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***PROCEEDINGS OF VIRTUAL (OR HYBRID) NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
PROVINCES***

The Council met at 14:02.

The Chairperson took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

The Chairperson announced that the hybrid sitting constituted a sitting of the National Council of Provinces.

QUESTIONS TO THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Question 7:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, on the 16th of June we will be in Mangaung for the Youth Month commemorations under the theme, *Accelerating youth economic emancipation for a sustainable growth*. We will deliver a more detailed report on the work that we are doing in addressing the challenges facing the youth of our country.

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In line with the commitment I made in this august House during the Oral Replies Session of 20 April 2023, I led a two-day outreach programme together with the Human Resource Development Council, HRDC, in the KwaZulu-Natal province on 18 and 19 May 2023.

The focus of this multi-stakeholder council visit was to the province and assess the impact of the Human Resource Development Strategy in the province and strengthen its alignment with the implementation of the District Development Model, DDM, in eThekweni and Umgungundlovu Municipalities.

During the Human Resource Development Council meeting of 19 May in KwaZulu-Natal, members of the council recommitted themselves to the skills development objectives by signing two social compacts; one focussed on building the foundations for learning, led by the National Education Collaboration Trust, and the second one focussed on building skills for transformation in the economy and society, led by the National Skills Authority.

We also visited projects that support skills development particularly for young people and job creation in the province. We specifically visited the Westown Precinct which

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is located in the eThekweni Municipality and the Shongweni Economic Development Node which is the initial phase of the construction of a new smart city between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. It is a collaboration between the city, the private sector and uBukhosi base maNgangeni. It contributes towards increasing the skills levels of the youth, women, persons with disabilities and military veterans in the city.

The Precinct opened an on-site Technical Training Centre in April this year, which equips people from Shongweni and surrounding communities with the critical skills required to participate meaningfully during the construction phase and beyond. It is anticipated that almost 500 community members will be equipped with these trade skills at the end of the current phase of this development, in November this year.

The Cedara College of Agriculture, which is located in Hilton in Mgungundlovu District Municipality, is the second oldest Agricultural College in the country. The college supports the farming community through services such as soil analytics and contributes to food security and employment opportunities. At this college, we also interacted with over 80 young and emerging farmers from Kokstad, Amanzimtoti, Mooi River and beyond.

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Mgungundlovu TVET College and education precinct has almost 40 partnerships with government departments, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, and private sector companies, all of which converge to deliver on its mandate. The department has allocated 182 million for this precinct project, and this model will be replicated across the country.

We are convinced that the engagements we have held together with the Human Resources Development Council are yielding the required results. We are going to continue with this work, especially strengthening collaboration between the government and the private sector in order to create the much-needed jobs. This is the District Development Model in action. Thank you very much Chairperson.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP: Hon Chairperson, I must say that we really appreciate the manner in which the Deputy President of the Republic has discharged his responsibilities since appointed to this important position in the country by engaging earnestly with various stakeholders and our communities with view of finding answers to complex challenges that continue to face our country and I want to say that, it is also clear that we need to do more decisive interventions and encourage more black communities to change their mindset

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of how they view vocational education, especially given our need for more technical and artisan skills and this we should do without fail, given the history of apartheid and colonialism in our country, where many of our people were discouraged to even protect the white workers at that period.

Now, I would like to ask the Deputy President, what are government's plans of increasing the human development programs and capacity for skills of the changing world, to equip young people with skills like digital economy, technological innovation like the green economy? Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Chairperson, through the work of the Human Resource Development Council, one of the things we are doing is to ensure that we equip young people with skills, especially in the field of science and technology. That's what we have been working hard on, particularly because of our contribution to the 4th Industrial Revolution, and that we do through all levels of government.

Secondly, you'll recall that in his budget speech, the Minister of Higher Education also announced that 26.

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TVET colleges are currently engaged in entrepreneurial training for what is called entrepreneurial hubs. These are meant to assist young people. The Minister has also announced that they are looking at what they call youth not in education, employment or training, and also support that.

One of the other initiatives is through the National Skills Fund. Through the National Skills Fund, government allocates funding capacity for capacity building to community colleges. They introduce skills programs learnerships and non-formal programs specifically targeting young peoples.

So, hon Mohai, I believe that these initiatives will assist a lot to strengthen capacity for young people, we know that in the past, young people did not like TVET colleges. There was a kind of stigma against TVET colleges. But I think a lot has been done now to turn that around. And a lot of young people are now going to TVET colleges to acquire the necessary skills that the economy wants, and that's what we are encouraging.

Ms H S BOSHOFF: Deputy President, we know that there are severe staff shortages with respect to teachers as well as medical professionals such as doctors and nurses. One of the main reasons we are told, is because of budget shortages.

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So, my question to you is, what engagement have you had with Treasury as well as the Departments of Basic Education and Health to address their budget prioritization to address these crucial shortages as Deputy President, there is absolutely no point in training the youth in these crucial roles, if there are no jobs for them once they have graduated. Thank you, Chairperson.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon member, as I said, through the Human Resource Development Council, our focus is on hardcore skills and to ensure that when young people have graduated, they are able to find jobs. I haven't specifically met with Treasury to check what their challenges are in terms of funding.

But of course, we would like to agree with you that it's important that when young people go through colleges and universities as well, when they come out, they should be employable. I will engage with National Treasury going forward and ensure that we look at what the challenges are.

But the good thing with the Human Resource Development Council is that we also involve the private sector. That way we can bring resources outside of government and I hope that is going

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to help going forward to ensure that we don't give and say we don't have funding. So, those are some of the initiatives that we are looking at.

Mr M S MOLETSANE: Chairperson, the ANC government has in past stated that its not its responsibility to create jobs for the millions of unemployed people of South Africa. As the EFF We are therefore not surprised by the high youth unemployment rate as this is a consequence of the ruling party's policies and ideologies. Nevertheless, how will the engagement which you refer to Deputy President, benefit the thousands of young, skilled graduates who are sitting at home right now? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Moletsane I think the first part of your comment is a misunderstanding of what the ANC said. The ANC didn't say it's not its job to create jobs. What the ANC said was that the creation of jobs or employment is largely the the private sector's responsibility because that's where it happens.

So, our approach as government is that we can come up with policies and funding, but it's important that we bring the private sector on board because government alone will not

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succeed. So, that was really what we were saying that let's not say, as government will create employment and do everything will create employment in collaboration with others, particularly the private sector. So that's the point we are making.

How will these programmes assist young people is to equip them with skills, not only skills but access to resources. When we were in KwaZulu-Natal, some of the emerging farmers, for instance, were saying we should help them with access to land, some of them markets. So, it's not just skills, but access to resources that will assist them.

