However, the battle for the economic liberation is challenging. “Our pan-African’s founding fathers correctly analysed that for there to be true liberation we need economic liberation and in order to achieve economic liberation we need economic unity and integration of Africa. If we want to achieve the objectives of economic development and integration in Africa, we must meet our goals of silencing the gun, and as a country we must use all our resources and energies at bilateral and multinational levels to focus on ending conflicts where they are currently in existence and ensure foreign policy remains geared towards ending conflict – conflict management, resolution and resolution,” added Mr Dangor.

Professor Vusi Gumede, from the University of Mpumalanga’s faculty of Economics, Development and Business said the AfCFTA faces both internal and external threats, as well as other challenges that frustrate efforts towards political integration in Africa. He suggested that policy coordination is critical for free trade. “Africa’s socio-economic development rests on clear policies and their coordination, and the most important policies requiring coordination relate to managing inflation, exchange rate and money supply,” said Prof Gumede. 🌍



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# National Assembly Speaker Calls For An End To All Forms Of Discrimination In Africa

*Speaking at the official opening of the Fourth Ordinary Session of the fifth Parliament of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in Midrand, The Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Thandi Modise, called for an end to all forms of discrimination in Africa and advocated for united efforts to rebuild the continent’s economy following the Covid-19 pandemic, reports Sakhile Mokoena.*



Ms Modise said it was very unfortunate that the continent was still divided along ethnic, religious, gender and languages lines of the former colonisers. “Our interests should be about building the African economy, the languages of the former colonisers must not be allowed to continue dividing us. We need to think as Africans and treat each other as brothers and sisters,” she said.

Ms Modise also urged Members of the PAP to fight against ethnic discrimination, gender-based discrimination and support the fight against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). She also spoke against the displacement of people and human trafficking caused by instability in some parts of the continent.

She dismissed the impression that South Africa was xenophobic against fellow Africans, saying that South Africa ensures that nobody is treated differently because of their nationality. “We will not tolerate xenophobia in our country, but we will also not tolerate criminality within our borders, whether by South Africans or by foreign nationals,” she said.

Ms Modise’s call for African unity was supported by the Democratic Republic of Congo’s (DRC)’s Ambassador to South Africa Mr Bene M’poko, who is also the Dean of African Ambassadors. “We need to unite as Africans and abandon some of our habits, like this thing of Anglophone and Francophone, which belong in the past, does not have to divide us. We need

to act and talk like one people. We are here to solve problems and challenges facing our continent,” said Ambassador M’poko.

Delivering the welcome message to the PAP on behalf of South Africa, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, said South Africa has provided support to the PAP and will continue doing so in line with the host country agreements. She warned that the socio-economic impact of coronavirus in the continent will be felt for quite some time, and she called on countries to build research and invest in higher education in order to build responses to possible future pandemics. “There will be other pandemics in the future, it’s a pattern of life,

we will have to be ready as a continent,” said Minister Pandor.

The theme for the PAP session echoes that of the African Union for 2021: “Year of the Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want”. Addressing the session as a guest of honour, the President of the Republic of Ghana, Mr Nana Akufo-Addo, said nothing defines a continent more than its arts, culture and heritage. He also called on African countries not to abandon their cultures and heritage as they modernise.

“Modernisation is seen as synonymous with westernisation, but we can modernise in our own way, like Japan which is highly modernised but not westernised. The Africa we want will not be realised if we



turn our backs on our arts, culture and heritage," said President Akufo-Addo.

He encouraged African countries to start knowing more about each other, to learn from each other and look out for each other. "We have what it takes to transform our economies, acting together we will boost our capacity to succeed," he added.

The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces Chairperson, Mr Amos Masondo, is the leader of the parliamentary delegation to the PAP. Other delegates include the Chief Whip of the Majority Party in the National Assembly, Ms Penny Majodina, Dr Mathole Motshekga, Mr Julius S Malema who is the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters and the Democratic Alliance's Mr TR Majola.

Speaker Modise is a former member of the PAP and was specially invited to make opening remarks, together with Dr Pandor, on behalf of South Africa as a host country.

Among the issues discussed at the session are various reports, including the Report by the Permanent Committees on the Covid-19 pandemic in Africa; the activity Report of the PAP; the Report of the Ad hoc Committee on the election of the President of the Pan-African Parliament; and Committee Meetings and Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians. 



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# Constitution supports cooperative governance and intergovernmental relations, says NCOP Chair

*The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), Mr Amos Masondo, participated in the Special National Members Assembly of the South African Local Government Association recently, writes Mava Lukani.*



Mr Amos Masondo, Chairperson of the NCOP

The theme of the Special National Members Assembly was: "Guiding the Transition: An Opportunity to Renew as We Usher in the 5th Term of Democratic and People-Centred Local Government". Mr Masondo addressed the topic: Working Together to Achieve the Developmental Outcomes of Local Government.

In addition to placing local government at the centre of social and economic development, Mr Masondo said the Constitution also advances the principles of cooperative governance and intergovernmental relations. It places a responsibility on the three spheres of government to cooperate with one another in mutual trust and good faith. This can be achieved, the Constitution says, by fostering friendly relations, assisting and supporting one another and communicating well with

one another.

However, Mr Masondo noted with concern the growing number of poor interventions by provinces in municipalities, as well as the increase in repeat interventions. He also pointed out that many such interventions are used as instruments to achieve political ends. The NCOP has noticed:

- 1) There is no uniformity in the application of Section 139 across provinces or within a province;
- 2) Some municipalities emerge from Section 139 interventions worse than before;
- 3) Sometimes the interventions occur late into the process;
- 4) There is failure to use the provisions of the Municipal Finance Management Act; and
- 5) The provinces do not seem to be keen or able to


establish early warning systems and to act accordingly.

