

in session



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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



*Youth Month
Edition*

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

Youth Day - Parliament calls on young people to help SA defeat covid19 and rebuild the economy

Parliament's Presiding Officers, led by Speaker of the National Assembly Ms Thandi Modise and Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces Mr Amos Masondo, joined the nation in commemorating Youth Day.



The historic event of 16 June 1976 still echoes in our minds as it remains immortalised in South Africa. Young people of South Africa rejected the brutal apartheid system by mobilising themselves and peacefully taking to the streets demanding that their voices be heard. The march was against an unjust education system aimed at undermining and restricting their intellectual development. The cruel apartheid system violently retaliated, killing many unarmed young people. The event became a defining moment in the history of South Africa serving as a stark reminder to all that democracy was achieved through bloodshed and sacrifice.

According to the Presiding Officers "there is no doubt that young people in South Africa today face a myriad of challenges, including the high rate of unemployment accompanied by various forms of social ills, poverty and the difficulties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic."

Additionally, the Labour Force Survey indicates a rise in the unemployment rate, meaning the official unemployment rate among the youth (18-34 years) stands at 46.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2021. The rate of unemployed university graduates stands at 9.3%.

This scenario has caused the Sixth Parliament to prioritise skills development through its constitutional mandate to oversee executive action. Most of this work is done at committee level, also known as Parliament's engine rooms where government ministers and senior government officials are held accountable for their actions. Further, through its constitutional mandate of providing a national forum for public consideration of issues, the hosting of the youth parliament helps young people bring to the fore their challenges. In return, Parliament can gauge the pulse of the youth and activate a programme of action.

Skills development and the

Fourth Industrial Revolution were amongst issues sharply raised in the 2020 youth parliament. Young people advocated for the overhaul of the education system and the strengthening of the TVET colleges. It will help mainstream them to be 'job creators rather than 'job seeker'.

Young people also called for widened opportunities to learn skills and optimise the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As such, to ensure that issues receive the necessary attention, one of the mechanisms employed by Parliament to establish progress on work done by the ministers is through ministerial briefing sessions. In August, the National Council of Provinces will have a Ministerial Briefing Session on Youth Poverty and Unemployment themed: "Interventions to address youth unemployment and poverty".

"Through our constitutional mandate and power, Parliament commits to addressing issues affecting young people. Our collective

efforts will help build a better quality of life for all young people free from all social ills", said the Presiding Officers.

As we mark Youth Day, Parliament urges South Africans to work for hand in glove with the government and help curb the spread of COVID-19. As the country moved back to alert level-3 to curb the spread of infections, the Presiding Officers called on all citizens, young people in particular, to adhere to all health safety protocols.

"We owe it to the 1976 young liberators to ensure that we build the South Africa of our dreams free from the pandemic and social ills. We shall overcome this traumatic period because we are a nation of hope. We want young people to be at the helm, driving the economic recovery post the pandemic. It is possible as the young people are ready to exploit all opportunities provided by the pandemic through the 4th Industrial revolution", added the Presiding Officers. 🇿🇦



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NCOP Youth Day Debate – SA Youth are central to meeting the goals of the NDP

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) held a debate to mark Youth Day on the theme: Youth Development Through Access to Higher Education and Expanded Access to Skills Development, writes Abel Mputing. Speakers affirmed the centrality of South African youth in the developmental agenda and political future of the South African youth.



In his opening address, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Mr Buti Manamela, reminded that this year’s celebration marks 25 years since the adoption of a democratic Constitution and 45 years after the outbreak of the June 16 Soweto Uprising. The government’s primary goal, he said, is to ensure that the youth acquires education and training to obtain the skills necessary to meet the goals of the National Development Plan (NDP).

“We have a resolve to skill the black youth by ensuring there is an increased uptake of black youth in higher education to expand and address skills shortages that are needed and their active participation in the labour market. This is linked to the department’s increase of funding for black students

from poor backgrounds. Well over R25 billion has been set aside to support students in universities for textbooks and living expenses.”

To prepare the youth for the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the department has heightened its investment in technology to avert the digital divide brought about by the advent of Covid-19 and to encourage the youth to acquire critical digital skills to curb skills shortages in this constantly expanding sector.

However, during the debate, many participants noted that the weak economy would struggle to carry the aspirations of the South African youth. Ms Karabo Khahau of the Free State Provincial Legislature said:

“Many South African youth is born in poverty and find it difficult to have access to tertiary education. And if they do and are qualified, they can’t find decent jobs because this economy can’t carry their hopes.”

She advised the government to encourage the youth to take artisan careers to gain the necessary skills to “compete, to enter and stay in the labour market. And to contribute in building our country’s economy”.

One of the young delegates to the NCOP, Mr Itumeleng Ntsube, called for the broadening of black economic empowerment requirements to include the youth and women. This will integrate them into the mainstream economy and bring about

inclusive growth.

Another NCOP delegate, Ms Brenda Mathevula, said today’s youth are still subjected to the same hardships as 45 years ago. “They are still getting shot and arrested by government when they call for equal and free education.” Like before, she said it’s still the black youth in underprivileged communities in rural areas that are compelled to study under the trees, in mud schools, with no textbooks and to be subjected to unqualified teachers. Under these conditions, the black youth will continue to have no full participation in the economy because they will remain unemployed, unemployable and uneducated.

NCOP Delegate, Mr Stephenus du Toit, said despite all the huge investment in education, billions of rands go to waste due to mismanagement in the sector. This has affected the youth’s skills development programmes and led to the loss of job opportunities. However, he urged young people not to give up hope.

A Member of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Mr Beki Lubes, advocated for the youth to be employed in the agricultural sector. This will ensure food security and make them aware of the value chain of this sector, the career paths and entrepreneurial opportunities it can afford them, and this will reduce the rate youth unemployment.

Mr Mbulelo Bara called on the private sector to invest



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, Malatswa Molepo, 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

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

in technical colleges to improve their standards and make them the institutions of choice for the youth. He added that the government should play a role in creating awareness of the relevance of technical colleges in our economy and in addressing skills shortages in the job market. "Government must promote technical colleges as an alternative sector for skills development, youth entrepreneurship, career paths and employment if we were to ensure that the youth play an active role in our mainstream economy, in their lifetime." 🇿🇦

Struggle stalwart remembers June 16, 1976

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the 16 June 1976 student uprisings., Insession writer Mava Lukani took the opportunity to talk to Mr Murphy Morobe, who was a student leader at Morris Isaacson High School on that fateful day.



Mr Murphy Morobe

Mava Lukani: Your demand of "Down with Afrikaans" in your memorandum of demands was a lobbying point and one of the students' central demands.

Murphy Morobe: To us, "Down with Afrikaans!" was a rebellion, not against the language per se, but against its application by the apartheid regime as a tool for the deepening of oppression against Africans. We understood its imposition as having nothing to do with the educational advancement of the black child, but rather a well-established disposition of conquerors to diminish the conquered of their sense of self-esteem by denying them their inalienable right to their language in which their values and cultural norms are embedded.

ML: Was Morris Isaacson High School the springboard

of the student uprising and its driving force?

MM: Morris Isaacson was one of a number of high schools in Soweto that took the struggle to the streets on the June 16. It was Orlando West Junior Secondary School, together with Belle Primary School, that had been boycotting classes in protest against Afrikaans long before June 16. It was through the mobilisation of all the high schools by the South African Student Movement (SASM) that a critical mass of student support was reached, leading up to the day of the march. So while Morris Isaacson played a pivotal role, it cannot be solely characterised as the "springboard" of the student uprising.

ML: You were in the same class with Tsietsi Mashinini. Can you briefly tell us about him and his vision for a non-racial and democratic future South Africa?

MM: Tsietsi Mashinini's leadership qualities were not in doubt among those of us who were involved with him in the Morris Isaacson branch of the South African Student Movement. An articulate and extroverted individual, he was to be the natural choice for chairmanship of the Action Committee we established on 13 June 1976 with the primary responsibility of organising the entire high school student body of Soweto to take to the streets in protest on 16 June.

He, like most of us, embraced a vision of a South Africa in which education would be free and underpinned by values of democracy, itself predicated on the key principle of black liberation from the yoke of apartheid.

ML: June, 16 1976 will remain as a watershed day in the history of the South African struggle and this year marks the 45th anniversary of that fateful day. What is your comment on that?

MM: There can be no gainsaying the fact that the event of June 16th, 45 years ago, was pivotal in changing and expediting the course of liberation leading to victory over the apartheid government. From protesting against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black schools, the protest rapidly progressed from being merely about the language issue to a full-blown struggle against apartheid rule. It

marked the instant arousal of political consciousness among the oppressed and was given expression through the slogans which began to proliferate across the length and breadth of our country, calling not only for the reversal of the government's language policy, but expressed brazen demands to end apartheid and grant political freedom and equality to all.

ML: We are told that the protest was inherently non-violent. Some of today's students have been known to torch and destroy their resources to put pressure on the authorities. What is your comment?

MM: Following on the deaths resulting from police brutality in trying to disperse the marchers on the day, the evening sky was lit by scores of government buildings that were set alight by township residents angered by the police use of live ammunition against unarmed student protesters. All government infrastructure was targeted, as it was seen as representing the apartheid system. It must be reiterated that it was never the intention of the organisers of the marchers to be violent. However, our alienation from these representations of apartheid rule over us was total. As they say, the genie was out of the bottle, and it was never going back. 🇿🇦



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Youth in the Covid-19 era and beyond: Development through free higher education and expanded access to skills development

The Covid-19 pandemic has left devastating effects on all people across the globe. In South Africa, the impact of Covid-19 is felt by every part of society, particularly young women and men, girls and boys. Over the years, the South African youth faced challenges ranging from academic and economic exclusion to limited entrepreneurial support. These challenges are worsened by the lingering impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, writes Parliament's Public Education Office.