The Human Resource Development Council is a collaborative effort that works with provincial, local government and communities. We are now bringing in the private sector in rural areas as well as traditional leaders, and I'm convinced that this is the right approach that is going to help young people. Thank you very much hon Chairperson.

Mr N M HADEBE: Hon Deputy President, South Africa's unemployment rate worsened in the first quarter of 2023 jumping by 0,2% from the fourth quarter of 2022 to 32,9% with youth unemployment especially concerning. I would like to know

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whether your department or your office has completed a youth survey on skills shortages in all or across all nine provinces, in order to focus intervention strategies in accordance with the gaps that were identified?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, my office has not conducted surveys yet, but we have divisions in the Presidency that are particularly focusing on challenges that are facing young people. You'll recall that some of the programs that the President announced are particularly focusing on young people. You can look at the youth Stimulus package and a lot of other initiatives. We will look into that matter.

We already know that the high levels of unemployment South Africa feeds mainly young people. We are already aware of that and therefore our interventions are going to be mainly focused on young people. We might want to dissect that further to look at the various categories. We are designing our programs in such a way that we give young people skills and create opportunities for them to get opportunities to be employable, but also run their own businesses and so on.

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I will follow up with my team to see if there's a need for us to do further surveys to look into that issue, but we definitely have to prioritize young people. Thank you very much Chairperson.

Question 8:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, when we responded to a similar question on 25 May this year, we outlined several programmes that the government has put in place to address both financial and technical support to emerging farmers. This includes amongst others, the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme and Ilima-Letsema programme, which is aimed at resourcing and equipping producers towards increasing food production and other value chain initiatives.

Secondly, the Land Development Support Programme which supports land reform by assisting farmers who acquired farms with infrastructure, farm machinery, equipment, production development inputs, and also the provision of technical support and mentorship. Thirdly, the blended finance scheme supports commercialization.

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The fourth one is the SA-GAP Certification Programme, which assists farmers to meet minimum food-safe safety and quality requirements, and thus is access to the markets. And lastly, collaboration with the Japan International Co-operation Agency and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, for the implementation of the Farmer Field Schools. Both these interventions enhance the provision of extension services to small-scale farmers towards maintaining sustainable food production and market access.

Hon Chairperson, as part of the comprehensive farmer support, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development provides capacity development interventions that are focused on capacitating producers with skills requisites and mentorship based on their needs at the farm level. In this regard, we will be implementing targeted programmes to empower the most disadvantaged sectors of our communities, including the youth, women, and people living with disabilities.

Some of the things we will do are the following: Through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, we have been able to provide production inputs for the most vulnerable producers for households, food security, and self-employment.

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Secondly, farmer production support units provide a central service for producers to get production inputs, mechanization, and technical support.

Thirdly, the Land Core programme is aimed at protecting and preserving natural resources and creating employment opportunities in rural communities.

Fourthly, the Animal and Veld Management Programme provides animal husbandry-related infrastructure such as fencing and handling deeping facilities, et cetera. The River Valley Catalytic Programme is designed to revitalize irrigation schemes, particularly in rural areas, the Macro Agricultural Finance Institute of South Africa provides affordable loans for producers and the National Rural Youth Service Corps programme targets unemployed rural youth with skills capacity.

As a government, we are committed to fast track the pace of land reform to ensure the improvement of our people's lives for the better, especially those living in rural areas. Thank you very much.

Mr W A S AUCAMP: Thank you, hon Chairperson. Hon Deputy President, land reform has failed due to a lack of urgency and

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corruption by the ANC-led government. This failure was confirmed by the High-Level Panel led by former President Kgalema Mothlante. It's not me that says it. It's the High-Level Panel under Kgalema Mothlante that said it.

We have seen how this government from the ANC tries to hide its failures with land reform, by introducing laws that will firstly not benefit land reform or food security, and secondly, will not pass the test of constitutionality. An example of this is the government's latest ploy to implement race quotas on water users, knowing full well that these water users are farmers. These proposed water quotas will have the effect that a farmer that irrigates as little as 30 hectares of land will be subject to quotas in his farming business.

Therefore, hon Deputy President are these proposed water quotas just another feeble attempt by the ANC-led government to hide the inability to affect meaningful land reform and transformation as it was intended and needed? If not, what are your intentions with these water quotas and what agricultural support will be achieved by these draconian and racist water quotas?

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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you very much, Chairperson. I made the point in my last speech- I do not remember if it was in the House-that we, as the governing party, have come to terms with the fact that progress on land reform is slow. But I think we should not give the impression that nothing has happened. For example, if you look at the numbers-I will not quote most of them-a total of 552 000 households have benefited from land reform programmes, 174 000 of which are women-headed households and 1 240 households headed by people with disabilities, 700 000 hectares of state-owned land have been identified and are expected to be distributed as early as 2020. So a lot is happening.

But you would recall as well that as we get involved in land reform, redistribution and restitution, we are also doing the transformation. So programmes like the quotas you are talking about are intended to ensure that the previously disadvantaged are also brought into the mainstream of the economy through programmes that they will acquire through land redistribution and restitution.

There is a lot that the government is doing in that regard to ensure that we correct the problems of the past and return the land to our people and ensure that they get involved in

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farming. And there is a lot of support that the government is going to the fast track including Operation Phakisa, and the Land Development Support programme. There are several programmes that we have put in place and we want to support all farmers. We are not discriminating. But it's important to redress the imbalances of the past. Thank you.

IsiZulu:

Nk L C BEBEE: Ngiyabonga, Sihlalo weNdlu, Baba, ngibingelele kuSekela Mongameli, Baba, siyazi ukuthi abalimi abaningi abasafufusayo abakwazi ukutshelaka izimali emabhange ngoba abanayo imininingwane la abazokwazi ukuthi batsheleke ngazo. Nokuthi futhi nje okunyiqiniso nokubalulekile ukuthi abantu bakithi abanawo nomhlaba. Sekela Mongameli, umbuzo wami uthi lana, ngabe uHulumeni ungalekelela kanjani kusimo esinjalo kulabo balimi ngoba phela bayathanda nabo ukuthi balime benze konke ngokufanele njengabantu bonke, ikahulukazi omama, intsha kanye nemiphakathi yasemakhaya? Ngiyabonga, Sekela Mongameli, Baba.