"It is our view," Mr Masondo said, "that many of the issues that trigger an intervention would not be there if the spheres of government were cooperating with one another in mutual trust and good faith, as provided for in the Constitution. One of the persisting challenges facing a number of municipalities and which impact development is the inability to raise revenue and lack of capacity to manage finances. This is particularly the case with many rural municipalities that have poor revenue base and also experience difficulties with attracting talent.

"We appreciate the role being played by Salga (South African Local Government Association) in the proceedings of the NCOP. This role has increased

over the years. It is a clear demonstration of how we can work together to achieve the development of local communities," said Mr Masondo.

On the new district model, he said: "We trust that the new District Development Model, which consists of a process by which joint and collaborative planning is undertaken at local, district and metropolitan levels by all the three spheres of government, will help us to enhance the observance and adherence to the constitutional principles of cooperative governance and intergovernmental relations."

Mr Masondo committed the NCOP to support the implementation of the model through the insights gained from oversight work. 



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# Committees on Trade and Industry, and International Relations, support Trips waiver initiative

*The Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition and the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation were briefed recently on the proposal for a temporary Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (Trips) waiver for Covid-19 vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), writes Rajaa Azzakani.*



The committees pledged their unwavering support for South Africa and India's initiative for a temporary Trips waiver, which would fall under permissible exceptions under the Marrakesh Agreement. It allows developing and least-developed countries to access medicines and other medical interventions at more affordable prices, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Trade and Industry Committee Chairperson, Mr Duma Nkosi, said: "If approved, the waiver would allow South Africa and developing countries to ramp up production and diversify supply of vaccines, diagnostics

and therapeutics, and provide more affordable doses for less wealthy countries. This is a step in the right direction to ensure the health and well-being of poorer nations."

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Tandi Mahambehlala, said that all efforts to prevent, treat and contain Covid-19 must be based on the bedrock of international solidarity, cooperation and assistance. "Intellectual property rights should not override states' obligations to protect and fulfil the right to health to all without discrimination." 🌱



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# NCOP holds Workshop to strengthen Budget and Fiscal Oversight

*The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) held a two-day Budget and Fiscal Oversight Workshop to determine successes and failures in conducting effective budgetary and fiscal oversight over the executive, reports Abel Mputing.*



**Mr Seiso Mohai, NCOP Chief Whip**

Speaking on Advancing the Mandate of the NCOP through Effective Budget and Fiscal Oversight recently, the Chairperson of the NCOP, Mr Amos Masondo, stated that the NCOP has certain constitutional mandates with the goal of transforming the lives of South Africans. "This workshop seeks to build a shared understanding of the NCOP's role in utilising oversight and fiscal instruments expressed in a wide range of money-related Bills and financial managements instruments that inform the NCOP's oversight and accountability mandate," he said.

This is to prevent abuse of public money and to ensure accountability in how taxpayers' money is used. Mr Masondo added: "One of our critical interventions as the NCOP is to ensure that the executive delivers

on its policies and the goals that it has set. We have to turn the existing oversight instruments into account to come up with effective strategies and tactics of realising the transformative prescripts of our Constitution."

Participating in the workshop, the Deputy Minister of Finance, Dr David Masondo, spoke on understanding budget processes and intergovernmental relations in South Africa. He gave a broad overview of the fiscal and financial instruments enacted since the inception of the Constitution and the first democratic Parliament, that sought to ensure accountability in managing public finances.

In his view, much has been done to establish world-class public finance management

based on prudent economic sustainability, public financial management to bring about transparent budgetary frameworks. He cited the Division of Revenue Amendment Bill, the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement and other money-related Acts as examples of this. In his view, these instruments provide the NCOP with oversight ammunition to hold the executive accountable in a manner that equals the role of the Auditor-General. It can do so by using “departments’ and entities’ annual plans and key performance areas reports to hold them accountable”.

Speaking on the Constitutional Framework for Parliamentary Oversight: Understanding the Constitutional Role of Parliament in Fostering Fiscal Oversight and Accountability, the University of Cape Town’s Prof Hugh Corder said the Constitution is based on the idea of breaking away from the past. This gave the democratic Parliament a responsibility to be a watchdog of constitutional prescripts. Comparing the South African Parliament with the apartheid parliament, he observed: “Apartheid parliament was not a watchdog, it was a lapdog. It did not bark; it did not bite.”

In his criticism of the current Parliament, he asked why Parliament fell short of the expectations of the new Constitution, based on accountability, responsibility and openness in holding the executive accountable. He cited corruption over many years as proof of this failure. In his view, at the heart of this regression are parliamentary committees which are supposed to be critical engines of oversight and accountability, but which have been stunted by party whips.

This has blurred the separation of powers and eroded Parliament’s

constitutional mandate. He then asked why committee chairpersons are not rotated or elected from the opposition. “Has Parliament considered electing chairpersons from the opposition and extend this practice beyond just the Standing Committee on Public Accounts?” he asked.

Fiscal accountability and oversight in the spotlight at NCOP workshop  
On the constitutional imperatives for fiscal accountability and oversight of the NCOP, Prof Omphemetse Sibanda of the University of Limpopo, began with the position that there is no need for new legislation for oversight and accountability.

In his view, one can never say we have too much legislation when efficiency and equity have not been achieved. “We can’t discount that until there’s transparency in the management of public finance. We are all affected by how our fiscus is managed. Well and sustainable management of the budget and public finance accountability will ensure that there’s service delivery.”

As for the NCOP’s oversight role in the fiscal framework, he believes there is a need to craft new legislation or strengthen existing legislation to give the NCOP greater powers. In addition, there is a need of overarching legislation to give effect to the NCOP’s role in conducting oversight and accountability over various fiscal frameworks.

He also criticised party political patronage that has over time affected the efficiency of the NCOP and Parliament in executing their oversight mandate. This has contributed towards them “not exacting their oversight influence on either Public Protector recommendations, Auditor-General or courts’ findings that call upon it to act impartially due to party political considerations rather than their oversight mandate.