Government's response to Covid-19 and the impact on young people guided by the Disaster Management Act (2002), Covid-19 regulations were put in place to combat the spread of the coronavirus. It is not business as usual. For example, educational institutions have had to change the way in which learning takes place. In response to dealing with lockdown regulations, new ways of working and learning have taken effect. At the beginning of lockdown, physical and face-to-face classroom and lecture-based learning was replaced by online learning platforms.

Since lockdown level 4,

learning has been carried out by means of the combination of face-to-face and online to ensure that learning takes place in the changing lockdown levels. The lingering question, "Is the youth well prepared and equipped to adjust to these movements to the digitisation of the economy?" (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020). There are disparities in terms of inequitable social and economic status and digital access to ensure equal entry into online learning and in the new working realities. Not all South African learners are able to access and benefit from the combination of face-to-face and online learning.

"While school closures seem

to present a logical solution to enforcing social distancing within communities, prolonged closures tend to have a disproportionately negative impact on the most vulnerable students. They have fewer opportunities for learning at home, and their time out of school may present economic burdens for parents who may face challenges in finding prolonged childcare, or even adequate food in the absence of school meals. There is a need to balance the return to school and managing the associated risks of Covid-19 to learners and educators. Many tertiary level learners may not complete their studies and might not qualify to enter the formal job market, joining the thousands of unemployed young people (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020).

The Bill of Rights addresses the need and responsibility of the state to put measures in place "to promote the achievement of equality" and "to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination". This means that the time for digital transformation for South Africa has arrived. It requires an inclusive approach that benefits every South African, particularly young people, irrespective of geographic location and other divides.

The National Development Plan (NDP) presents a way forward for the successful transformation of our nation. It sets out how to do this by drawing on the skills and energies of the nation to grow a more inclusive economy, enhance the capacity of the state, build new capabilities,

promote leadership, and foster partnerships across various fronts. The NDP also mandates the government to develop a national e-strategy, which will underpin the development of an inclusive information society and knowledge economy. The government's economic recovery plan must include and involve the youth to ease the impact of COVID-19 on young South Africans.

Youth development advancement goals and commitments are outlined in the National Youth Policy 2020 (NYP2020). Free higher education and skills development are urged through bursaries (e.g. National Student Financial Aid Scheme and the Lushaka Bursary Scheme), internships and learnerships. The initiation, facilitation, implementation, coordination and monitoring of youth development interventions to reduce youth unemployment is the core mandate of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). Youth need to engage with the NYDA to identify opportunities available to improve their lives by actively participating in youth development initiatives.

Parliament's response to the youth of the Covid-19 era

Parliament's committees have also had to adapt to new ways of carrying out their law-making, oversight and public involvement mandate in the work of Parliament. For example, the Portfolio Committee on Communications called the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies for a briefing to discuss their plans to move

the economy towards digital transformation.

During the briefing session, the department discussed its annual performance plan (APP) including plans to transition the economy to the digital era. Some of the key outcomes reflected in the department's five-year plan (2020-2025) include:

- Plans to implement digital transformation legislation;
- Amendment of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (2002) to create enabling legislation for the digital transformation of the South African economy; and
- Implementation of the Digital and Future Skills strategy, to ensure that the majority of South Africans are skilled in the aspects of digital transformation.

The Digital and Future Skills Strategy has since been gazetted and is a public document.

Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Communications will monitor the implementation of the department's plan and ensure accountability. Young people must participate to make sure that laws being processed by Parliament represent their views. Youth also have a crucial role to play in Parliament's oversight function and the accountability of government departments. Those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process, including its monitoring and evaluation. This process will ensure that youth have their say on all matters of concern to them, including job creation opportunities to alleviate

poverty and acquiring the necessary skills to adapt to the new normal.

Participation of youth in Parliament's legislative and other processes of contributes to a multi-sectoral participatory democracy that emphasises the broad participation of stakeholders in the direction and operation of governance. The Youth Parliament held in 2020 agreed to resolutions to advance the interests of youth. One of the resolutions was to realise free education for all.

Active citizenship must be facilitated and encouraged by remembering the sacrifices made by the youth of 1976. By doing so, the youth can build on this legacy and contribute to the realisation of the goals of the African Youth Charter (2006). This charter provides a strategic framework for youth empowerment and development activities at the continental, regional and national levels across Africa. It addresses key issues affecting youth, including youth participation, employment, sustainable livelihoods, education, skills development, health, national youth policy, peace and security, law enforcement, youth in the diaspora, and youth with disabilities.

YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2020 RESOLUTIONS

- Reconsider the film and television sector support by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) to ensure that it supports youth and local companies;
- Develop youth specific incentives to support programmes, similar to the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) for black entrepreneurs;
- Develop strategies in collaboration with the private sector to reduce the cost of data for the purposes of education and small businesses;
- Free education for all must be realised;
- Persons with disabilities

target should reach 7% by 2030 and the shortages of special needs schools should be addressed;

- Enterprises must get contracts only if they can demonstrate that 25% of their employees are youth;
- Create a state bank that will address the challenges of lack of access to finance for micro and small medium enterprises and youth owned enterprises;
- The NYDA should help young people formulate successful business plans before they submit applications for funding;
- Youth business ventures in the agriculture sector must be encouraged;
- There should be a transition strategy for youth to move from internships to jobs;
- Open up government infrastructure to private companies that support the employment of youth;
- Provide a grant for youth looking for work to cover the cost of preparing and sending CVs to prospective employers;
- Youth Parliament should not be a once off event and Parliament should prepare a progress report on progress made on issues raised in previous Youth Parliaments; and
- There must be greater representation of youth and vulnerable groups in Parliament. 🇿🇦



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NA Speaker highlights need to invest in ICT

Tabling of Parliament's Budget Vote in the National Assembly (NA), the Speaker of the NA, Ms Thandi Modise, highlighted the need for the national legislature to invest in information and communications technology (ICT) and have a relook at the employment processes and models to adjust to the fast-changing world of work, Sakhile Mokoena.



Ms Modise said in response to the coronavirus, Parliament had to adjust to new organisational and procedural solutions for legislative work to continue during Covid-19. "We are ready to accept that virtual, hybrid and work from home systems will be with us for a while as we must hold the executive to account. The challenges of the lockdown notwithstanding, we managed to have oversight work (first in clusters and then as committees). Reports were produced. Oversight visits were conducted. Law-making sessions took place. Public hearings were held; interviews for crucial government posts were held; quarterly reports, and budget votes conducted. Our international work, as well as international agreements, were processed. We held at least 48 virtual meetings."

The Speaker also affirmed that Parliament will continue to focus on the resolve to strengthen its performance and to improve efficiency in law-making and oversight, and to constantly look at the performance and needs of committees and individual Members of Parliament

(MPs) to ensure that they adequately represent the public.

Ms Modise also acknowledged that though times have changed, the country and world were still dealing with poverty, inequality and rising joblessness, and that the coronavirus pandemic has simply increased and exaggerated the contradictions under a non-performing world economy, which engender deep feelings of fear and frustration.

She also touched on the Constitutional Court ruling that independent candidates should be allowed to stand for office without belonging to any political party, and said Parliament must meet the deadline given by the court to enact the required law.

Parliament also hopes to increase public awareness by featuring programmes and documentaries on Parliament TV, to boost access to information and educational materials to the public, and to increase participation in law-making and oversight.

The Co-Chairperson of the

Joint Standing Committee on the Financial Management of Parliament, Ms Peace Mabe, said the submissions at the Zondo Commission of Inquiry into allegations of state capture were critical and should be used as a lesson to improve the work of Parliament.

"The submissions have taught us that our committees are not adequately resourced, are not vigilant enough, do not follow through enough and often are reliant on what comes before them rather than taking what is presented as a trigger to begin their own investigations.

"Our oversight must ask questions, follow up on issues and not draw assumptions. When allegations are made, committees must demand facts and evidence and act informed by the balance of evidence. For this to happen, we have to address the resources allocated to Parliament," Ms Mabe said.

She said the current budget allocation to Parliament,

by the admission of the National Treasury, is going to have a negative impact on Parliament's efforts to increase its effectiveness. Parliament's allocation for this financial year is R2.6 billion. Ms Mabe proposed a thorough review on how Parliament is resourced without compromising on its independence and constitutional status.

The Deputy Chief Whip of the Official Opposition in the NA, Mr Jacques Julius, claimed that the Parliament's programmes, targets and performance indicators are skewed, and that there was no performance indicator for quality on the budget vote. "These targets and performance indicators will not wake up Parliament. This budget will keep Parliament fast asleep and an expected apology again over the years to come," said Mr Julius.

He also accused parliamentarians from the ruling party of not doing enough to hold the executive accountable and called on them to "ask uncomfortable questions and stop the sweetheart questions" to Ministers and Deputy Ministers.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), through its Member of Parliament, Ms Veronica Mente, rejected the proposed budget of Parliament, arguing that it was informed by "a misguided austerity doctrine which seeks to collapse the state, including the collapse of the democratically elected public representatives to hold the government accountable".

She also added her voice on the debate about the feasibility of relocating Parliament, saying that to continue to have Parliament in Cape Town was "simply to please colonial arrangements that sought to bring together white colonial racists. We must move Parliament to a central location accessible to the majority of our people

to make Parliament truly the people's Parliament. Our people from Mpumalanga, Limpopo, North West, Free State and some people from KwaZulu-Natal will be able to drive to Parliament, make their input on legislation, hold the executive to account and still be able to go back to their families, something that they cannot do currently because Cape Town for many is a very foreign country".