USEKELA MONGAMELI: Ngiyabonga kakhulu, Sihlalo Ohloniphekile, Mama, lo mbuzo wakho muhle kakhulu ngoba vele yinto esiyeenzayo ukuthi abantu bakithi bathole umhlaba njengoba nje usho ukuthi abaningi abanawo umhlaba wokuthi balime. Ngike ngasho

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ekugaleni ukuthi kunezinhlelo esize nazo zokuthi sisize bona njenga lolu ebengikulume ngalo okuthiwa yi-Farmers Support Programme olenzelwe lokho futhi lelo hlelo lwabekwa uNgqongqoshe uDidiza mhla ethula isabelomali somnyango wakhe wathi enye into azoyenza yile ebizwa nge-Land Development Support nalento esiyibiza i-Blended Finance Facility esiyenza ngokubambisana ne-IDC.

Yizimali lezo ezibekelwe ukuthi sisize laba abafuna ukulima, kungaba omama, kungaba abakhubazekile, yintsha. Lezi zinhlelo zenzelwe bona ngakhokemabeze bafake izicelo zokuthola usizo. Kuyenzeka ngesinye isikhathi uthole ukuthi abazi ukuthi zikhona lezi zinhlelo ezisungulelwe ukusiza bona. Ngakho masibatshela ukuthi beze, sisebenzisana futhi ne-Land Bank nayo futhi esungulelwe ukuthi isize bonke abafuna umhlaba nabafuna ukulima. Ngiyabonga, Mama.

English:

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: Thank you, Chairperson. Deputy President, concerning the accelerated land reform and agricultural support qualifying individuals, what measures are in place to ensure that existing commercial farming activities that form the basis of food security are not affected negatively in any way?

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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. Hon the De Bruyn, we agree with you that we must try as much as possible not to disturb programmes that ensure food security. That's why commercial farmers are not our targets. But what we are saying is that when you go out there, you do find farmers with vast tracts of land. Some don't even farm or produce any food. So, we are saying there needs to be a balance that you redistribute land to ensure more people come into agriculture without chasing anybody away.

So, the commercial farmers that are there need to be supported. They are being supported. They have access to loans from the Land Bank. And we do want to see them producing more and more to ensure food security in our country. That must go hand in hand with ensuring that we bring more people into agriculture, particularly from disadvantaged communities. We are finding a very good balance in doing that.

And in fact, we have with the Deputy President in the past, met with a lot of commercial farmers, it was quite interesting because, in one of the meetings that I attended, one of the commercial farmers came to us with the former Deputy President and this commercial farmer said to us, "How can we help? We

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have learned, and we have skills. If you want to bring more people into agriculture, we are there to work with you."

So let us work with the commercial farmers in our country, let us not chase them away, let us not interrupt their production, but let us get more people to increase productivity in the agriculture sector.

Ms N TAFENI: Deputy President, the recent report of the department to the Land Claims Court on progress made in settling land restitution claims indicates that it may take a further 30 years to settle the less than 7 000 land claims lodged in 1998. The department further indicates that it will need R68 billion to settle this claim.

Have you engaged the department to get the full details of why the settlement of these claims has been delayed? If so, what steps are you putting in place to fast-track the settlement of these claims, because most of those who lodge the claims are dying?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Thank you very much, hon member. It is in our interest to ensure that land claimants,

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do receive their land in their lifetime. But obviously, some of them are old, as you say, can't wait forever.

One of the things that we are doing now with the President is to meet with all Ministers to look at their programmes, and what they are prioritizing. This is a matter that we have discussed with the Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform, and it is something that they are dealing with, to fast-track these programmes.

You may recall that one of the challenges is sometimes because of disputes from land claimants within families or sometimes even as communities we don't just agree on the use of land or who belongs to that particular area. And those tend to delay the programme of land reform to ensure that people get back their land through redistribution or restitution. But we are addressing that. I think it is in our interest to ensure that people have access to land as quickly as possible. So we are trying our best. Thank you very much, hon member, for the question. Thank you, Chair.

Question 9:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Chairperson, government has identified service-delivery hotspots with the aim to improve universal

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access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, sustainable energy, refuse collection and other essential services.

An evaluation of the state of local government that was conducted last year revealed that the number of dysfunctional municipalities had increased from 64 to 66. Amongst other things, this increase can be attributed to a lack of capacity, poor governance, financial management, corruption, as well as failed coalition governments.

In this regard, the Department of Water and Sanitation, working together with the elected leadership in municipalities, has agreed on a number of improvement plans to resolve, amongst others water-related challenges. Part of the solution includes the following interventions:

Firstly, financial support through the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant and Water Services Infrastructure Grant; and

Secondly, technical advice and management support from the Department of Water and Sanitation and its water boards.

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Similar interventions have been put in place to resolve the issue of water contamination in Hammanskraal in the north of Tshwane, where unfortunately, lives were lost due to this crisis.

President Cyril Ramaphosa recently announced that the departments of Water and Sanitation and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the Gauteng government, together with the City of Tshwane, have begun collaborating on a larger scale to revamp and expand the Rooiwal water treatment plant to resolve the water and sanitation challenges in Hammanskraal. This project is expected to take three years to complete at a cost of R4 billion. The Development Bank of Southern Africa has been brought on board to manage the project.

In the meantime, government will keep on providing clean water to the people of Hammanskraal through water tanks, while Magalies Water build what they call a package water system that will provide water to the people.

Through the District Development Model, DDM, we are ensuring that not only is the provision of essential services expanded but also that communities outside of the service-delivery

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hotspots do receive dependable and high-quality services. We strongly believe that through the DDM and the service-delivery rapid response approach, we shall in each district have one plan that is measurable, implementable and citizen focused.

Government will continue to implement measures to ensure that communities have access to dependable and high-quality services, amongst others the deployment of technical professionals; the revival of the Green Drop and Blue Drop certification by the Department of Water and Sanitation; and the adoption of national pothole repair programmes to intensify the fight against potholes, and general road refurbishment and improvement.

What is of critical importance to us is that as we execute these reforms, we are putting communities at the heart of service delivery, and organising citizens and members of civil society to contribute towards the development of a brighter tomorrow for all. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

Ms A D MALEKA: Deputy President, the delivery of quality and reliable services to communities is directly linked to the quality of the infrastructure, resources and the maintenance system of municipalities. Municipalities with poor

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infrastructure lack resources and have inadequate maintenance plans, and those in failed and failing coalition arrangements form the majority of municipalities that are located in service-delivery hotspots.