In concluding the workshop’s

first session, the Chief Whip of the NCOP, Mr Seiso Mohai, believes that despite challenges, qualitative strides have been made to build an activist Parliament that seeks to realise the principles of a better life for all. However, work must be done to address problems identified. He also raised the need for funding a parliamentary model that is independent from the executive. This would uphold the principle of the separation of powers and would render Parliament more effective in conducting oversight and ensuring accountability.

Parliament’s powers to amend the national budget  
Discussions on the second day of the workshop focused on Parliament’s powers to amend the national budget, as well as oversight on government spending in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA).

Financial experts, academics, as well as officials from the National Treasury and related state institutions in the finance and economics cluster, joined Members of Parliament in a virtual platform for the two-day Budget and Fiscal Oversight Workshop.

Commenting on the topic Parliament’s Scrutiny of the Budget: Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, Dr Seán Muller, from the University of Johannesburg’s Public and Environment Economic Research Centre, said the Act

gives Parliament wide-ranging powers and even allows the legislature to propose an alternative budget. However, Parliament lacks the capacity to do so.

“However, as much as the Act gives Parliament the powers to amend the budget, there are requirements to be followed, such as ensuring that any amendments to the budget do not harm service delivery,” Dr Muller said.

He said the executive opposes the idea of Parliament amending the budget, as it believes that the Money Bills provide enough opportunity for Parliament to make inputs on the budget in advance.

“The executive argues that amendments by Parliament are not a requirement if there is that kind of engagement, but the legislature should not downplay the amendment powers that it has,” said Dr Muller.

He also told the workshop that the fact that Parliament has never made any substantive amendments on all the Money Bills tabled by National Treasury could create an impression that Parliament is simply rubber-stamping.

Another academic, Prof Jacobus Pauw from the University of South Africa, in support of Parliament’s powers provided in Money Bills said: “The exercise of greater powers on the budget by Parliament will not be against fiscal discipline and the amending powers should be taken seriously.”

Other speakers supported proposals to make Money Bills less onerous. Some participants mentioned the difficulty of Section 85 in particular, saying that the relevant parliamentary committees do not have adequate resources to deal with it.

The workshop also heard that South Africa has numerous pieces of legislation governing the management of public finances, yet there is not

enough improvement. In addition, reports show that Parliament’s oversight role does not take place as it should, resulting in inadequate accountability.

Workshop participants also said that committee oversight is hampered by a poor understanding of the budget cycle. Parliament committees do not use National Treasury and Auditor-General’s reports to hold the executive accountable on spending. “Parliament should hold us accountable in terms of what the PFMA says; whether as National Treasury we are playing our role as articulated by law,” said the National Treasury’s Director-General, Mr Dondo Mogajane.

NCOP Delegate and Chairperson of the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Water and Sanitation and Human Settlements, Mr China Dodovu, questioned why with all the legislation, good systems and structures, the country continues to face challenges, including deteriorating finances in municipalities, provincial government and national government? “The big problem we are failing to confront is poor ethical leadership, both administratively and politically, and it inhibits accountability,” said Mr Dodovu.

NCOP Chief Whip, Mr Seiso Mohai, said the workshop has identified the need to facilitate public participation in the budget process and fiscal policy. “The budget is inherently a policy function residing in the National Treasury, and the question to be asked is whether Parliament has the requisite capacity to amend the budget,” he said.

The Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Ms Sylvia Lucas, said: “We need to strengthen oversight to make sure the budget responds to the socio-economic needs of our people.”





# KwaZulu-Natal residents - expropriation of land is a non-negotiable

*The Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure went to the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) recently to give the people of the province an opportunity to express their views on the Expropriation Bill. KZN was the fifth province to be visited by the committee for public hearings on the Bill, writes Sureshinee Govender.*



At the hearings, the overwhelming majority of residents in Umzinyathi, King Cetshwayo, Zululand and eThekweni districts supported the Bill. They argued that expropriation of the land is a non-negotiable issue in South Africa, as it will redress the injustice done when their land was disposed of through the system of colonialism.

Most participants in Umzinyathi District told the committee that they support the Bill because it will restore their dignity, which was taken from them by a minority when they were dispossessed of their land. They argued that the Bill is the best mechanism to redress that historical injustice.

There was a minority in Umzinyathi who argued that the Bill will have far-reaching negative implications,

particularly on food production and employment of farm workers. Furthermore, the Bill may also have unintended consequences, if it discourages local and foreign property investors at a time when South Africa is trying to encourage foreign investors.

Farmworkers who participated in the hearings in Umzinyathi expressed their support for the implementation of the Expropriation Bill. They told the committee that they do not have cemeteries on farms to bury their relatives. They also told the committee that when they leave the farms, they have to ask permission to come back to visit the graves of their relatives and at times are not allowed to do so.

They told the committee that they are prohibited from practicing their culture and that they live under difficult

conditions on farms. The lamented that they are not allowed to keep livestock or plant for their subsistence and called for the speedy implementation of the Expropriation Bill.

The committee heard that fertile land is in the hands of the white people in the Umzinyathi District. The residents used the opportunity presented by the hearings to inform the committee about the problems they encounter on a daily basis. They told the committee that they do not get the assistance they require from officials in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in Pietermaritzburg regarding progress on their claims.

At KwaMandlazini Hall, one of the farm workers told the committee that he worked all his life on a farm, which was bought by the government and was given to a certain person. He said he represented farm workers who had applied for that farm. He asked the committee about the criteria used for awarding farms to the people if those who had worked on it were unable to get it. He said they support the implementation of the Bill, as the land must be returned to those who work it.

Farm dwellers at the same hearing told the committee about the severe conditions under which they live on the farms. They told the committee that if they speak freely that could cost them and their

families a place to sleep tonight. They said the government must expropriate the land that is owned by white farmers who own thousands of hectares of land, whereas black people don't have land. They said they support the expropriation of land without compensation, as they have been working on these farms all their lives and gained nothing after that.