Mr Narend Singh, the Chief Whip of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in the NA, commended Parliament for its response to Covid-19 by adopting a new normal as well as embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution in terms of the manner in which parliamentary business was conducted.

"The question that must be asked is whether we were able to fulfil our mandate and responsibilities as servants of the citizenry. The answer to some extent is in the affirmative. We admit we have passed budget, considered legislation, received ministerial reports and had question sessions. However, due to Covid-19 we were not able to engage with the public as per normal. We are accountable to the people in the first place," he said.

Mr Singh suggested that the

funds that Parliament saved from travel and hoisting events such as the State of the Nation Address should be reallocated to Parliamentary Constituency Offices to ensure these were fully functional and resourced. "These offices should be functioning as a conduit allowing constituency challenges and problems to reach the highest levels of government. However, looking at the budget set aside for constituency offices and allowances, the objective of taking Parliament to the people will most certainly not be met.

"The IFP suggests that we utilise the savings from travel and other costs and reallocate them to ensure that constituency offices are viable conduits in addressing and attending to queries from members of the public," added Mr Singh.

Mr Corne Mulder of the Freedom Front Plus dismissed the argument that Parliament's problems stem from inadequately resourced committees. "In my view the problem is that the executive and legislative branches of the state are too close to one another, if there is stronger separation between the executive and the legislative branch, it will be better and more easy to keep the executive to account," Mr

Mulder said.

The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) wants Parliament to return to a state of normality and for the Covid-19 state of emergency regulations to be subjected to parliamentary scrutiny. "If we are serious about holding the executive to account, we need to amend the Disaster Management Act to improve parliamentary oversight and to stop executive encroachment on the legislative authority of Parliament," said Mr Steve Swart of the ACDP.

The call for Parliament to go back to normality was supported by Mr Nqabayomzi Kwankwa of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) with the view that "while virtual meetings have served their purpose, but to some extent Parliament is beginning to lose its home ground advantage due to virtual meetings". He also suggested that at some point Parliament needs to consider conducting a study on the effectiveness of virtual oversight meetings.

Reacting to the Speaker's submission to the Zondo Commission where she apologised for Parliament's failure to follow up on allegations of state capture, Mr Kwankwa argued that "it was not Parliament that failed,

but some MPs that failed South Africa. It is regrettable that the Speaker apologised for Parliament, but it was not Parliament that failed, it was ANC deployees and MPs that failed South Africa. While the opposition tried to hold the executive to account, the ruling party mollycoddled and defended the executive in committees and in the House".

The National Freedom Party's Mr Ahmed Shaik-Emam was concerned about the lack of follow-up on committee oversight reports and implementation of recommendations. "The issue of oversight is a concern. While all political parties participate in the oversight process, all we do when we come back is that the reports are adopted by Parliament. That's where it ends and it goes into the bin, with very little or nothing happening, no consequences based on the reports and our findings, and we believe that is a problem," he said.

Mr Shaik-Emam also demanded better clarity on the management of constituency funds, saying currently there is not enough clarity on exactly what the funds can and cannot be used for. "We want more clarity, but also importantly, to ensure that those funds are used for the right purpose, that is, to promote Parliament to the people," said Mr Shaik-Emam.

Al Jama'ah complained about the lack of support from the Parliamentary Legal Services to smaller parties in drafting and processing Private Members' Bills (PMB). "Where Parliament is lacking in supporting Private Members' Bills by smaller parties, they can't discriminate against us. We submitted a PMB some time ago and there seems to be no progress. Smaller parties must be given the same assistance as the governing party," pleaded Al Jama'ah Member of the National Assembly, Mr Ganief Hendricks. 🇷🇵



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Covid-19 increases Parliament's resolve to embrace the 4th Industrial Revolution

In the Parliament's Budget Vote, the Chairperson of the National Council of Province (NCOP), Mr Amos Masondo, gave a broad overview of how the NCOP fared in the last financial year and what it seeks to improve on, writes Abel Mputing.



Mr Masondo reflected on the impact on Parliament's work of Covid-19 and budget cuts, as well as Parliament's swift adjustment to such challenges. In response to Covid-19, he stated: "We responded quickly and decisively by adopting virtual and hybrid platforms to ensure that we fulfilled our constitutional mandate whilst minimising the risk of transmission in the parliamentary precinct."

While Parliament embraced the Fourth Industrial Revolution in conducting its work, the advent of Covid-19 hastened this resolve. "Our view is that the impact of the 'new normal' will require Parliament to continue to accelerate its digital journey." He conceded that capacity will

have to be built to ensure that Members and staff are able to adopt and embrace these new technologies and capabilities.

Despite challenges, the digital migration has increased public participation. "The majority of the meetings of committees, public hearings and plenaries of the Houses of Parliament were broadcast and streamed live on social media channels and radio, and this increased the level of public access and participation in the work of Parliament," he added.

Mr Masondo said Parliament is also on course with its plans towards free-to-air television and the creation of radio broadcast services that will sustain over 90% awareness levels and continue to boost participation levels.

In spite of challenges, Mr Masondo pointed out that the NCOP adopted 25 Bills, forming part of the NCOP's contribution to bettering the lives of the people. In line with its constitutional mandate to protect the integrity of the three spheres of government, Mr Masondo said: "We processed 14 notices of intervention in the local sphere of government. But we remain worried by the increase in the number of repeat interventions."

One of the critical interventions in this financial year, he said, is the inception of an oversight plan to coordinate oversight priorities and activities of committees, Houses and legislatures, including changes to the

parliamentary programme to provide more time for committee and constituency activities.

Amidst the need to improve MPs' law-making and oversight capacities and to ensure Parliament is innovative in executing its mandate, Mr Masondo mentioned the impact of budget cuts. "There are projections of R257 million cuts in 2021/22, R339 million in 2022/23 and R296 million in 2023/24." This will put a squeeze on Parliament's strategic plans and Parliament has therefore called on Treasury to consider parliament's budgetary baseline review.

Participating in the debate, Ms Sonja Boshoff, expressed concern about the lack of robust engagement with the legislation that comes before the NCOP. "This contributes to the NCOP simply rubber-stamping the National Assembly's decisions. The NCOP must take its law-making mandate seriously," she reiterated.

Ms Dikeledi Mahlangu said the NCOP's work is highly complex and that the workshops offered to Members of Parliament (MPs) to familiarise themselves with its work are insufficient. Turning to law-making, she remarked that the legal interpretation of law during law-making is critical. Instead of being capacitated with this skill set, "we are made to rely on the technical assistance of Parliament's legal department. As a result, we become dependent on them and we are never in a position to master it".

She said this applies to oversight as well. "During our orientation, we are not equipped with the necessary skills to analyse policies, to have consummate financial acumen, monitoring and evaluation capabilities to conduct effective and efficient oversight over the provinces, departments and the complex web of state-owned

enterprises, which all require different skills sets," she said.

Mr Moletsane Moletsane said Parliament's 8.7% cut is higher than that of the government departments. "How is Parliament expected to fulfil its mandate when its budget is lower than those it's meant to oversee?" he asked.

Making an analogy to underscore the effect of budget cuts, the House Chairperson for Committees, Mr Jomo Nyambi, said: "How do you expect under-resourced police officers to pursue wealthy criminals?" Comparing South Africa to the United Kingdom (UK), he said: "In the UK, a committee Member has more than five assistants, ranging from legal and policy experts to economists if need be in order for the committee Member to have sufficient support to conduct his or her work efficiently. With so much cuts, that is a bridge too far for us."

The Chief Whip of the NCOP, Mr Seiso Mohai, said there is a growing realisation that the constitutional role of the NCOP needs to be reviewed in order for it to play a catalytic role in provincial matters, local government and traditional authorities.

This review would frame the new conceptual and strategic direction of public participation and should consist of stakeholders from government and civil society to academia. This will assist the NCOP to have an outcomes-based approach that "measures its success and its failures objectively". It will also assist the NCOP to rise and claim its rightful role in the intergovernmental sphere of the state. "And it's necessary because we have far greater battles ahead." 🇿🇦

President outlines plans to overhaul & stabilise state-owned enterprises

The Presidency's Budget Vote was the last to be tabled for debate in the National Assembly (NA), one of the final steps in an intensive parliamentary process of scrutinising and analysing government's allocations and spending plans. The President promised better coordination and implementation of government programmes, reports Sakhile Mokoena.



Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa

President Cyril Ramaphosa opened the debate by explaining that the work of his office gives substance to cooperative governance and facilitates private/public partnerships to build a capable and developmental state. This budget, he explained, seeks to create a more effective Presidency in directing and coordinating the implementation of government programmes. Since the start of President Ramaphosa's administration, the office has made efforts to realign the Presidency to more effectively drive the transformation of society and the economy.

"Eight months ago, we launched the Presidential Employment Stimulus, the largest and fastest scale-up of public employment in our country's history. And, since its inception, this programme has been making a difference in the lives of South Africans across the length and breadth

of our country. To date, the Presidential Employment Stimulus has supported nearly 700 000 opportunities," President Ramaphosa said.

Of these, 422 000 are jobs that have been created or retained, 110 000 are awards issued for livelihoods support, and a further 162 000 are opportunities where awards are currently in process. The Presidency has developed an online dashboard where citizens can track progress in the implementation of the stimulus, pioneering a new approach to transparency and accountability. The stimulus has played a crucial role in supporting vulnerable households to keep working and earning an income, while at the same time benefitting the communities in which they work.

"It has incubated new approaches to coordination and collaboration across the government to

achieve a single objective, demonstrating the powerful results of a whole-of-government approach. A further R11 billion has been allocated for the continuation of the Presidential Employment Stimulus in the current financial year," he said.

The President also reported on plans to stabilise state-owned enterprises (SOEs), saying that while there has been important progress, these efforts will not be sufficient, on their own, to enable these entities to make a contribution to economic and social progress.