To what extent is government ensuring that infrastructure improvement, maintenance and the protection of infrastructure, particularly against vandalism, form a key part of the acceleration of the service-delivery improvement drive, particularly in service-delivery hotspots?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: As government, we have put a number of initiatives in place to particularly improve the maintenance of key infrastructure across the country. One of the programmes that is in place is what we call the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent, Misa. Through Misa, government has identified the gaps that exist and also to look at the inability of certain municipalities to be able to deliver or manage infrastructure in a reliable manner or ensure that there is a provision of basic quality services.

There is also the municipal infrastructure support agent that is also strengthening our DDM. Amongst others, some of the things – and I will conclude Chairperson because there is a

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lot that is happening there – is also what we are doing to support municipalities through this infrastructure support agent, like conducting effective infrastructure planning, supporting and assisting municipalities in the implementation of infrastructure projects as to determine what municipalities should do in their *integrated development plans*, IDPs, supporting and assisting municipalities with operations and maintenance and also building the capacity of municipalities.

So, there are a lot of initiatives that we are doing to ensure that we support these municipalities because we are aware of these challenges, and we are going to continue to do so. Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr N M HADEBE: Hon Deputy President, when it comes to the issue of service delivery, we know that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work, as contextually the problems faced by provinces differ, considering that in eThekweni Municipality it would take the municipality more than 90 years to address the current informal settlement backlog given the current fiscal allocations.

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I would like to know how you will ensure that basic services such as the removal of garbage, and water and sanitation are provided to South Africans living in these areas. Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes, as I said earlier, the first approach for us is to support municipalities and help them with capacity. There have been instances where we have seen huge dysfunctionalities almost leading to a collapse of service delivery. There are interventions, where government can come in and place the municipality under administration to be able to then provide services either through a provincial government or directly from national government. However, we avoid that as a first move. Of course, I understand your concern that there shouldn't be a gap where services are not provided. So, where we support we must see improvement. If it's not happening, then we can come with section 139 and take-over to be able to provide services. We have done that in a number of areas. You have seen it in places like Emfuleni, at some point Mogale City and now in Jakkalsfontein in the Free State. So, there are interventions, where national government and provincial government move in to ensure that basic services are provided by government. We will do so, but the first thing is to support municipalities to do that work. Thank you, Chairperson.

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Ms N TAFENI: Deputy President, the large number of service-delivery protests stand as the reflection of the discontent amongst our people as there currently exists an unequal redistribution of services, particularly in rural and township areas, which are often denied critical resources.

What measures have you put in place to ensure that there is a recruitment of skilled personnel to rural and underdeveloped areas so as to expand the provision of basic services and provide quality services, even in those areas which are often forgotten by the ANC?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: These areas have been remembered by the ANC. They have not been forgotten. One of the things that we are doing through the Human Resource Development Council, HRDC, is to ensure that there are proper skills at those levels, particularly the rural municipalities. In our recent trips to provinces, we sought to go deep into rural areas, where as you correctly say are challenges of capacity. We have recently been to Lusikisiki and looked at challenges there. We will be going to other rural areas as well. So, through the HRDC, it is in fact our priority. The good thing about this council is that we work with people on the ground. We work with traditional leaders, farmers and local business people.

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So, as a result, these communities will not be forgotten because as we go down through our DDM, we target those areas exactly. Thank you very much.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Deputy President, the existence of service-delivery hotspots is mainly a consequence of poor governance and corruption in dysfunctional municipalities, effectively propelling local government into a kakistocracy. I can assist you if you don't know what a kakistocracy means, Deputy President. It means a state governed by its least suitable or competent citizens. Recently, Ratings Afrika, a private municipal governance ratings firm, and the Auditor-General, AG, reaffirmed that the majority of the country's best municipalities were in fact DA-led and in the Western Cape, which is a fact.

Will the Minister inform the country whether he will be open to a national municipal best practice summit, where well-run municipalities will be able to share knowledge with struggling municipalities on how to improve governance and improve service delivery? If not, can the Deputy President please provide reasons why not? Thank you, sir.

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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Badenhorst, as I said earlier, as the governing party we continue to monitor the performance of municipalities. That's why I said earlier that we know those that are functional and those that are dysfunctional because we are monitoring. Not only are we monitoring, but we are also intervening where we find that there are problems.

Currently, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs has identified 24 where they are already intervening. Obviously, that's not the largest number but they have started, and the idea is to reach out to all those. We are also aware of those that the AG has raised which need attention.

You are quite right in that often you do find problems of poor governance or corruption, and those are the things that we are definitely addressing, even in terms of people who are appointed in those areas ... local municipalities. We are pushing for people with competent skills and people who are able to do the job.

So, the issue of poor dysfunctional municipalities is not something that is left out there without attention. In fact, the biggest work of the Department of Co-operative Governance

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and Traditional Affairs at the moment, directed by the Presidency, is to address exactly that problem to ensure that we turn around municipalities because they are at the forefront of service delivery. Municipalities are the nearest to the people on the ground and if they are dysfunctional it means that people are not getting the services they are supposed to get. So, hon Badenhorst, this is definitely our priority.

I have participated in many summits in the past and summits do help. Sometimes they become talk shows. I think what we need to do is to ensure that there are plans for implementation. If there's a summit that comes up with good plans and good practices that will ensure implementation, we will look at that but I think it's important that we focus on implementing plans that are going to help turn around municipalities to be able to deliver quality services to our people. Thank you, hon Chairperson.

Question 10:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, as I committed to this august House on 19 March 2023 that I would undertake an oversight visit to Jurgersfontein, I would like to report that, indeed, on 9 May, I led a government

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delegation, comprising leaders across the three spheres of government to visit Jurgersfontein.

The visit confirmed the challenges related to service delivery, financial sustainability and the debt to Bloem Water in that municipality. These are a couple of things that we agreed on, together with the Free State government and the Xhariep District Municipality, as well as the private sector and other stakeholders that we are going to attend to, particularly after the dam disaster of September 2022.

Firstly, the immediate interventions included the Free State Provincial Government, subsequently invoking section 139(1)(b) of the Constitution, done on 17 May 2023, as part of efforts towards improving service delivery at Kopanong Municipality.

Secondly, the Free State Provincial Executive Council has also appointed representatives to oversee the implementation of the intervention, with a focus on dealing with the water supply challenges experienced by residents and issues related to the financial viability of the municipality, as well as responding to the educational needs of youth in the area.

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In ensuring that we respond adequately through a sustainable solution, I have asked Deputy Minister Tau of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Deputy Minister Majola of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, to lead a project management team that will consult with various stakeholders, such as National Treasury and Department of Water and Sanitation in an attempt to find solutions to this matter. I specifically asked these two Deputy Ministers because they were with me on that mission, visiting that areas.