At the Ulundi public hearings, the residents who are living on Ingonyama Trust land expressed contrasting views on the future ownership of the land belonging to the trust. Some told the committee that the land must not be tampered with, while others argued that it should be given to amakhosi and izinduna to own and manage on behalf of their subjects. They were in support of the Expropriation Bill.

They told the committee that the Bill must be implemented because it is supported by the majority of the people. They called for the return of the land to the majority of the people. They said the appropriation of land must be followed by provision of resources to the new beneficiaries. In addition, they must be empowered with skills and training to enable them to use the land productively.

The residents told the committee at Richards Bay's KwaMandlazini Hall that they needed land to build a police station and a clinic, as there is currently no land to build those very important centres of service. KwaMandlazini residents told the committee that they believe that the implementation of the Bill is urgent and will mark the beginning of the alleviation of socio-economic problems, such as unemployment and poverty.

The youth told the committee at all the hearings that the government must ensure that expropriation of the land is followed by empowerment of the new land recipients and provision of resources to work the land. They are ready to work the land.

The absence of some traditional leaders at the hearings concerned the residents at

Ulundi hearings. The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Nolitha Ntobongwana, informed the residents that the committee had extended an invitation to the public hearings to all stakeholders, including the National and Provincial Houses of Traditional Leaders, labour organisations, civic organisations, political parties, and religious and cultural organisations to the public hearings. She said the committee hoped that all traditional leaders would be present at the public hearings to express their views on the Bill.

As some of the residents raised issues related to land restitution process during the public hearings, Ms Ntobongwana emphasised that the committee is driven by Section 59 of the Constitution, which allows the people to raise issues related to the Bill. Issues outside the ambit of the Bill will be referred to the attention of the relevant parliamentary committees for the attention of the relevant government departments. She said the committee will consider all the views it received on the Bill at Parliament. It will then compile and submit a report about the public hearings in the National Assembly. 🌱



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# Parliament's Budget Office - Ensuring that parliament holds government accountable

*The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) was established to improve Parliament's oversight over the executive. In session writer, Mava Lukani spoke to the recently appointed Director of the PBO, Dr Dumisani Jantjies.*



**Dr Dumisani Jantjies, Director PBO**

**Government departments appear before the relevant committees of Parliament to present their annual performance plans and budgets for the financial year. Which constitutional principles and legislation govern that process?**

**Dr Jantjies:** Chapter 5 of the Constitution sets out the accountability framework for the executive. In particular, section 92 sets out accountability and responsibilities that Ministers and Cabinet individually and collectively are accountable to Parliament for the exercise of their powers and the performance of their functions. According to the Constitution and the Money Bills and Related Matters Act of 2009, Parliament allocates budgets to government functions through the Appropriation Bill. In their budget speeches, Ministers are

expected to set out political outcomes for their functions of government (votes), and Parliament has to use these agreed political outcomes to hold the Ministers and Cabinet to account during their performance of their duties.

The Public Financial Management Act of 1999 and the Money Bills and Related Matters Act of 2009 set out clear mechanisms from which Parliament may hold government accountable in realising their political outcomes. The process is initiated through the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS), where the government clearly sets out its medium-term spending priorities.

It is these priorities, together with the economic context and other budget assumptions, that set the context for government

departments to prepare their budget votes to be presented in Parliament prior to spending the budget allocated in terms of the Appropriation Bill – although the Money Bills and Related Matters Act of 2009 does allow departments to spend a certain percentage of the budget allocated before an Appropriation Bill is adopted in Parliament by end of July of every year.

**Parliament also presents its own budget, which legislation accounts for that?**

**Dr Jantjies:** Parliament is a separate arm of state, and its governance and management frameworks are set out in both the Constitution and Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act of 2009 (FMPPLA). In terms of these legislative prescripts, Parliament is also

required to present its budget in the National Assembly once appropriated in terms of the FMPPLA.

It is probably worth mentioning that the budget allocation to Parliament is proposed by National Treasury using the Public Financial Management Act (PFMA), similar to those for government votes. However, the final appropriation is approved by Parliament when adopting the Appropriation Bill every year by July. There is further Adjustment Appropriations that are done during the MTBPS period, also to be approved by Parliament.

**What is the role of the PBO in these processes?**

**Dr Jantjies:** The Parliamentary Budget Office was established

by the Money Bills and Related Matters Act of 2009 to support Parliament in implementing the Act. The Parliamentary Budget Office provides analysis and advice to Parliament on all budget instruments (Fiscal Framework, Division of Revenue, Appropriation Bills and Tax and other Revenue Bills) proposed by government both in February and October.

Specific to the budget votes, the PBO advisory related to Appropriation Bills covers all the budget votes. And where necessary and required by Parliament, the PBO provides substantive analysis on a particular government function (budget vote). The analysis focuses on highlighting risk areas and the implication of budget proposals for service deliver and economic development.



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# National Assembly adopts Department of Health's budget vote despite huge cut

*The Department of Health's much-anticipated budget vote came under the spotlight at the National Assembly's mini-plenary recently. In his speech, the Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize, reported on some of the key priorities of the department's annual performance plans in the last financial year and the immediate challenges posed by Covid-19 on the department's budget, reports Abel Mputing.*



High on the department's agenda is the establishment of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Fund, which will enhance human resource capacity in the healthcare sector. Reporting on the NHI Bill, the Minister stated that public hearings were held to obtain the public's views on the Bill, and R7.6 billion has been set aside to establish the NHI Unit to contract service providers and to oversee the fund.

Tied to the NHI is the concept of Ideal Clinics and over 1 200 clinics across the country have obtained this status. In addition, R13.7 billion has been assigned to tertiary health services.

In his input, the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, commended the department's successes and supported the Bill. However, he was unhappy with the department's projected

R50 billion budget cut. "We have resolved that we will meet the National Treasury and ask it to explain to us how the department will achieve its annual performance plans in the light of these projected budget cuts."

The national outcry over the unlawful procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) did not escape his attention. "As a committee, we would like to get a report on why there is so much outcry over the procurement of PPE. We want to know what happened."