"That is why government envisages a fundamental overhaul of the SOE model to address not only the deficiencies of the immediate past, but also the requirements of national development into the future. The Presidential Review Committee on SOEs laid the foundations for rethinking

the role, governance and composition of this crucial portfolio of entities. Through the Presidential SOE Council, we have created a dedicated structure, tapping on expertise from all of society, to guide this reform," he told the National Assembly.

Meanwhile, on the mass Covid-19 vaccination programme, the President acknowledged that the rollout was delayed by several challenges, but assured MPs (Members of Parliament) that the public vaccination drive is now gathering pace.

In addition, South Africa is leading a campaign to create vaccine manufacturing capabilities on the African continent. "Despite the high burden of disease in Africa, we have to import most of our vaccines, therapeutics and other medications. Manufacturing our own vaccines will enable us to overcome the current

pandemic and respond to future health emergencies," said President Ramaphosa.

Furthermore, the government has had to deal with the impact of coronavirus on human health and respond to its impact on the economy, on businesses, on jobs and on people's livelihoods. These responses have included wage support, expanded protection, small business financing by government and a loan guarantee scheme to support banking sector lending.

The support package has helped to shield society from some of the economic damages and laid the basis for a concerted plan to ensure a strong and sustained economic recovery.

Members of the NA react to the Presidency Budget Vote

As parliamentary rules dictate, the first political party to react to the Budget Vote was the majority party, the African National Congress (ANC). On this occasion, the ANC's Deputy Chief Whip, Ms. Doris Dlakude, declared the ANC's support for the budget. She spoke about her party's commitment to fight fraud and corruption in government, as well as its transformation agenda.

"Corruption is the cancer that is slowly destroying our beautiful country. We are tired of being labelled as corrupt just because we are members of the ANC. It cannot be business as usual that we are all painted with the same brush. Corruption doesn't have a name or a surname; those found to have committed fraud and corruption must be dealt with accordingly, be it in

government or private sector," said Ms Dlakude.

The Deputy Chief Whip also urged South Africans to stand together behind the Constitution and be part of efforts to build a non-sexist, non-racist and democratic South Africa. "The National Development Plan urges us to collaborate as a nation to advance the transformation agenda. This means that civil society, religious bodies and communities across the board must stand in unity with government in order to build a cohesive society," she said.

While the ANC applauded the Presidency's performance and declared support for the President's plans, other political parties in the National Assembly were dissatisfied with the Presidency's performance, with some even proposing the establishment of a parliamentary committee to oversee the Presidency.

The Democratic Alliance's Mr Dean Macpherson, accused the President of "breaking every single promise" he made to the country, after filling the nation with hope and new dawn. "You promised growth of 5% by 2023, you delivered 1,9% this year. You promised one million paid internships, you only delivered 32 000 by 2019. You promised jobs to young people, today 74% of them are unemployed. You promised to halve violent crime, yet there is an increase in rape and murder. You promised to get rid of corruption, yet you have a Health Minister mired in allegations of corruption," Mr Macpherson stated.

He also called for the scrapping of black economic empowerment (BEE) and for the government to "build the economy for the many and not for the few".

EFF accuses the President of lacking inspiration Mr Julius Malema, the Leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), said the President lacks inspiration and doesn't believe in what he

says. "In 2018 you said at the centre of your national agenda is creating jobs, especially for the youth. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey picture points to a dire state of affairs, a crisis that you have created. Unemployment stands at more than 42%, and close to 50% for black people is the worst level ever," said Mr Malema.

The EFF also claimed that the President did not believe in the expropriation of land without compensation, and was not convinced about taking the land from colonial settlers. "We want the Constitution to recognise that land, like mineral resources and water, is a natural resource and a common heritage which belongs to all our people. Let us expropriate all land and place it under the custodianship of the democratic state," he said.

He further explained that custodianship is not the same as nationalisation: "When we talk about nationalisation, the state takes full control of whatever asset and uses whatever is nationalised for the collective benefit of the population. However, when we talk about custodianship, the state does not take the land to use it. The land is only in the state's custody as a conduit or to facilitate for people to access land."

Inkatha Freedom Party Leader, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, questioned the President on why the government only implemented reforms and lowered the cost of doing business in response to Covid-19, while the economy has been struggling for decades.

He also raised concerns over the absence of a parliamentary committee responsible for oversight on the Presidency. "The need for a parliamentary committee to oversee the Presidency is becoming urgent. We are not able to scrutinise the budget at committee level. Let us open the Presidency for scrutiny and oversight by this

Parliament," Prince Buthelezi proposed.

FF+ citizens have a right to protect themselves The Freedom Front (FF) Plus was concerned about the planned amendments to the Firearms Control Act, arguing this move would deny citizens the right to protect themselves from criminals. "It is an obligation of the President to ensure a capable and effective police service to protect the people of South Africa against criminals. If people cannot be protected by the South African Police Service, how do you expect them not to be able to protect themselves by means of firearms? Please stop this insane amendment of the Firearms Act," said FF Plus Leader, Mr Pieter Groenewald.

The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) also added its opposition voice to the proposed amendments to the Firearms Act. "The ACDP wants to know why the government plans to disarm law-abiding citizens and deny them the right to protect themselves against criminals," said ACDP MP, Mr Steve Swart.

Mr Bantu Holomisa of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) said: "Mr President, the Constitution empowers you to appoint Ministers, but also to remove them. You never act, not even when there is evidence of corruption, with these nauseating exposures of Ministers and their families thriving due to access to government business, like Minister Mkhize and the allegation that he signed the R150 million contract with Digital Vibes, which paid for the family's house renovations and also gave R300 000 to, and bought a Land Cruiser for his son."

The National Freedom Party (NFP) used the debate to advocate for the downgrading of the South African Embassy in Israel, in order to put pressure on Israel to respect international law and human rights.

NFP Member of Parliament,

Mr Ahmed Shaik-Emam, also reminded South Africans not to forget the role played by countries like Palestine in supporting South Africa during the apartheid years.

The GOOD party was concerned about the unemployment figures and poor economic growth. GOOD MP, Mr Shaun August, said getting the economy back to growth must be the responsibility of every sector and not just government, to heed the call to put South Africa back on track.

Mr Lulama Ntshayisa of the African Independent Congress (AIC) also supported the proposal to have a parliamentary committee that will be responsible for oversight on the Presidency. He also called for the vaccine rollout to be fast-tracked, as currently the "vaccine rollout was very slow compared to the speed at which the virus is spreading".

The Congress of the People's (Cope's) Willie Madisha urged the President to reduce the executive by merging some departments. The party also wants the President to rescue important SOEs and deal with corruption.

Responding to the debate, President Ramaphosa said the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has set the country's economic progress back many years. "It has made South Africans poorer. It has made hunger more widespread and it has directly affected the health and well-being of hundreds of thousands of people. It has made the task of growing an inclusive economy and transforming our society that much more difficult," he said.

But it is equally important, he continued, that we recognise that our own weaknesses and shortcomings have hampered the task of building a new society and achieving a better life for all. "We must, as we have done, acknowledge that there have been failures of governance in several

municipalities, in departments and in state-owned entities," he said.

Speaking about corruption, the President said it deprives the poor of resources that are rightfully theirs. It starves the economy of investment in that those who would want to invest in our economy are kept away by the stench of corruption. "It leads to a degradation of public infrastructure and services, and tragically, it ultimately costs lives."

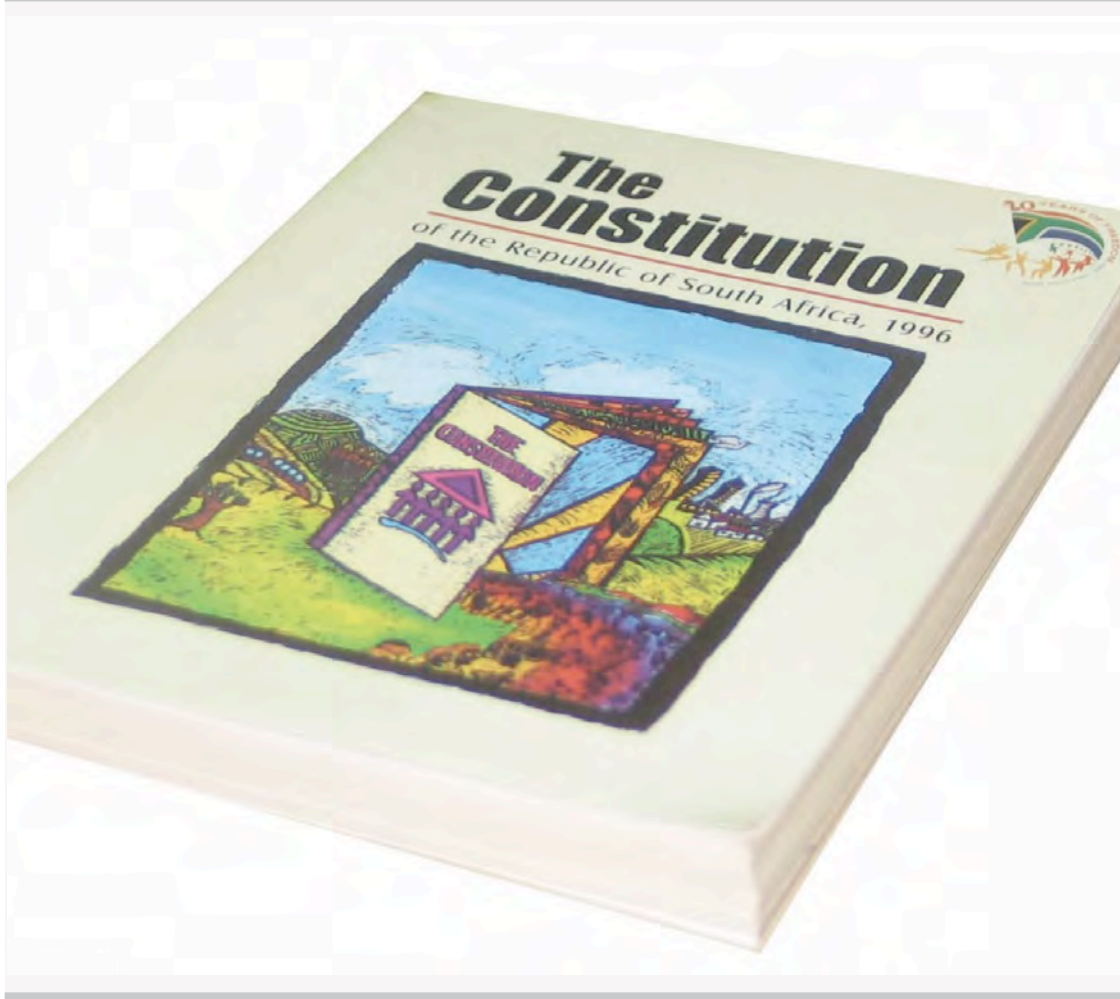
He said the Presidency was determined to address all the challenges, both those rooted deep in our past and those that manifest themselves today. 🇿🇦