This project management team is working closely, as we speak with the Free State Provincial Department and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in ensuring that responses to the above challenges are anchored on ensuring that the District Development Model serves as the foundation for enabling adequate and efficient service delivery to the people, driving infrastructure investment and advancing local economic development.

These are some of the citizen-centric efforts that we are providing political oversight over the Kopanong Local Municipality. We will continue to work tirelessly towards ensuring that we deliver on our mandate of ensuring the

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improvement of life and dignity for all the people in that municipality, as required by the Constitution. I thank you.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: Hon Chairperson, Deputy President, firstly, thank you for honouring your commitment made earlier this year to visit Kopanong Local Municipality. I fear much more is needed in the Kopanong Municipality.

I am sure that you are aware that, at this stage, the employees and officials of Kopanong have still not received their salaries for the month of May, and this month, they will again not receive their salaries. It is expected that they will only receive the salaries of these two months in the middle of next month. To no surprise, all the workers and officials of the municipality are striking and there is currently no service delivery in any of the nine towns of Kopanong Municipality. Adding to that, the communities are now without water for 16 months, as a result of the nonpayment that you have just mentioned to Bloem Water.

During your visit to Kopanong last month, there were a lot of promises made by you, the MECs and even the premier.

Unfortunately, the people of Kopanong are no strangers to promises made by government. They have been hearing these

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promises for years and years on end already, to no avail. Unfortunately, they are also used to the government making promises that they do not keep, especially when there is an election around the corner. This has also been happening for years and years on end.

My question is: While I appreciate the commitments that you have made during your visit in Kopanong and here in the House today, what guarantees can you give that these commitments and promises are not just empty promises, as they have experienced in the past, and has been made by your predecessor? When can we expect to see these promises and commitments being implemented on ground level and not just on paper? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, hon member, one of the things that we have agreed to do with the Premier of the Free State was for them to intervene, as I have said in my reply, amongst others, to particularly look at the debt to Bloem Water. The debt is also, amongst others, as a result of nonpayment of services not only by households, but also by the industry.

So, what Bloem Water did was then to reduce the supply of water. At that time, I was told that they only supply 30% of

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water. So, you are quite right; people don't have adequate water.

The Free State government was then going to intervene in the meantime, by providing some resources to Bloem Water, to increase the water supply. So, we will check with them where that process is. At that time, there was talk of about R10 million that would be made available. I did have a discussion with hon Parks Tau, who had promised that they were already engaging on a number of issues affecting Kopanong and that he would give me a report in the coming week. We will then be able to see which areas still need attention.

Of course, if the municipality cannot pay salaries, it does mean that they have a challenge of resources. So, we will check with the Free State government on whether they were able to assist them financially. But, at the end of the day, it does point to the fact that the municipality may not be viable. Therefore, you may need even more intervention from provincial and national levels, to ensure that people have services and workers are paid.

Many local councillors don't like it when provincial or national government comes in to take over. Sometimes, you

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reach a point where you have to do it. So, we are watching Kopanong and, of course, other municipalities carefully. There are other municipalities that have similar challenges.

We will support them, assist, but where we realise that we are not winning, provincial and national government must come in to stabilise the situation. Thank you.

Mr G MICHALAKIS: Hon Chairperson, hon Deputy President, it is not only Kopanong that faces this problem. The two most serious worries that I have, not disregarding the challenges faced by Kopanong, is that Bloem Water is also owned money by the two biggest cities in the Free State, being Mangaung and Matjhabeng. Matjhabeng is my constituency.

Now, the problem is not only due to the fact that residents and businesses are not paying their rates and taxes. The actual problem lies with financial maladministration of these municipalities. In the nine years that I have been on the committee that deals with municipal interventions -section 139 interventions - I am still to see an intervention of that nature that has been successful. So, respectfully, I do not think that such an intervention is going to bear any fruit.

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Firstly, I want to ask you, a few years ago, we had before the delegation from the Free State, both the national and the provincial, as well as the local municipalities, these very same municipalities, with the very same question. So, the government knew about these problems and that Bloem Water debt is going the same way as Eskom, why did government not act on that? It is the big question that we are all asking.

Furthermore, I also wrote a request to the premier this week, because Welkom, as the second largest city in the Free State has been without water in some cases for months in some areas. I asked that there should be a financial recovery plan from the province imposed on the municipality. It is a much better option than a section 139 intervention. Would you today support my request to the premier to consider such a financial recovery plan for the Matjhabeng Municipality? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, as I have said earlier, when I left Kopanong, we had agreed that the two Deputy Ministers are going follow up on these issues, but the Free State government will also intervene through section 139.

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I have not been made aware that such interventions are not yielding fruit, but as I said, I am getting a report next week from hon Parks Tau to check what the problem is. Of course, you are quite right that the challenge is not only Kopanong. We will have to look at what is happening in Matjhabeng and as you are saying, there may also be problems elsewhere in the province.

So, municipalities that owe Bloem Water is not only Kopanong. We need to look at all of them, so that we don't resolve Kopanong and then tomorrow, there is Matjhabeng or another municipality. We are going to look holistically at all of them.

So, I will get the report from the Deputy Ministers, particularly the Deputy Minister of Cogta next week. We will look at sustainable solutions, and if there are solutions that will help us, if section 139 is not assisting, we will look at what else we should do there to resolve that situation. Then we will report once more to this august House. Thank you.

Mr M S MOLETSANE: Hon Chairperson, Deputy President, the people of Kopanong actually want to hear what kind of help will be provided to the municipality to recover from its

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financial challenges, which it is currently facing, in particular, the law revenue collection and large debt to service providers. Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon member, indeed, when we were there, we had the opportunity to meet with all stakeholders, including business and, of course, all of them were keen that they want to see their municipality being able to service them. We committed that we are going to assist the municipality, because the provincial government was there, the premier himself was there with all the MECs to assist the municipality. And therefore, they intervened with section 139, but they were also going to assist the municipality by providing some finance, to pay Bloem Water, to provide water in the areas.

We looked at what further measures we need to put in place, to assist the people in that area. Obviously, when I get the report next week from Deputy Minister Parks Tau, we will see whether there are other measures that we need to put in place to intervene beyond section 139.

For me, what is urgent is to ensure that we stabilise the issue of water supply in the area. We must ensure that there

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is proper provision of services, including the removal of waste in the townships, to ensure that there is proper waste management and to ensure that there are proper services to business communities.

In fact, when we were there, there were business people who wanted to invest in the area. In fact, they were not just looking at Kopanong, but also at the broader Xariep District and they were saying that they wanted to invest there and if we could get the municipalities to operate correctly, they would come in. Most of them do not have proper revenue, because they do not have industries and so on.