He also praised the nursing staff for their hard work during the pandemic and recognised the impact these trying times have had on them. "Our nurses are wounded tigers. Please walk tall with your scars. Thanks for holding on to the fort."

He further stated that as part of its oversight mandate, the committee will visit the provinces to determine the provinces' vaccine rollout readiness.

"The success of government interventions to curb the spread of Covid-19 will be determined by how many people we can save. And we can save people by vaccinating as many as possible. At the current pace of less than 1% vaccination rate, the 40 million annual target remains a far-fetched dream. Worst of all, we have been surpassed by less resourced countries, such as Zimbabwe and Ghana," said Member of Parliament (MP), Ms Siviwe Gwarube.

"We highlighted this looming crisis, but our concerns were met by government inaction, by the government that evades accountability. We want the

department to present its plan on how it intends to deal with the third wave and with the Indian strain that is likely to migrate to our shores," she insisted.

"At the current pace of vaccination, the department's initial projection is a distant dream," said another MP, Dr Sophie Thembekwayo. "People are faced with imminent death because the department has no vaccination plan that is worth its name. If we continue to have no integrated vaccination

plan of Covid-19 and HIV/Aids, we are faced with desperate consequences. We need a decisive leadership. Minister, if this job is above the level of your competency, please resign now," she said.

Mr Nqabayomzi Kwankwa, an MP, questioned the wisdom of holding election in the face of a crisis, a vaccination plan that is erratic and in the absence of a comprehensive vaccination plan to deal with the third wave and when numbers of infections are increasing daily. 🌐

## Approved Cogta budget aims to build safe, sustainable, prosperous & connected communities

*The Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, has announced over R96 billion in transfers and subsidies to municipalities, and a further R173.3 million to support traditional leadership, writes Sakhile Mokoena.*



**Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma**



Presenting the two departments (Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs) budget votes for debate in a mini-plenary of the National Assembly (NA) recently, the Minister said the budgets will help “lay a solid foundation to set us on a path towards building resilient, safe, sustainable, prosperous, cohesive, connected and climate-smart communities”.

She said Vote 3 (Cooperative Governance) sets aside over R100.8 billion in the 2021/22 financial year. R96 billion of the allocation is made up of transfers and subsidies to municipalities. Vote 15 (Traditional Affairs) allocates R173.3 million to support developmental traditional leadership, which promotes participatory democracy and rural development, as well as agriculture.

Dr Dlamini-Zuma also told Members of the NA that, in implementing the District Development Model in the pilot sites, the department has committed to training more than 1 000 young people, in partnership with the Department of Rural Development. “We are pleased to announce that, so far, 554 young people have completed their training in agriculture-related areas such the production and processing of maize, vegetables, beef, dairy and pork. These young people will either be placed in agriculture institutions or will be supported to start community-based initiatives,” she said.

Minister Dlamini-Zuma also confirmed an allocation of R2.9 billion in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework period to the OR Tambo District in the Eastern Cape for the implementation of water and sanitation projects. “We are a responsive and caring government. Therefore, we have set aside close to R618.9 million in national and municipality allocations to address the water and sanitation

challenges,” she said.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Cogta, Ms Faith Muthambi, welcomed the commitment by the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent to support 44 district municipalities to reduce infrastructure backlogs and improve performance on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant.

However, the committee’s major concern with the Department of Cogta is around the Community Work Programme (CWP). “On numerous occasions, the committee has requested specific information to help us understand better the challenges facing the programme and provide the necessary oversight. The department’s cooperation in this regard has left much to be desired. This low level of accountability in respect to the CWP is proving to be a source of tension and is threatening our amicable working relationship with the department,” Ms Muthambi said.

The committee also noted the Department of Traditional Affairs’ priorities for the period under review, including the emphasis on the role of traditional leadership in curbing the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, gender-based violence, femicide, violence against the LGBTQ+ community and promoting gender representation and women empowerment within the structures of traditional leadership.

Mr Cilliers Brink of the Democratic Alliance (DA) raised a concern about failing municipalities. He blamed their problems on policies such as cadre deployment, race-based employment equity and black economic empowerment (BEE) preferential procurement. “These policies don’t empower ordinary people. They [promote] state capture. The jobs at local government require non-political skills and attitude,” he argued.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) also raised concerns about rampant corruption in municipalities and refused to support the Cogta Budget Vote. “Corruption is the number one problem for our decaying municipalities. Our people don’t have water and electricity while money is being looted left, right and centre. Our people are suffering due to corruption,” said EFF Member of Parliament, Ms Hlengiwe Mkhali.

Mr Ignatius Groenewald of Freedom Front Plus also spoke strongly against corruption, cadre deployment, as well as BEE, blaming these factors for failing municipalities. “The reason for incomplete infrastructure projects in our municipalities is not lack of funds; it’s poor planning, corruption and inflated prices. If drastic changes do not happen, the future of municipalities is bleak,” said Mr Groenewald. He also complained about the size of the country’s municipalities, saying they were too big and suggested smaller municipal units. 



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# National Assembly welcomes plans to upgrade informal settlements

*The Department of Human Settlements has identified the upgrading of informal settlements as one of its priority delivery areas and has ring-fenced a budget of R10 billion for this purpose over the next three years, reports Sakhile Mokoena.*



**Ms Lindiwe Sisulu**

Presenting the department’s budget vote for debate in a National Assembly mini-plenary, the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, said growing informal settlements in urban areas is the department’s biggest challenge in its efforts to provide shelter to indigent households. The challenge is exacerbated by the influx of undocumented migrants from neighbouring countries. “The need for housing our own people is long and growing with 2.2 million households still living in informal settlements. And when you consider migrants

from neighbouring countries also seeking employment, then you can understand the nightmare we have to deal with year in and year out.

“We will overcome this problem in time, which remains a constant nightmare made worse by the fact that we continuously receive undocumented migrants from neighbouring countries seeking employment. We spend a great deal of our time to resolve this problem,” she said.