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Parliament commemorates 25 years of the Constitution

Parliament held a joint sitting of the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) to observe the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, writes Abel Mputing.



Members of Parliament (MPs) paid homage to the courage of those who brought it to fruition and ensured that it broke with the inhumanity of the past. The Constitution ushered in new democratic precepts that became the founding architecture of South Africa's constitutional democracy.

Opening the debate, the Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, said: "We affirm the adoption of the boldest inscription of our Constitution, which is a cornerstone of our infant democracy and the radical aspirations of our collective future. This Constitution is a testimony of the ingenuity of a legion of countless brave leaders, of heroes and heroines whose radical aspirations for our future and their common democratic

principles are mirrored in it."

The leaders ensured that the principles of our democratic struggle were realised. "One of which is Oliver Tambo whose document Ready to Govern shapes the philosophy of our current Constitution. It's this document that gave birth to the precepts that are today the architecture of our constitution."

Dr Pandor said South African history resembles a long tradition of systematic racial exploitation, and our key challenge is to reverse the socio-economic injustices visited upon the vulnerable people of our country. "This moment affords us an opportunity to assess what more needs to be done to ensure that our people benefit from a document that sets out their ambitions and future aspirations of freedom,

equality and human rights."

The Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Ms Sylvia Lucas, said: "The Constitution is a result of many agitations, this includes the Women's Charter which was inceptioned in 1954. Its 12 articles articulate the equal recognition of women's rights in all aspects of life, which are now enshrined in the Bill of Rights of our Constitution. Freedom "is a point of reference for the discourse on gender equality – and for the inception of positive sets of gender tools and instruments and their machinery which underpin the theory of change".

"We found these sets of gender tools lacking in provinces during our Provincial Women's Charter sessions due to lack of resources, and lack of engendered responsive to gender budgeting to foster

women empowerment "to improve women's material conditions and to change pattern of ownership of means of production in favour of women."

Ms Natasha Mazzone of the NA said: "The inception of the Constitution signalled a change of a nation united in diversity. A nation that seeks to restore the culture of human rights and to free the potential of each and every individual. We are, therefore, proud for those who wrote this document for their forward thinking and inclusivity. But also, it's essential to hold accountable those who undermine it. Those who undermine our Constitution are engaged in an act of treason. They should not be ignored; they should be put behind bars."

She urged parliamentarians to ensure that the Constitution reigns supreme. "It's therefore our job to protect the constitution at all cost. We have sworn to an oath of upholding it. Holding it we shall. May our Constitution reign supreme."

MP Ms Ntombovuyo Mente said: "But if truth be told, the Constitution is a stone wall for the perpetrators of injustices. It supports the continuation of racial discrimination. We must ask ourselves what the struggle was for? If it continued to sustain a system that suppresses our people.

"We were not fighting for vague equalities. We won't allow a situation in which colonisers continue to live a life of kings in our lands. To keep the land while we remain landless."

As it stands, "This Constitution is a pact between the political elite and the colonisers. We will amend this Constitution to take the land from thieves and we will fight until we attain land restitution and economic freedom in our life time."

Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi said one of the sterling achievements of the Constitution is its proclamation

of one law for one nation. He said: "But what it failed to achieve is to recognise indigenous and customary laws." As a result of that, he said, there is no provision in it for the roles and responsibilities of traditional leadership. There have been promises to that effect, but such promises have been broken. "I will not retire as an MP before the finalisation of land expropriation clause in the Constitution," he added.

Mr Petrus Mulder said the South African Constitution is hailed as the jewel crown of the best in the world, if so why is South Africa faced with so many troubles? Is it because of the ruling party or of the policies it is based on, he asked. He blamed much of the current woes on the racial provisions of the Constitution. In his view, 25 years of the Constitution marks the 25 years of misrule through the courtesy of the provision of the Constitution.

The President of South African Local Government Association (Salga), Ms Thembi Nkadameng, said: "In keeping with the precepts of the Constitution, we have made strides in realising the rights of our people and to uphold their human dignity. As we reflect on the commitments of our Constitution, we take stock of our own commitment and we are pleased to announce that we have gone a long way in delivering basic services to our people . . . We take this moment to renew our commitment to a people-centred local government sphere."

Another MP, Mr Vuyolwethu Zungula, said there is not much to celebrate because South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world. It has 30 million people who are unemployed and is the rape capital of the world.

MP Mr Shaun August said: "There is a growing tendency

to blame the yawning gap between fairness and injustices on the Constitution, which often camouflages government failure to address landlessness, poverty and inequality and corruption in the last 25 years. In all these years, the government has failed to use the tools provided by the Constitution to bring about necessary reforms. "We need to take a hard look in the mirror and ask ourselves what we can do better to fix our mounting problems rather than blame the Constitution."

Mr Ahmed Shaik-Emam said: "In the last 25 years we have learnt new lessons. Surely, we have learnt new experiences that necessitate the amendment of our Constitution to ensure that our Constitution protects the rights of all South Africans. That everyone, irrespective of race, gender or creed, enjoys the fruits of our Constitution."

Mr Bantu Holomisa said: "The Bill of Rights enshrined in our Constitution is not a wish list. It seeks to empower our people and to ensure that the state plays a role to make these rights manifest. Regrettably, instead of upholding this Bill, the state has written a new chapter of corruption in the Constitution."

Mr William Madisha said, "We should not lose sight of the fact that the Constitution signals a victory of the will of the people and is a result of many sacrifices for freedom and equal rights that we enjoy today."

Mr Yunus Carrim of the NCOP said, "The authors of the Constitution realised that the only way to reduce the material inequality was to address the economic exploitation of black people. This was based on the notion that we don't want freedom without bread and we don't want bread without freedom. The basic material rights of black people needed to be addressed for the full realisation of freedom. People have been patient with us, but for how long? We must learn

from history," he warned.

Mr Zakhele Mbhele of the NCOP said: "Our Constitution is a stark illustration of the stark difference between conceptualisation and implementation. For it to be realised, we need a capable state. But we inherited instead a corrupt and incapable state that finds it difficult to translate the principles of the Constitution into reality."

In closing the debate, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mr Ronald Lamola, said the greatest intent of our Constitution is to bring about social justice, social cohesion and nation-building.

After so much wrangling and opposing views on what the Constitution had, should and could have achieved, Mr Lamola said: "We have a responsibility to build a nation based on the Bill of Rights. We should bring everyone and minorities at the centre of this cause to construct a country that we all want. As such, we are committed to taking South Africa forward and to promote that which binds us together, than that which divides us."

He added: "We should utilise this commonality to resolve our socio-economic conditions. And to utilise our constitutional democracy as our moral campus in attaining the South Africa for which we all aspire." 🇿🇦



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Eastern Cape Residents express mixed views on the Expropriation Bill

At the start of the Eastern Cape leg of the public hearings on the Expropriation Bill in the Alfred Nzo District, residents expressed mixed views on the need for the Bill, reports Malatswa Molepo



The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Nolitha Ntobongwana, thanked participants for taking the time to participate in the proceedings. "We are extremely appreciative that the people of Alfred Nzo District braved the rainy and cold weather to contribute their views on the Bill. We have listened to every opinion expressed, and will take them into consideration when we conclude the public consultation process, which is one of the most important pillars of a democratic law-making process."

Those who supported the Bill highlighted the dire need for land to build infrastructure, such as roads, schools, and health and agricultural facilities to change the socio-economic conditions of previously

disadvantaged South Africans. Other participants in the hearings called for skills development for the purpose of capacitation, especially of previously disadvantaged people, to ensure that expropriated land is used productively.

Among the dissenting views on the Bill, the primary point of contention centred on dissatisfaction with Clause 12(3) of the Bill, which provides for instances where expropriation with nil compensation may be just and equitable. The argument advanced was that property is a generational investment, which would be threatened if the Bill is passed. Even these people recognised that sometimes expropriation in the public interest is required, but they said there should be equitable compensation when

this occurs.

Traditional leaders participating in the hearings welcomed the Bill on the grounds that it will facilitate the return of land that was forcefully taken during the colonial era and which undermined the role of traditional leaders as the custodians of the land.

Meanwhile, the committee apologised to traditional leaders and the people of Matatiele who complained about the committee's failure to visit their area. Ms Notobomgwana said: "We have taken due regard that we will not be able to visit every local municipality due to financial constraints, as well as the impracticability of such an endeavour. In all the provinces we have visited, we have ensured that people

are provided transport so as to ensure extensive coverage and meaningful public participation. We have also, in the past, called for written public submissions to ensure that even those who are unable to attend the hearings are afforded an opportunity to express their views on the Bill."