So, I was very happy that business was there. As we help to fix this place, we are coming in. That is going to help those municipalities to survive, because they will then have a proper revenue base. So, we are focusing on that and we are going to make sure that we fix the problem. Thank you.

Ms N E NKOSI: Hon Chairperson, hon Deputy President, the challenges that are facing Bloem Water are also as a result of aging infrastructure that continues to hamper the future water demand targets, as stated in greater Bloemfontein Reconciliation Strategy.

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Cllr Khalipha, the Mayor of Matjhabeng, which has been without water for days has indicated that Matjhabeng alone needs half a billion rand for water infrastructure to deal with the current water saving problems. What measures are in place to ensure that more resources to ensure that Bloem Water and many of the water boards that are facing similar challenges throughout the country have access to more funding for service delivery, infrastructure restoration and maintenance? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, hon Nkosi, we are working very closely with the Minister of Water and Sanitation on these matters. One of the things the Minister has committed to do is to address this problem of aging infrastructure.

It is not only in the Free State area. We have noticed that there are a number of areas in the country where you have aging infrastructure. And the Minister of Water and Sanitation has been doing that audit throughout, to pick up where these problems are, to intervene and to ensure that we can then put in new infrastructure in many of these areas.

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So, that work is already underway. So, we will definitely not forget the Free State. Matjhabeng, as you said, does not have the money to do it themselves - half a billion, as you said.

The Minister of Water and Sanitation is already aware of this and they have already picked it up. They are already looking at the solution to ensure that we can assist these municipalities to renew this infrastructure, so that they can provide better service and get revenue from taxpayers, households and businesses in their areas. Thank you very much.

Question 11:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, the Land Reform Programme remains a major part of the work of government. We must not waiver on this task if we are to realise our transformation agenda. We must not allow anyone or anything to defocus us on this task, worst of all the allegations of fraud and corruption.

It is for this reason that Cabinet approved the National Anti-Corruption Strategy in November 2020, which enables the country to step up the fight against fraud and corruption.

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As part of investigating allegations of corruption, we are working with various law enforcement agencies and entities to ensure that those responsible for such activities are prosecuted, and to put in place, corrective measures to mitigate against the recurrence of such acts.

In this regard, President Cyril Ramaphosa has signed Proclamation R-114 of 2023, authorising the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, to investigate allegations of maladministration and corruption in the former National Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries project called Ilima/Letsema Support Programme, and to recover any financial losses suffered by the state.

According to the Special Investigating Unit the Proclamation covers offences which took place between the inception of Letsema and 17 February 2023, or after the date of publication of the Proclamation. But is relevant to, connected with, incidental or ancillary to the matters mentioned in the schedule or involve the same persons, entities or contracts investigated.

One of the cases that are under investigation by the SIU relates to the concluding of a lease agreement with Cultiver

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Investments, which the Special Tribunal has recently declared as being irregular or unlawful.

This is one amongst many matters that the department has taken steps to investigate after the emergence of fraud and corruption allegations. Internal investigations have resulted in disciplinary hearings, civil and criminal referrals of employees who are implicated in acts of corruption.

As the Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land Reform, we will continue to work with implementing departments and entities in fast-tracking land reform and the coordination of programmes to accelerate land reform and agricultural support, and we'll ensure that we root out corruption and fraud in that sector. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Ms C VISSER: Hon Deputy President, thank you for very briefly explaining to us that the processes and procedures that you are going to follow.

I just want to ask you further than that in terms of the backlog of land reform and the problems that or the challenges that we have with the eradication of a lead fraud, corruption and theft in the department: Why is there in the system no

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thing built-in like in terms of the Act on fraud and ... the act of the prevention on fraud and corruption cities, what happened to checks and balances and consequences because what I referred to is a case way back of 2019 and it's now 2023 and nothing has happened so far? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon member, I take note of the fact that the issue you raised could have been addressed long ago or previously, but in our discussions with the department they did indicate that they are following the guide to implement lifestyle audits as well as part of the antifraud campaign in the department.

So, we are going to be engaging with them to look at what more can be done. You will recall that the antifraud framework is a framework that covers the whole of government and we want all the departments to be able to do that but come up with additional measures.

The lifestyle or what they call the lifestyle audits in the public service is now one of the things that is being used to ensure that it helps us to curb corruption in the departments.

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We will engage with the department to see if more can be done if things don't improve quicker, but otherwise it's a matter that they are attending to. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Mr Z MKIVA: Chairperson, good afternoon to you and good afternoon to the Deputy President, as well as the members of this august House.

Deputy President, section 3 of the Public Service Act of 1994 allows the Minister for the Public Service and Administration to establish norms and standards relating to integrity, ethics, conduct and anticorruption in the public service, which includes the adoption of the lifestyle - as you have alluded to - lifestyle audits as a legitimate fraud prevention and detection mechanism.

This is just by way of emphasising the issue because I know that you have already covered this very well, but the point where I want you to help us is the fact that one would have expected that by now all national, provincial departments and other entities of state would have long employed this mechanism to ensure that it is in full swing.

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What is the reason that the government has not fully implemented these lifestyle audits as a measure to combat corruption to this point? Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Mkiva, I agree with you that we should move faster to get all government departments to implement this mechanism.

We all agree that fraud and corruption in our country, particularly in the public sector, seriously undermine the efforts of government to deliver and that's why government came up with this guide to implement lifestyle audits. But as you say, not all government departments have moved with speed and therefore, it is up to the Presidency to ensure that we check all the departments and ensure that all of them introduce and implement these guidelines to be able to curb fraud and corruption. Even the guidelines on lifestyle audits need to be rigorously implemented to ensure that we are able to curb the problem.

You may be aware that the President has established what we call the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council, which will advise government on the implementation of a society wide response against corruption.

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This council will, in the main, focus on legislative reforms, monitoring and evaluation of procurement where a lot of corruption does take place. So, it will help us a lot once these mechanisms are put in place faster.

But we agree with you that there's a need to ensure that all government departments do implement these measures. Thank you very much.

Mr N M HADEBE: Hon Deputy President, the IFP has long held the view that government's commitment to land reform and coordination of an acceleration of government's programme towards agricultural support is not convincing. Though budget allocation may sometimes match the need, but it does not match reaction and progress on the ground. This, of course, may be attributed to activities of theft, fraud and corruption.

I would like to know whether the government has any plan or plans of recouping monies embezzled through litigation of those officials found guilty of such, and what timeframe can be given for that? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Chairperson, as I indicated earlier, the SIU does recoup monies once people are

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prosecuted and be able to return the funds to the fiscus. So, we will do that with all the programme where we find that fraud and corruption is committed.