In the 2020 budget statement, the Minister announced an allocation of R4.6 billion for



provinces and metros for the upgrading of informal settlements. This year, provincial upgrades are planned for 679 informal settlements, while 344 informal settlements will be targeted in metropolitan municipality upgrades.

“Over the next three years, about R10 billion has been ring-fenced to accelerate the upgrading of informal settlements countrywide. The rapid growth of informal settlements in all major cities and towns, which I reflected on earlier, has necessitated a review of funding frameworks,” said the Minister.

Her department has created a dedicated Upgrading of Informal Settlements Grant Funding Framework to address this challenge. The Minister also called for urban state land to be released for social housing to allow working people to stay closer to their places of work.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Ms Machwene Semenya, commended the department for a renewed focus on the upgrading of informal settlements, and the introduction of the informal settlements upgrading partnership grant. “This grant will go a long way in the upgrading and formalisation of informal settlements over the medium-term. It is worth pointing out that the grant will deliver 180 000 stands with access to municipal services to our communities across provinces and metropolitan areas,” said the committee Chairperson.

Ms Semenya was also pleased with the department’s plan to collaborate with provinces and municipalities to upgrade informal settlements and provide affordable rental housing, among many other programmes. “This is evident in the fact that around 97% of this budget vote will be disbursed through transfers and subsidies to province

and municipalities and other entities. We accept that this is a plan and it has to be implemented and we will be there as a Portfolio Committee overseeing the implementation of this budget vote,” she said.

She also called on the department to accelerate the issuing of title deeds and to support the provinces and municipalities to maximise the use of the Provincial Emergency Housing and Municipal Emergency Housing grants, so as to prevent land invasions.

Ms Emma Powell of the Democratic Alliance was sceptical about the department’s plans to upgrade informal settlements, saying in the past the department had failed to meet its own targets. “During last year’s budget speech, you promised to replace 1 174 shacks with proper houses in Duncan Village; less than half were completed. Our government takes money from formal housing to fund vanity programmes like the South African Airways. You can’t claim to care about ordinary people,” said Ms Powell.

Declaring her party’s rejection of the Department of Human Settlements’ Budget Vote, Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) Member of Parliament, Ms Rebecca Mohlala, accused the government of failing to address the problem created by apartheid spatial planning. “27 years after democracy, our people still live in shacks, far from their places of work, with unreliable public transport. Cadre deployment is the order of the day while people are languishing in dilapidated informal settlements,” she said.

Ms Mohlala also called for transformation of the Estate Agency Affairs Board, and urged the Minister to create “a conducive environment for black people to be drawn into the value chain”. 🌱

## Budget vote - Home Affairs to review all permits issued to foreigners since 2004

*In an effort to fight immigration corruption and fraud, the Department of Home Affairs is reviewing all permits issued to foreign nationals based in South Africa since 2004, the year the Immigration Act came into effect. These plans were announced by the Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, when he tabled the department’s budget vote statement in a mini-plenary of the National Assembly (NA) recently; writes Sakhile Mokoena.*



**Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, Minister of Home Affairs**

Dr Motsoaledi said: “I have put up a ministerial committee headed by the former Director-General in the Presidency, Dr Cassius Lubisi, to review all the permits issued since 2004, the year the Immigration Act came into effect.”

The review will include permanent residential permits; corporate, business and professional visas; retired persons’ visas and early naturalisation and study visas.

He told the mini-plenary that the department has many initiatives in the pipeline, including legislative and policy initiatives that will

soon come to Parliament for processing and enactment into laws. “Among these is the recently released Green Paper on marriage policy. It is an incontestable fact that this country needs a new marriage policy based on the three pillars of our Constitution, that is, equality, non-discrimination and human dignity,” he added.

Currently, South Africa citizens have to choose between three Acts of Parliament and decide under which to get married. These are the Marriage Act 25 of 1961, the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act 20 of 1998 or the Civil Union Act 17 of 2006 (which provides for same-sex marriages).

According to Dr Motsoaledi, these Acts have many gaps, omissions and weaknesses. In addition, they do not cater or give recognition to Muslim marriages, Hindu marriages and marriages conducted according to Jewish rites.

Despite the enactment of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act by Parliament, the Minister added, traditional marriages taking place in many royal families in terms of their traditions and rituals are still not on the statute books. “None of the existing laws prevent minor children from getting married. Hence a



girl below the age of 18 and a boy below 17 can legally get married as long as their parents are prepared to send them off to such ill-conceived marriages," he said.

Dr Motsoaledi also provided an update on the newly established Border Management Agency (BMA). He told the Members of Parliament (MPs) that it was expected to be operational in 11 border posts and segments of the borderline by the end of the current financial year.

Mr Mosa Chabane, who serves on the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs, welcomed the department's initiatives to formulate legislation and policy on marriages, as well as the planned overhaul of immigration laws. He said the immigration affairs and the asylum status regulation were the most improved branches of the Department of Home Affairs.

Another Member of Parliament, Ms Thembisile Khanyile of the Democratic Alliance (DA), also welcomed the establishment of the BMA. She was concerned, however, that the budget was "silent on how the department was going to deal with porous borders". She cited the case of Prophet Shepherd Bushiri who mysteriously left the country illegally, and the January stampede at the Beitbridge and Lebombo border posts.

Mr Mgcini Tshwaku of the Economic Freedom Fighters labelled the Department of Home Affairs "the most dysfunctional department in the country" due to "incompetent leadership". Mr Tshwaku was concerned that the budget does not address plans to address the long queues at Home Affairs offices, and the information and technology system that is perpetually off-line. 🌐

## NA MPs call on department of women to do its job & defend women

*This year's budget vote of the Department of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities took place during the government's year-long commemoration of Ms Charlotte Maxeke, one of the first South Africans to fight for African women's enfranchisement, **rreports Abel Mputing.** Ms Maxeke fought against patriarchy and colonial domination, and her call for women's emancipation and self-determination still resonates with the women's cause to this day.*



**Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of Women**

Delivering her budget vote speech before a National Assembly mini-plenary, the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, said two years ago, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the establishment of the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide to tackle gender-based violence (GBV). This was strengthened by the establishment of a ministerial committee and multi-sectorial approach.