Majority of Joe Gqabi District residents support the Bill

Most residents of Joe Gqabi District supported the Bill, largely because they believe expropriation promises to be a tool to reverse the injustices of the past, while ensuring equitable access to the land. However, they highlighted the risk of unfair allocation of land, which might undermine the Bill's good intentions.

Emerging farmers complained during the hearings about the ongoing challenge of access to land, especially for previously disadvantaged people living in townships and rural areas. Traditional leaders also expressed their support for the Bill and highlighted the long-standing link between traditional leaders and land.

Some participants told the committee that their support for the Bill is on condition that expropriation of land translates into increased production, food security and job creation, alleviates poverty and, above all, restores equality in South Africa.

The committee also received various complaints related to the land reform process and other challenges, including the lack of title deeds and of support for emerging farmers. The committee committed itself to passing the complaints to the relevant parliamentary committees to ensure a follow-up and the delivery of services.

Residents who were not in favour of the Bill called the definition of property too vague, which they said will lead to disinvestment and job losses.

The committee assured

residents that all their views had been recorded. The committee will deliberate on their views and incorporate them into the Bill, which will enrich and strengthen it.

Nelson Mandela residents - land must be maximised to ensure food security.

The committee concluded the Eastern Cape leg of the Expropriation Bill public hearings in Gqeberha (previously Port Elizabeth) where residents were concerned about the impact of the Bill on South Africa's investment drive to secure more foreign direct investment, which will boost economic growth and create jobs.

Equal numbers of Gqeberha residents supported and opposed the Bill. However, everyone agreed that the use of productive land must be maximised to ensure food security.

Dissenting views on the Bill were mainly anchored on the perceived risk of policy uncertainty due to ambiguity created by an unclear definition of the property that might be expropriated using the Bill. In addition, those opposing the Bill emphasised that South Africa is in dire need of investment to create job opportunities and the Bill will not assist in that respect. Others opposing the Bill believe that the process to amend Section 25 of the Constitution must be concluded to ensure that enabling legislation speaks directly to amendments made.

Meanwhile, the Bill's supporters highlighted that it is a necessary step to redress past injustices and will enable the government to fight poverty, inequality and unemployment. Many supporters said their entrepreneurial spirit is smothered by the lack of access to land.

During the hearings, the committee heard first-hand of forced removals conducted by the previous administration

and sympathised with those who are still waiting for their land claims to be settled. The committee committed to engaging with its sister portfolio committees in Parliament to ensure that they strengthen oversight of the departments identified. "We are a listening Parliament and all concerns raised by the people will be followed up, because ours is to strive to improve the lives of the people of South Africa," said Ms Nolitha Ntobongwana, the Chairperson of the committee.

Meanwhile, following engagements with health officials and the announcement of adjusted restrictions on alert level 2, the committee resolved to postpone hearings in the Northern Cape, due to an exponential increase in Covid-19 infections in the province.

"We have decided to continue with the Western Cape hearings as scheduled, as the province is experiencing lower numbers of Covid-19 infections. Following the completion of the Western Cape leg of the hearings, the committee will pause its programme until the rate of infections is kept under control in both Northern Cape and Free State," said Ms Ntobongwana.

National Assembly passes Bills to combat gender-based violence

The National Assembly (NA) has passed the Gender-Based Violence Bills - Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill, Domestic Violence Amendment Bill and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act Amendment Bill.



The three Bills were introduced in Parliament following a November 2018 Presidential Summit against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). The summit resolved to fast-track the review of existing laws and policies on gender-based violence making them victim-centred, ensure all other relevant laws respond to GBV, revisit and fast-track all outstanding laws and bills that relate to GBVF.

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act Amendment Bill proposes amendments to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment

Act 32 of 2007, being one of several legislative measures identified to strengthen South Africa's response to GBVF, in particular the legislation regulating the National Register for Sex Offenders (NRSO).

The bill also aims to expand the scope of the NRSO to include the particulars of all sex offenders, not only sex offenders against children and persons who are mentally disabled, and to expand the list of persons who are to be protected to include other vulnerable persons, namely, certain young women, persons with physical, mental, sensory or intellectual disabilities and



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

persons over 60 years of age who, for example, receive community-based care and support services. It will also increase the periods for which a sex offender's particulars must remain on the NRSO before they can be removed from the register. The Bill further proposes to expand the ambit of the crime of incest, and introduces a new offence of sexual intimidation.

The purpose of the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill is to amend the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 to further provide for how acts of domestic violence and related matters must be dealt with by certain functionaries, persons and government departments. It will also regulate obtaining of protection orders in response to acts of domestic violence.

The Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill aims to amend four Acts, namely the Magistrates' Courts Act 32 of 1944, the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, the Criminal Law Amendment Act 85 of 1997 and the Superior Courts Act 7 of 2013. The Bill's purpose is to amend the Magistrates' Courts Act to provide for the appointment of intermediaries and the giving of evidence through intermediaries in proceedings other than criminal proceedings. It will also amend the Criminal Procedure Act to further regulate the granting and cancellation of bail and the right of a complainant in a domestic-related offence to participate in parole proceedings. In addition, it will amend the Criminal Law Amendment Act to further regulate sentences in respect of offences that have been committed against vulnerable persons. It will also amend the Superior Courts Act to provide for the appointment of intermediaries and the giving of evidence through intermediaries in proceedings other than criminal proceedings.

The Bills will now be sent to the NCOP for concurrence.

At the same sitting, the NA approved the recommendation of the names of Ms Philile Ntuli and Ms Fatima Chohan for appointment as full-time commissioners of the South African Human Rights Commission for a period of seven years. Ms Chohan will serve as the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission.

The posts of the two commissioners became vacant following the death of the former Deputy Chairperson of the Commission and the expiry of the term of one of the commissioners.

Section 193(4) of the Constitution provides that the President, on the recommendation of the National Assembly, must appoint the members of the South African Human Rights Commission.

The names of the two commissioners will now be sent to the President for appointment. 🇿🇦



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NCOP passes the Division of Revenue Bill 2021

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) passed the Division of Revenue Bill 2021.

The Bill provides for the equitable division of revenue raised nationally among the national, provincial and local spheres of government for the 2021/2022 financial year. It also provides for each province's share and for any other allocations to provinces, local government or municipalities from the national government's share of that revenue. The Bill also covers the conditions on which those allocations are made.



Section 214 (1) of the Constitution requires that every year a Division of Revenue Act should determine the equitable division of nationally-raised revenue between the national, provincial and local government. The Minister of Finance, Mr Tito Mboweni, tabled the 2021 national Budget, including the Division of Revenue Bill, in the National Assembly on 24

February 2021.

One key objective of the 2021 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period is to narrow the budget deficit and stabilise the debt-to-gross domestic product ratio, primarily by controlling non-interest expenditure growth. Another important objective is to provide continued support to the economy and public health services in the short

term, without adding to long-term spending pressures. A further goal is to improve the composition of spending, by reducing growth in compensation while protecting capital investments.

The Select Committee on Appropriations' report to the NCOP states that the committee agreed to the Bill without amendments. However, the committee made a number of recommendations on the Bill to the Minister of Finance, the National Treasury and to the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

These executive authorities are required to send Parliament their responses to the recommendations within 60 days. The Bill was passed by the National Assembly on 18 March 2021 and will now be referred to the President for consent. 🇿🇦



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Success of Section 100 intervention in the North West depends on stable municipalities

The Ad Hoc Committee on Section 100 Intervention in the North West Province believes that the crisis affecting a majority of municipalities in the North West will inhibit any potential success of the Section 100 intervention in the province, primarily because the delivery of basic services resides within the local sphere of government, writes Malatswa Molepo.



The committee visited the North West Province recently to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 100 intervention in the province. The committee received a progress report from the Inter-Ministerial Task Team (IMTT) and has commended progress in stabilising the provincial level of administration. The appointment of heads of departments for the Office of the Premier, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Department of Social Development will bring much-needed stability and strategic direction to those departments.

In addition, the steady improvement in audit outcomes points to green shoots at the provincial administrative level. Furthermore, some of the consequence management initiatives, which led to the

immediate dismissal of some officials, are to be welcomed. This is despite the need to ensure criminal prosecution for the malfeasance that caused the current challenges. The committee has also called for the state to urgently initiate a process to recoup ill-gotten finances, which occurred due to corruption within the province.

Despite the green shoots, the committee remains concerned about the lack of stability within the local sphere of government, with reports of parallel councils and two mayors and two Speakers operating at the same time. "It is unacceptable and unfathomable to find a situation where a municipality has two mayors, especially because this dysfunction affects service delivery directly.

The committee welcomes

the IMTT's intention to redouble its efforts in support of Kgetlengrivier, Tswaing, Ditsobotla, Ramotshere Moiloa, Ratlou and Matlosa local municipalities, as well as Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati," said Mr China Dodovu, the Chairperson of the committee.

To remedy this challenge, the committee welcomed the IMTT's intention to find additional support through state-owned entities to ensure that budgets are spent, especially in the context of the devastating effects of Covid-19. Meanwhile, the committee welcomed the announcement that the Intergovernmental Monitoring, Support and Intervention Bill is being processed. The committee awaits the tabling of the Bill to enable the committee and the public to make quality inputs on the Bill. 🇿🇦

Holding the Executive to Account - President Ramaphosa answers questions in the NCOP

President Cyril Ramaphosa appeared before the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) in a hybrid plenary sitting recently to answer questions for oral reply. Holding regular question and answer sessions is one way in which Parliament holds the Presidents and his executive to account, as provided by Section 92(2) of the Constitution.