I am not able to give a definite timeframe at the moment on how we will be able to complete the process of looking at this particular aspect, but obviously, it's a matter that requires urgent attention.

I'm sure hon Radebe will understand that we also accept that it needs urgent attention. We will look at the timeframes later, but obviously, I take your point that where we are intervening we should do it quicker. So, we will do exactly that. Thank you, Chairperson.

Setswana:

Moh S B LEHIHI: Motlatsamoporesidente, mokgatlo o o busang wa pallwa e bile o palletswe ke go lwantsha bobodu mo ditirelong tsa setšhaba. Baeteledipele ba lekoko le le busang ba tswelela go ikhumisa le go utswa madi a puso a a tshwanetseng go thusa batho ba ba tlhophileng.

Go tlile go diragala eng ka batho bao ba nnileng le seabe mo bobodung? Ke a leboga, Chairperson [Modulasetilo].

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English:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon member, there are various activities that government is implementing to deal with fraud and corruption.

Setswana:

Ke setse ke buile gore SIU ke yone e bidiwang mo go nang le bobodu gore e dire dipatlisiso ka botlalo.

Ka gantsi batho ba tshwarwa fela re batla bas ka tshwarwa fela, go nne le kotlhao e ba e boning gore go bonagale gore puso eno e tlhoile bobodu.

Gape re batla gore madi a puso a a utswitsweng a boe. Fa batho ba utswitse madi a puso ba tshwanetse ba a duele. SIU e tlile go dira gore madi otlhe a a utswitsweng a duelwa.

Re batla gore botlhe ba ba nang le seabe mo bogodung le bobodu ba otlhaiwe...

English:

... in other words, the people who are involved in fraud and corruption must be arrested and they must be prosecuted and punished and the resources of the people must be returned to

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the government. And we think that the SIU is doing a good job in executing that mandate. Ke a leboga, kgaitsemi. [Thank you, my sister.]

Question 12:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, the government is focusing on strengthening leadership and professionalisation of the public service, skills development, accountability, interdepartmental co-ordination, intergovernmental relations, and better governance of state-owned enterprises.

On 19 October last year, Cabinet approved the National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector. The framework was introduced to ensure that only qualified and competent individuals are appointed into positions of authority, in pursuit of a transformed, professional, ethical, capable, and developmental public sector.

The professionalisation framework has been extended to the national, provincial, and local spheres of government, organs of state and the legislative sector. Therefore, recommendations made in the national framework shall be

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consistently applied across the public sector, including the military, state security, police, and correctional services.

Our state-owned enterprises, SOEs, are at the forefront of economic and social transformation of our country. SOEs are key drivers for the provision of critical infrastructure required for the development of our country's economy. This includes electricity generation, commuter transport, water provision, freight logistics, technology, and telecommunications, amongst others. In order to closely monitor the performance of state-owned enterprises, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation launched the State-Owned Enterprises Monitoring Framework in March this year, to strengthen the oversight capacity of departments to oversee public entities.

These are some of the measures that government has implemented to maximise the capacity and capabilities of government departments and state entities to ensure greater alignment across the public sector to optimise the interconnection between planning and performance management.

The President has delegated us to monitor the implementing of the District Development Model, DDM, which is an operational

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model for improving co-operative governance aimed at building a capable, ethical, and developmental state. The DDM embodies an approach by which the three spheres of government and state entities work in unison in an impact-oriented way, and where there is higher performance and accountability for coherent service delivery and development outcomes.

Through outreach programmes, and oversight visits that we are currently conducting, we are able to troubleshoot challenges at District level and ensuring that One Plans are developed and implemented to address service delivery challenges at that level.

To further maximise the capacity and capabilities of government departments and entities, the government has forged partnerships with its science councils, namely, the Human Science Research Council, HSRC, Council for Geoscience, and many others, to establish a Community of Practise for Science Councils Monitoring and Evaluation Practitioners.

The purpose of the Community of Practice is to share lessons learnt on best practices amongst the members to build the planning, monitoring and evaluation capacity and capabilities of government departments and state entities. In this regard,

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the HSRC is working with government to support local government initiatives to improve service delivery.

Government will continue to build state capacity and capabilities by encouraging continuous learning and professional development through institutions like the National School of Government, TVET colleges, Science Councils, and institutions of higher learning. Thank you very much.

Mr M I RAYI: Hon Chairperson, greetings to the hon Deputy President, I was worried as the Deputy President was continuing that he would even cover my follow up question and he has already done so, but nevertheless, I will ask the question, Chair. How is the government leveraging on the country' science council to maximise the capacity and capabilities of state-owned enterprises and the local government sphere? As I said here, he has even touched on the number of science councils that are there in the country. Thank you so much.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: So, I thought hon Rayi would say that I am covered. [Laughter.] Yes, but just to say, hon Chairperson, that there is a lot that is being done that I

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can cover just during this question, particularly through the District Development Model, there are lots of initiatives. We are engaging lead departments, amongst others, on data observatory to enable real time access to DDM information, deploying Municipal Innovation Maturity Index, harnessing solutions developed by Departments of Science and Innovation, and submit DDM project information to the Department of Cogta. So, there is a lot that we are doing to ensure that state entities are able to do their work properly, but also to support government interventions and a lot of work that we are doing at the level of government support comes, amongst others, from the science councils, as we have seen even during the period of COVID-19, we were able to develop interventions because of our science councils. So, they are very important, and they are helping us a lot. Thank you very much.

Mr M J MAGWALA: Protectme, Chair. Greetings to the Deputy President, and to the members of the House. Deputy President, I am not covered at all. Whether the measures that you are referring to and also include making commitments for all spheres of government to directly provide services in these areas which are functions of the state? If so, which initiatives have you taken to insource all the workers working in government departments and facilities and which timeframes

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have you put in place in this regard and also, Deputy President, why is the ANC so against the insourcing of our people in these departments? Do you know that if a security guard that is outsourced is costing R14 000 for his services from a private sector, but the security guard is earning R4500? I think the survey has been done also in the insourcing of the security guards in Gauteng municipalities that the EFF has pushed there. Why is the government of the ANC so desperately want to do tenders and not do away with tenders and insource our people and put them and give them the necessary benefits that they deserve so that we move away from outsourcing even a mere thing of a water bottle that must be insourced, but we can insource our own people that can go and buy this water, not private companies. Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: If I suspected that you would ask that question, I would have gotten some figures to ensure that you become aware that government is one of the biggest employers in the country as we speak. It is already the biggest. The ANC, hon member, is not obsessed with outsourcing. In many of the institutions we run in government, whether at provincial, local level, even national, we do employ people. There are maybe particular times when you need skills from industry that you would then go and tender to

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bring in a particular company. It is done everywhere in the world. There will never be a time when you have all the skills in government that you require and all the expertise, and when you don't, you then go out to get those skills. But it's not our preoccupation to outsource. We believe in insourcing. You will see it happening all the time. Thank you very much.