Part of the legislative battle against GBV is a Bill that will pay special attention to the rights and recourse of GBV victims, to ensure justice, as well as coherent and systematic legal prescripts for handling GBV cases. The

Bill will reinforce gender budgeting in government departments, which will enforce compliance with the requirement that 40% of tenders in every department should be allocated to women.

The Minister also announced that women will be prioritised in land redistribution programmes, as one of the factors leading women to stay in abusive relationships is that they are not economically independent.

The Minister also reported that the department is paying special attention to youth unemployment. It will use the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to allocate funds to upskill the youth and facilitate the development of their entrepreneurial skills.

However, the departmental budget will hamper efforts to facilitate, monitor and evaluate inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral commitments to fight GBV and femicide. It will also diminish the mainstreaming of youth empowerment and people with disabilities.

Nevertheless, the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Ms Nonhlanhla Ndaba, welcomed that out of the department's budget of R763 million allocation, R479 million will go to the NYDA. "This will ensure that the youth are given training in technical, vocational skills and entrepreneurial development to ensure that they participate in the mainstream economy."

However, Ms Ndaba criticised the fact that R90 million will go to the Commission for Gender Equality, leaving R100 million for staff salaries and only R85 million will be left for goods and services. "More allocations are needed if we were to achieve the targets of core programmes aimed at addressing the rights of persons with disabilities."

She urged the department to intensify its role of monitoring and evaluating the policies and commitments aimed at enhancing the rights of women, youth and people with disabilities.

On budgetary cuts, NA MP, Mr Luvuyo Mphiti, claimed that this has reduced the department's objectives of monitoring and valuation without any effect on implementing its key priorities, as stated in its annual performance plans. The reduced budget indicates to him that the department is "not there to serve the interests of women, youth and people with disabilities, but to extend political patronage".

The department's commitment to fighting GBV was questioned by another NA MP, Ms Ntokozo Hlonhlanhla. "The department has failed to hold the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) accountable for the countless cases that go by without any prosecution and that have been thrown out of court due to poor investigation." 🌐



# Budget cuts will have big impact on social services

*The Portfolio Committee on Social Development heard recently that the operations of the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) will be significantly affected by a R600 million budget cut, writes Sibongile Maputi.*



When Sassa and the National Development Agency briefed the committee on their annual performance plans, Sassa's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Ms Totsie Memela, informed the committee that the Covid-19 pandemic has drastically increased the need for social assistance, with 10 million applications received for the social relief package.

The Minister of the Department of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu, led the briefing. She informed the committee that Covid-19 revealed much about the experiences of the people. "We should commit ourselves to improving the lives of our people," she said.

Committee members questioned why so much of the social services budget goes to compensating employees. They also wanted to know more about challenges with the R350 Covid-19 social assistance payments, Sassa's anti-corruption unit, irregular

expenditure and the impact of budget cuts on the entire portfolio.

Committee Member, Ms Liezl van der Merwe, applauded the Department of Social Development and Sassa for asking Cabinet and the National Treasury to extend the R350 grant. She asked whether the six million beneficiaries have received their payments. "Some beneficiaries have claimed on social media that some payments in some months have been skipped," she said.

Committee Member, Ms Bridget Masango, was concerned about the budget cuts. "What is the projected value of the child support grant in the 2022/23 financial year in light of these cuts? It seems the child support grant is being reduced when we are in need of more," she said.

Committee Member, Ms Alexandra Abrahams, asked what Sassa was doing to recover debt, as this would

offset budget cuts to some extent. She said it is crucial for Sassa not to do anything that will compromise the poor, including bowing to the demands of labour unions.

Sassa responded by saying that it has always had a fraud strategy and all it needs is a proper gatekeeping strategy to eliminate all fraud. Sassa assured committee Members that the 70% of beneficiaries who are paid through the South African Post Office are stringently validated. "We should have efficient mechanisms to recover erroneous payments and we need to ensure that there is consequence management," Ms Memela said.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Mondli Gungubele, noted that the Auditor-General's report on the entities is not good. "The things raised in that report are things that could be done; the matter requires urgent attention," he pleaded. 🌱

# Committee supports Department of Higher Education and Training's budget vote

*The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training, Science and Technology, Mr Philly Mapulane, supported the adoption of the Department of Higher Education and Training's budget vote in a National Assembly plenary session. The budget includes over R45 billion for student support, writes Mava Lukani.*



The departments of Higher Education and Training and of Science and Technology appeared before the committee recently to present their annual performance plans and budgets for the 2021/22 financial year. After engaging with those plans and budgets, the committee adopted them.

In supporting the adoption of the budget debate vote in a NA mini-plenary session recently, Mr Mapulane said notwithstanding the budget

reductions, the committee is hoping that the South African economy will bounce back and return to health. "We call on all who will be responsible for the implementation of this budget vote to do more with less and innovation is encouraged."

While recognising the ongoing debates that are part of the transformation of the university landscape, Mr Mapulane announced during the budget debate that the committee will be



convening a Colloquium on Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability on 28 May this year to further contribute towards the refinement of “ours and that of the sector’s understanding and application of these concepts”.


The department’s budget allocation for the 2021/22 financial year amounts to R115.5 billion, including skills levies. The department’s voted funds amount to R97.7 billion, shared amongst the six budget programmes. The bulk of the budget of the voted funds, which represents 86.06%, is apportioned to Programme 3: University Education, subsidies to universities, and allocation to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to support access to education through student funding, as well infrastructure efficiency grants.

Delivering his Budget Vote, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Dr Blade Nzimande, said his department will dedicate efforts in the 2021/22 financial year to address gender-based violence (GBV), with an allocation of R5 million towards GBV. The department, through Programme 2: Planning, Policy and Strategy, will report on the implementation of the GBV Framework by the sector.

On financial support to students, Minister Nzimande said NSFAS’s approved budget for 2020/21 is R41.5 billion, which excludes the approved R6.4 billion additional budget.

Following the shortfall experienced by NSFAS, Dr Nzimande said: “We reprioritised our departmental budget to ensure that all deserving and qualifying students are able to receive funding for the 2021 academic year from NSFAS. Irrespective of these challenges, NSFAS funding has increased more than

five-fold in six years, from R5.9 billion in 2014 to R34.7 billion in 2020. In the current financial year, NSFAS funding is expected to reach over R43 billion, a further increase of nearly R10 billion in just two years.”

In support of the expansion of access to the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system, the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) will award bursaries to PhD students and will pipeline postgraduate students. The DSI will also be placing graduates and students in DSI-funded work preparation programmes in science, engineering, technology and innovation institutions in support of the initiatives towards ensuring the responsiveness of the PSET system. 



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# Health Committee Chairpersons honour nurses on International Nurses Day

*Parliament, Wednesday, 12 May 2021 – The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, and the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Health and Social Services, Ms Maurencia Gillion, have joined the world in commemorating the 56th anniversary of International Nurses Day, writes Yoliswa Landu.*




Dr Dhlomo and Ms Gillion said: “This year is different as we remember and want to pay respect to nurses who have gone ahead of us, their families and their loved ones and the contributions that they have made in an exceptionally difficult year, 2020, when the country and the entire world was faced with the Covid-19 pandemic.”

Dr Dhlomo and Ms Gillion said nurses have been at the forefront in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and have been a reliable resource for the good health of society and the country as a whole. “We cannot have health system without them, they are the backbone of the health system,” they added.

Dr Dhlomo said: “We pay tribute to the nurses who walk around like wounded tigers, wounded physically and wounded psychologically, and those scars that we don’t see for the heavy load of work that they carried in

2020, we salute them. We wish the nurses strength and we wish them that God can carry them through and give them energy to carry on under these difficult conditions.”

The Chairpersons said they wanted “to make sure that all our nurses and other healthcare workers are vaccinated and we begin to heal the psychological scars they have and they carry on in this fight against Covid-19”.

They wished all nurses a “happy International Nurses Day even under these difficult conditions, may the nurses continue like Florence Nightingale who was known as ‘the lady with the lamp’ who looked after wounded soldiers during a time of war.” 



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# All 14 parties on the Section 194 Enquiry Committee will have proportional voting rights

*The National Assembly (NA) Rules Committee agreed unanimously to accept the Speaker of the National Assembly (NA) Speaker Ms Thandi Modise's decision to expand the composition of the Section 194 Enquiry Committee to 36 members and to give all NA political parties proportional voting rights.*



The committee will make enquiries to see if there are grounds for the removal from office of the Public Protector Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane. The previous composition of the committee announced on 7 April stipulated 26 members from the 14 NA political parties. Of the 26 members, 11 were voting members and 15 were non-voting members.

The revised composition to be implemented immediately increases overall membership to 36 members. All 36 will have voting rights in line with their proportional representation and membership will be:

- 19 members – African National Congress
- 4 members – Democratic Alliance
- 2 members – Economic Freedom Fighters

- 1 member each – Inkatha Freedom Party, African Christian Democratic Party, National Freedom Party, Freedom Front Plus, United Democratic Movement, GOOD, African Independent Congress, Congress of the People, Pan Africanist Congress, Al Jama-ah

The committee also resolved to allocate the African Transformation Movement a seat with voting rights, even though it formerly expressed its decision not to participate in the Section 194 committee's proceedings.

The Rules Committee has referred the Speaker's determination to the Subcommittee on the Review of Rules to be effected in the Rules of the Assembly.

The NA voted in favour of establishing the Section 194

Committee on 16 March. This decision was taken after adopting the report of an independent panel of experts, which recommended the establishment of the such a committee. In terms of the NA Rules, the Section 194 Committee has to conduct the enquiry, to establish whether the charges against the Public Protector are sustainable and to report to the NA for a decision.

The committee's report must give findings, recommendations and reasons for their recommendations. Such a report must also be scheduled for consideration and debate in the NA with appropriate urgency.

The committee must finish its work within a reasonable time and must elect its chairperson at its first meeting. 🇿🇦

## A Loyal Representative Of The People Passes On

The Presiding Officers (POs) of Parliament, the Speaker of the National Assembly (NA), Ms Thandi Modise, and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces Chairperson (NCOP), Mr Amos Maseko, extended their heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Member of Parliament Ms Mpho Adolphina Tongwane on her passing. Ms Tongwane was a member of the African National Congress (ANC).

Ms Tongwane joined Parliament in 2008 as a Member of the NA. She served

on the Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs and the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements.

The POs said Ms Tongwane was a hardworking and dedicated parliamentarian who served the people of South Africa with diligence, passion and commitment. Through her experience, knowledge and understanding of legislative and oversight matters, she made an immense contribution to the quality of laws and her other committee work.

They said this period has been one of the most difficult in Parliament's history, as the institution has lost people in the Covid-19 pandemic. Parliament has been left poorer by the passing of such a devoted public representative, with her untiring commitment and dedication to the service of the people.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Mr Fikile Xasa, said: "Ms Tongwane leaves an indelible mark that will remain as a shining legacy of her contribution in the

project of building the South African nation."

Ms Tongwane was a pleasant, lovely and soft-spoken person, Mr Xasa said, who was loved by all her colleagues and parliamentary officials in the committee for her wonderful disposition. "She will certainly

be missed and the committee is truly poorer without Ms Tongwane who brought a useful insight, experience and a unique perspective to the work of the committee." She took seriously her role as a public representative and served her people well. 🇿🇦



**Ms Mpho Adolphina Tongwane**