Question 1

infrastructure?

Mr Jomo Nyambi (Mpumalanga: ANC) asked the President:

- (1) Has the government undertaken an audit regarding public infrastructure that was damaged, vandalised or stolen during the lockdown period? If it hasn't, what is the government's position in this regard? If it did conduct such an audit, what is the estimated value of the damage?
- (2) Has the government put any plans in place to repair and/or replace such infrastructure? Please explain why not, if this hasn't occurred, and if it has, what are the details of such plans?
- (3) What is the worst affected infrastructure and which provinces were the worst affected?
- (4) Will the government undertake a comprehensive audit of damage caused to public infrastructure during the lockdown period and develop a plan for repairing or replacing such

President Ramaphosa

Public infrastructure is vital to the lives and livelihoods of South Africans and to the achievement of our developmental goals. Damage to public infrastructure, whether through vandalism or theft, amounts to nothing less than acts of sabotage against the aspirations of the South African people. Unfortunately, there was a significant increase in such criminal acts during the lockdown period, predominantly in the areas of commuter rail and basic education.

The responsibility for public infrastructure development, maintenance and repair lies with various levels of government. At national level, national departments are responsible; at provincial level, provincial governments bear responsibility; and at local level, municipalities have direct responsibility of looking after public infrastructure.

As in the normal course of events, each of these is



ACCOUNTABILITY: President Ramaphosa answers questions

responsible for conducting an assessment of any damage caused, and then take steps to replace or restore the affected infrastructure. It is therefore not possible to provide an overall estimate of the value of the damage caused over this period.

With respect to commuter rail, Metrorail experienced an alarming increase in cases of infrastructure theft and vandalism, ranging from overhead electric lines, electric substations, train stations and depot buildings. This vandalism took place in Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. These acts have a huge impact on the mobility of commuters, who depend on the affordable Metrorail services to access economic opportunities in our major urban centres.

Metrorail has started to gradually return commuter services as it works to repair and replace critical infrastructure. This includes projects to rehabilitate railway tracks, reinstate electricity infrastructure, walling off rail lines, building and repairing pedestrian bridges, station improvements and automated signalling infrastructure. This work is hampered by illegal settlements that have been built on the tracks and inside the rail reserve, and Prasa (Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa) is working with municipalities to address this problem.

A number of commuter rail corridors have been prioritised in Gauteng, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, and several mainline passenger services for the restoration of infrastructure and the return to service.

With respect to education, the Department of Basic Education reports that over 1 700 schools across the country were vandalised or had equipment stolen since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown. KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Eastern Cape were the worse affected provinces. Responsibility for the maintenance and repair of these schools is the responsibility of the Provincial Departments of Education.

Reports from the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure also indicate damage to public infrastructure in Kimberley, Gqeberha and Hout Bay. These include the theft of cables at a bulk water pump station in Gqeberha, theft of borehole pumps at two police stations, and damage caused through vandalism at SAPS (South African Police Service) offices in King William's Town.

We are working to intensify the efforts of law enforcement agencies, working alongside entities like the (Passenger Rail Authority of South Africa) Prasa, to uncover illicit cable trading syndicates and scrap

metal dealers in possession of stolen material. The success of these efforts depends on a partnership with communities, as we all have a responsibility to safeguard and care for public infrastructure.

Question 2

Ms Cathlene Labuschagne (Western Cape: DA) asked the President:

Does your announcement during the 2021 State of the Nation Address of a Climate Advisory Council and your participation in the Virtual Leaders' Summit on Climate Change indicate that you consider climate change as a priority? What are the details, if it is a priority for the entire Cabinet and government, and if not, why not?

President Ramaphosa

Tackling climate change is a national priority. This requires not only that we meet our international commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also that we implement adaptation measures to protect individuals, communities and our economy from the effects of climate change.

If we do not act now, and if we do not act together as a global community, we will be increasingly vulnerable to adverse weather conditions, food insecurity, water scarcity, displacement of populations, and biodiversity loss. At the

same time, the country's response to climate change needs to be well managed to ensure that it does not negatively impact on the economy or exacerbate inequality, poverty and unemployment.

We must acknowledge that the transition to a low-emissions economy and climate-resilient society offers opportunities for new development, investment and job creation. It is therefore important that we understand both the opportunities and the risks associated with a climate transition. It is for this reason that we established the Presidential Climate Commission to identify a path towards a low-emissions economy and climate-resilient society that is just, promotes inclusive development and job creation, and leaves no one behind.

The commission itself is constituted by members from various sectors of society, including business, labour, civil society, youth, research institutes and government. This signifies that we recognise the multidimensional nature of climate change and a just transition. Cabinet Ministers, particularly those from the economic cluster, actively participate in the commission's work to ensure that there is political oversight.

As part of our response to climate change, public consultations have been underway on the updated draft Nationally Determined Contribution. This outlines the country's targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Once finalised, the updated Nationally Determined Contribution will be submitted to the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change ahead of the Climate Change Summit – known as COP 26 – in Glasgow in November.

South Africa is currently the coordinator of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change, which met earlier this week. This committee is a

vital part of Africa's ambitious coordinated response to climate change and provides guidance on Africa's common position on climate change in international forums.

This weekend, I will be participating in deliberations on climate change at the G7 meeting in the United Kingdom, where I will be presenting the positions of our country and the continent on this critical issue.

Question 3

Mr Mandla Rayi (Eastern Cape: ANC) asked the President:

(1) How much funding and financing commitments have been made by the government and private sector to execute the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan in respect of the damage caused by Covid-19?

(2) Has the government made any progress in implementing the priority areas articulated in such a plan? Please indicate if not, why not? And if so, provide details?

President Ramaphosa
The Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan is a necessary response to the severe economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The plan aims to ensure a swift and lasting economic recovery, with measures to limit the immediate impact of the pandemic on vulnerable workers and households and to revive economic growth in the short- and medium-term.

Significant progress has been made since the announcement of the plan less than eight months ago. The Infrastructure Fund has been established, and its investment committee has been constituted. A total of R18 billion has been allocated to the fund over the next three years for blended finance arrangements that will leverage private sector funding.

To achieve greater energy security, a total of 1 200 MW of new generation capacity has now been connected to the grid from projects approved through Bid Window 4 of the Renewable Energy IPP Programme. A request for proposals has been issued for 2 600 MW of power from wind and solar PV projects through Bid Window 5.

Eleven preferred bidders have been approved as part of the emergency power procurement programme, which will together deliver nearly 2 000 MW of power to the grid over the next 18 months. As I announced earlier this afternoon, Schedule 2 of the Electricity Regulation

Act will soon be amended to increase the licensing threshold for embedded generation projects from 1 MW to 100 MW.

The Presidential Employment Stimulus has supported close to 700 000 opportunities across a range of programmes, through the creation of new work opportunities, the protection of existing jobs in vulnerable sectors, and support for livelihoods.

Four sector master plans are currently in implementation, in the automotive, sugar, poultry, and clothing, textiles, footwear and leather sectors. This approach, which relies on close collaboration with stakeholders to develop a tailored action plan for high-growth sectors, is already demonstrating results.

According to data released by the South African Revenue Service (SARS), South Africa experienced a cumulative trade surplus of close to R150 billion for the first four months of this year. This reflects a massive increase in our exports to the rest of the world, driven largely by the unique strategic value of our mineral resources.

Funding for the measures

contained in the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan is included in the budgets of all national departments for their areas of responsibility, ensuring that the plan is mainstreamed in the work of government. Through the effective implementation of this plan, as well as the structural reforms that form part of Operation Vulindlela, we are reviving our economy and placing South Africa on a new growth trajectory. The success of the recovery plan is based on a strong partnership with business, labour and other social partners, as a whole-of-society effort to promote our economic recovery.

Question 4

Ms Brenda Mathevula (Limpopo: EFF) asked the President:

- 1) What reasons did the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) give for appointing the panel only after the date of the local government elections was proclaimed?
- 2) Will you postpone the elections if the panel recommends that the elections will not be free and fair if conducted in this climate? If not, why not? If so, what are the relevant details?

President Ramaphosa
On 22 April 2021, I announced 27 October 2021 as the date on which the local government elections will be held. The announcement does not constitute a proclamation as contemplated in the Local Government: Municipal Electoral Act. The proclamation will be issued by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

For the first time since its establishment, the Independent Electoral Commission is faced with the prospect of conducting elections in the midst of a global pandemic. Concerns have been expressed by some political parties represented on the party liaison committee that the forthcoming general

elections may not be free and fair given the impact of the Covid-19 and the measures taken to curb the continued spread of the pandemic.

Cognisant of its obligation to ensure that the elections are free and fair, the IEC has commissioned Justice Dikgang Moseneke to lead the Inquiry into Ensuring Free and Fair Local Government Elections during Covid-19.

The inquiry is expected to do three things. Firstly, inquire into the conditions for free and fair elections. Secondly, come up with findings following the inquiry. And thirdly, issue a report in which recommendations are set out concerning the likelihood that the IEC would be able to ensure that the forthcoming government elections will be free and fair.

It has also been asked to indicate additional measures that the IEC may be required to implement in order to realise free and fair elections within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Any possible postponement of elections is a matter on which the IEC will have to make a determination in terms of the provisions of the Constitution and applicable legal prescripts.

The Moseneke Inquiry is about inquiring into and providing a report on the conditions for free and fair elections so as to enable the IEC to fully consider the matter. As there is no determination of a postponement at this stage, no other date has been considered as election date other than 27 October 2021.

Question 5

Ms Shahidabibi Shaikh (Limpopo: ANC) asked the President:

With reference to the phenomenal increase in the destabilisation of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique and sporadic upsurge of violent conflicts in other parts of Africa, does the government have any plans to reinvigorate the Southern African Development

Community (SADC)? If not, why not? And if so, please provide details?