Mr S F DU TOIT: Hon Deputy President, thank you for the answer. The initial question speaks to the delivery of essential services. It also speaks to weakening state capacity. In your previous answers on this question, you mentioned the professionalisation of the public sector. But, hon Deputy President, in the Auditor-General reports that we have been receiving for the for the past few years now, it is evident that political interference is one of the major issues that contributes to failing municipalities. In a previous answer you mentioned that the number of dysfunctional municipalities has increased. A few weeks back, the Minister of Electricity was here, and he said that the possibility of a blackout is not off the table. It will not be, according to him on the generation side, but on the distribution side. Now, when I go back to the beginning with the delivery of essential services, which is water, amongst others, we are currently struggling to get some of the water reticulation plants

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excluded from being victims of load shedding and that is happening. Yes, some generators are being put in place, but that's not something that can be pulled through until the end of days. So, Deputy President, I want to know: Does government have a backup plan to ensure that the country and municipalities do have sufficient water supply in the event of a grid collapse? Is there an estimated calculation for how long essential services like water supply will be available in these municipal areas as with the current storage facilities that they do have? Thank you, Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Well, let me start where you started where you said there is political interference. Now, many people sometimes fail to understand that politicians do have a role in government, whether it's at local level, provincial, and is provided for in the Constitution and legislation, for example, if you are an MEC in the province, you are what is called the executing authority. It means you have the power to execute, and in fact, you are the final arbiter, not the director-general. Often people, when politicians do their work, they say it is interference because we don't read the legislation properly. Yes, the legislation does give heads of department and directors-general their authority, their powers, but it does give politicians as well.

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So often, it is how do you relate to one another in that space. The MEC must not stand on the toes of the head of department or the Minister, the director-general, and vice versa, but they all have roles. So, what we need to do to avoid so-called political interference, everybody must understand their roles. This is my role, it ends here. Director-general, this your role up to there. Once we all understand our roles, you will never have a problem.

Now, let me go back to water. In fact, I was addressing a meeting this morning and one of the things I said is that we are in discussion with our Ministers to ensure that we don't get to a water crisis because we don't want to deal with issues because there's a crisis. There shouldn't be a water crisis. Again, I think we must disabuse ourselves from this comment of grid failure. It is not helpful. It is almost like a scarecrow. There will be no grid failure. No, there shouldn't be because ... you know what grid failure is? [Interjections.] We must not say these things lightly because grid failure means that we are going to the dark. There is no electricity, there is nothing.

Let me conclude because maybe this is a debate for another day. You know, the Minister of Electricity said something very

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interesting when I saw him two days ago and he said to me, you know, when there is a problem of load shedding, I get a lot of questions about what has gone wrong, this or that. And he says but when I improve nobody appreciates. He says it is almost like the improvement is through prayer. Nobody says the Minister of Electricity, we can see now the lights are on, what have you done? What are you doing? He says no, they don't ask me that. No, it is beyond burning diesel. If you listened to him yesterday, those who saw him, he said I am doing this deal with Mozambique because one of the things I want to do is to avoid continuing to burn diesel. When things are good, hon Chairperson, you don't get any praise, but when they are bad, 101 questions will come to you.

So, hon member, yes, we are going to come with a very strong strategy that will ensure that we always have water. South Africa has a lot of dams. We must just make sure that there's access because sometimes it's not that there is no water, it would be because reticulation is a problem, therefore people can't access water. We must make sure that they, in fact, access water and that there shall be no grid collapse. We are fixing the power stations, even the old ones. The ones that some of you were saying we must abandon. We are going to fix them so that we don't transition in the dark.

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Ms D C CHRISTIANS: Hon Deputy President, I am going to take you back to political interference, unfortunately. Hon Deputy President, you should have a bird's eye view of the effectiveness in government across South Africa. Now, without a shadow of doubt, the median Da-run government delivers better services than the median ANC-run government. It is true, it cannot be denied. We do not argue, of course, that there are exceptions to both, but overall, the ANC is delivering the worst services to the citizens of South Africa where it governs. The practice of deploying incompetent cadres has a direct impact on the capacity of municipalities because of office bearers that are handpicked based on their political loyalty instead of their fitness for the job, whereas the DA employs competent people to run their governments and it is reflected in most metrics. The ANC through the deployment committee in Luthuli house, has eroded the capacity of most governments to deliver to the most vulnerable. Now, Deputy President, when will you stop this practice of sending incompetent people to key positions that directly impact the most vulnerable and ensure that people who are fit for purpose are employed through a fair and transparent process? Thank you, Chairperson.

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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC: Hon Chairperson, okay, let me leave the issue of political interference because you didn't make any point, you threatened to make a point, but I didn't hear it. The second issue of incompetence, it's not true, in fact, let me give you an example, all the mayors of the ANC currently, starting from metros right down, have been interviewed before they assumed office. No, they were interviewed by the most competent people. They had to produce their qualifications. So, it is just that sometimes the DA doesn't understand the issue of cadre development because they think that - listen - when you talk about cadre development and deployment, you just go fetch someone in the streets and say go there, no. There's even a school in the ANC, people are trained. Yes, we train people, we check them, we make sure that when they are deployed, they are interviewed, and the most competent gets appointed. So, this story about why you are appointing incompetent people is not true. When I was a Minister in government, before you appoint a director-general ... because I know we have been accused that we just pick up directors-generals that we like. No, when I was in national government at the time as a Minister, if you want to have a director-general, you must advertise, and you must make sure there is a proper shortlisting. When the director-general is interviewed, the Minister sits with three other Ministers and

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Deputy Ministers and other directors-general to interview. So, it is not like any Minister come and say no, now, I want Mohamed Dangor. No, you go through a proper and rigorous process of interviews. So, in short, Chairperson, I want to say to hon Chris, I dismiss your assertion. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much. As the Deputy President takes his seat, I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for availing himself for this sitting. An appreciation also goes to permanent delegates, special delegates and all MECs, especially those who are on virtual, hon members and delegates. That ... I will come down again, just a short announcement that tomorrow' sitting will be fully virtual. [Inaudible.] [Recording stopped.]

The Council adjourned at 16:03.