President Ramaphosa:
South Africa is working within the established systems of the Southern African Development Community to address the destabilisation of the Cabo Delgado province and to establish political stability in Mozambique.

The SADC Double Troika Technical Assessment Mission, which has been deployed to the Cabo Delgado province in April 2021, proposed, among other things, the deployment of the SADC Standby Force in support of the Mozambican Armed Defence Force to combat the threat of terrorism and acts of violent extremism.

An Extraordinary SADC Organ Troika Summit that took place on 27 May 2021 in Maputo agreed to convene an Extraordinary SADC Summit on 23 June 2021 to reach an agreement on the appropriate regional response in support of Mozambique. The summit noted progress towards the establishment and operationalisation of the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre, which will enhance regional capabilities in risk and disaster management. Mozambique has committed to host the centre.

The SADC Organ Troika, in keeping with its principle of peaceful resolution, remains seized with finding a lasting solution to the conflict to ensure that Mozambique is stable, peaceful and able to develop its economy.

Question 6

Ms Delmaine Christians (Northern Cape: DA) asked the President:

Considering that in your State of the Nation Address in June 2019 you committed to strategies that would end gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), does the Presidency have any plans to further strengthen the fight against GBVF? Will the government also provide

access to justice for the victims and survivors? If not, why not? And if so, what are the details in each case?

President Ramaphosa:
Following the State of the Nation Address in June 2019, the Emergency Response Action Plan was implemented to further strengthen the fight against gender-based violence and femicide and provide justice for the victims and survivors. This was a short-term plan implemented over six months through partnerships between civil society networks, government, development partners and academic institutions.

The National Strategic Plan on GBVF was approved by Cabinet in March 2020. It builds onto the Emergency Response Action Plan and focuses on improved accountability, responsiveness to the needs of survivors, addressing impunity and driving a comprehensive prevention agenda.

We are beginning to see positive results through various joint interventions. In February 2021, we launched the private sector GBVF Response Fund where an initial amount of R128 million was pledged.

Legislative reform has been a critical component of the National Strategic Plan. Last week, the National Assembly passed three Bills:

- the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Bill,
- Domestic Violence Amendment Bill, and
- Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill.

These three Bills are now on their way to the NCOP. I would encourage the NCOP to carefully consider these three important Bills with a sense of urgency, within the legislative mandate of the NCOP.

We have introduced several innovative initiatives to facilitate access to support and justice. This includes an SMS notification system for applications for domestic

violence protection orders that was launched at all district courts in January 2021. The Domestic Violence Amendment Bill, once passed, will make it possible for complainants to apply for protection orders online.

Thirty-two regional courts are ready for designation as Sexual Offences Courts. There are plans for the establishment of six additional Thuthuzela Care Centres. As at March 2021, all police stations have the necessary sexual assault DNA kits to assist victims and survivors.

The implementation of NSP on GBVF through the district development model is being embedded in provincial and local government structures. All provinces have either finalised or are developing provincial plans. The process of localisation is further bolstered by the establishment of rapid response structures at district and local municipality levels across the country.

As we move into the second year of the National Strategic Plan, we are focused on strengthening accountability at all levels of government and society. We are developing a comprehensive national GBVF prevention strategy, including evidence-based social and behaviour change programmes.

If we are committed to working together as a country – as government, communities, civil society, organised labour, business, academia, traditional leaders and the faith community – we will succeed in ending violence against women in South Africa. 🇷🇷



Mr Mandla Rayi, Eastern Cape ANC



Ms Delmaine Christians, Northern Cape DA



Ms Brenda Mathevula, Limpopo EFF



Ms Cathlene Labuschagene, Western Cape DA



Mr Jomo Nyambi, Mpumalanga ANC



Ms Shahidabibi `Shaik, Limpopo ANC

QUESTION TIME: Delegates to the NCOP demand answers



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Eliminating gender-based violence throughout Eastern and Southern Africa

The Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) held an advocacy dialogue on the elimination of gender-based violence (GBV) in the eastern and southern African regions, reports Sakhile Mokoena.



The dialogue's moderator, Ms Mishy Singano, a development expert and African gender-rights activist, said the objective of the virtual engagement was to identify key messages and to have a concrete action plan to support eastern and southern African countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3 and 5, and also reflect on existing platforms to address GBV.

SDGs are a global commitment, spearheaded by the United Nations to achieve a better and sustainable future for the world's population. SDG 3 aims to promote healthy lives and promote the well-being of

people of all ages, while SDG 5 is a commitment to ensure gender equality and empower women and girls.

Addressing the dialogue on the role of the SADC-PF and member parliaments in addressing gender-based violence, as well as on advancing gender-responsive legislation through SADC model laws, the forum's Secretary-General Ms Boemo Sekgoma, said parliaments of the region's member countries have enacted legislation relating to gender equality, such as the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, the Equal Opportunities Act and laws compelling parents to send all children to school

without discrimination.

SADC parliaments also pass appropriation legislation to provide for national budgets related to gender ministries and departments, public schools and hospitals, and the enforcement of measures to protect children and women, among other things.

"The SADC-PF acts as the enabler for change through targeted model laws, which are formulated following a consultative process with democratically elected SADC Members of Parliament. Therefore, (these laws are) made by the people and for the people. Model laws are based on best norms and

practices which are contained in generally accepted international instruments. For instance, the legal age for consent to marriage is 18 and is contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and is also reflected in the SADC Model Law on Child Marriage," said Ms Sekgoma. She added that model laws act as catalysts for domestication of treaties and covenants, as they contain similar norms and are further adapted to the Southern African context.

Ms Sekgoma reported that the SADC Model Law on GBV has been prepared by the forum and validated by Members of Parliament. It contains best practices relating to the prevention of gender-based violence across all SADC member states. "Under this model law, gender-based violence is defined broadly to encompass economic and psychological violence, as well as stalking and harassment. It will thus change the landscape of GBV legislation across all SADC member states, by providing for a user-friendly single piece of legislation that can be readily domesticated by the executive," said the SADC-PF Secretary-General.

She also believes the SADC Model Law on GBV as the potential to be a game-changer in spearheading modern, gender-responsive and anti-discriminatory legislation. Furthermore, the Model Law on Child Marriage and the SADC Model Law on HIV will together uphold the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and young girls in the SADC region. 🌱



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Parliament supports the establishment of a Palestinian State

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Lechesa Tsenoli, participated in the forum “International Parliamentary Support to the Question of Palestine” that took place in May.



Mr Lechesa Tsenoli, Deputy Speaker of the NA

The forum was convened by the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. It was chaired by Ambassador Cheikh Niang, Chair of the committee and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the UN, and moderated by Mr Pedro Roque, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and a Member of the Portuguese Parliament.

The forum consisted of an opening session with remarks from Ambassador Niang; Minister Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine; and Ms Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the UN Secretariat and two discussion panels.

The first panel, on “Parliaments, Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) and

Israeli Settlements: Calls for Accountability”, consisted of Mr Francisco Chahuán, Senator of Chile; Ms Julie Elliott, Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom; and Mr Hubert Julien-Laferrière, Member of the French National Assembly.

Mr Tsenoli participated in the second panel, on the topic: “Parliamentarians and Support for Efforts to Achieve a Just Solution”. The panel comprised Mr Alexandre Boulerice, Member of Parliament of Canada, and Mr Tsenoli.

In welcoming the participants, the Chair reiterated the committee’s mandate, which is to promote a just and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an end to the Israeli occupation and to support the realisation of the two-state solution and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian

people, including self-determination, sovereignty and right to return.

He gave examples of the successful work of parliamentarians to advocate for the same, including recent letters from European Members of Parliament to call for their governments to impose sanctions on Israel over its annexation policy and to put pressure on Israel to stop the eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem.

The Chair also referred to the recent resolution approved by the Chilean Senate, calling on the President to adopt a law banning the import of settlement goods into the country, as well as to the support provided by South African parliamentarians to Palestinian solidarity movements and civil society groups in their advocacy at the UN Human Rights Council, among other bodies.

He reiterated the commitment of the committee to continue working with a variety of partners, especially parliamentarians because of the important legislative and diplomatic work that they contribute to the question of Palestine. The committee was deeply alarmed by the dramatic deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and Israel’s military actions in the Gaza Strip and reiterated the committee’s call for a de-escalation of conflict.

Mr Tsenoli said the current violence in the OPT reminded South Africans of what apartheid did to them. He called on more Israelis to object to “unsustainable violent and hegemonic imposition of all kinds” on

the Palestinian people. He regretted that this continues to be the legacy of the provocative approach by the previous US administration.

Mr Tsenoli recalled former President Nelson Mandela’s and his grandson’s commitment to the Palestinian cause, repeating the stance that “our freedom in South Africa is dependent on the freedom of the Palestinians”. As Israeli violations of international law and UN resolutions are unacceptable, he fully supported his government’s efforts in all multilateral bodies to pursue peace in the Middle East.

Mr Tsenoli reiterated the South African Parliament’s solidarity with the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination and the full support for the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. The situation cannot be allowed to remain unchanged as it represents an impediment to

the security, peace, stability and development of the broader Middle East.

Mr Tsenoli underlined the position of South Africa on ending the Israeli occupation, which would be in the interest of both Israel and Palestine, and called on both parties to take concrete steps to that end. He said the outstanding final status issues will need to be resolved through negotiation, with support from the international community, including South Africa, to resume the peace process for a lasting and just settlement of the Palestinian question.

He stressed that any peace plan should ensure that the Palestinian state does not become an entity devoid of territorial contiguity and economic viability. Mr Tsenoli said solidarity from parliaments of the world and civil society would contribute significantly to the prospect of peace. 🌍



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA