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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

The Council met at 14:01.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

(Rules)

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon members, I would like to remind you that the Rules, in particular Sub Rules (21), (22) and (23) of Rule 103 does apply. In accordance with Council Rule 22(1), there will be no Notices of Motions or Motions Without Notice.

Before we proceed to questions, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Ministers from the Social Cluster, especially the Minister of Basic Education and the Minister of Higher Education. I would also like to welcome all permanent

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delegates as well as MECs and all special delegates and South African Local Government Association, Salga, representatives in the House.

Further, I would like to remind delegates that in terms of Rule 229 of the Council Rules, the time for reply by the Ministers to a question is five minutes. Only four supplementary questions are allowed per question. A member that asked the initial question would be the first to be afforded the opportunity to ask a supplementary question.

The time for asking supplementary question is two minutes. The time for a reply to a supplementary question is four minutes. The supplementary question must emanate from the initial question. I now call upon the Minister of Basic Education to please come to the podium and respond to Question 111 asked by the hon Mokwele. The response time is five minutes.

CLUSTER 2A: SOCIAL SERVICES

(Questions for Oral Reply)

Question 111:

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The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chairperson. The question asked by the hon member was whether the department is implementing the judgement of the pupil who fell into a pit latrine in Limpopo and whether or not we are meeting the deadlines. The Department of Basic Education, DBE, is monitoring the implementation of the Komape judgement that the member mentioned. We are monitoring the implementation of that judgement, but the implementation is being done by the DBE in Limpopo with the support of the DBE at national level. We as the DBE nationally support the province through the provision of the Sanitation Appropriate for Education, SAFE, programme.

The second part of the question is whether or not the deadlines were met? Yes, a comprehensive implementation plan was developed and submitted in accordance with the court order on 17 December 2021. Progress reports were submitted on 30 June 2022, 02 December 2022, June 2023, December 2023 and June 2024.

Chair, I just want to briefly explain what is included in the implementation plan. The department had divided the various milestones into priority one projects, priority two projects and priority three projects. What were the priority one

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projects? Those were the schools where there were no proper sanitation facilities, and those were the schools where there were essentially basic pit toilets. Those were the projects that were prioritised first. Of those projects, 527 have reached practical completion, which is 98% of progress, and the remaining 29 are in the construction phase.

Then, there were the priority two projects, those were the schools where the sanitation facilities were inadequate, where there was perhaps a very important person, VIP, or a better toilet, but the number of places for the students in the schools remained below what was decided, below the norms and standards. Here, 581 projects have reached practical completion, which is 50% of progress, and 60 are in the construction phase.

The priority three projects were schools that had adequate sanitation facilities with the appropriate technology and sufficient numbers, but still had basic pit toilets that were not covered. And this is still a big problem for us, because we have often seen children drowning in pit toilets. Often times, the toilets would have been built, but the pit is still there in the school. And that poses a safety risk because children, especially younger children, can get into these

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toilets and injure themselves. Priority three were the schools where those pits essentially had to be removed.

Chairperson, I just want to conclude by saying, this is one of my priority projects in my term of office in the seventh administration. Because it is my firm belief that no child should be drowning in a pit toilet in 2024 in a democratic South Africa in pursuit of quality basic education. This is something that we are taking very seriously. And as it pertains to this case, we are monitoring its implementation. Thank you.

Mr M F MOKWELE: Chairperson and hon members, I greet you in this august House. Minister, thank you very much for answering the question. My follow-up question to you is that we fully acknowledge the work of your predecessor, the hon Angie Motshekga on the removal of pit latrines. Minister, do you perhaps have an audit of how many schools in each province have pit latrines? And whether there is a plan to eradicate them completely? Thank you.

The MIINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, hon member. Absolutely, there is a plan to eradicate these pit latrines completely. The hon members will remember that the

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President himself has undertaken that the DBE, particularly the provincial departments need to have cleared the backlog of pit toilets that was first identified by the end of this financial year, which is 31 March 2025. So, there is definitely a plan in place to eradicate these pit toilets. Of course, there are often issues that we have and delays that we experience in provinces, especially when it comes to implementing agents who either don't follow through with projects or who are slow or there are delays on site. But I am working closely with the MEC to make sure that they are meeting their targets of clearing the pit toilets backlog.

Hon member, on the numbers that you asked about, yes, the answer is that we have got the number of the initial audit that was done, which was just over 4000 pit toilets across the country. We are now working through clearing that backlog and this must be noted by members. I am glad that I am in this House with you to have this conversation that these numbers are provided to us by provinces, and we rely on the provinces to give us accurate data at all times, so that we may be able then to track whether or not provinces are doing what they can to eradicate the pit latrines.

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However, it is really my intention and my goal that once the backlog that we are currently clearing, which we have got about just over 200 pit toilets that are left, once we are done with those, it is my wish that we undertake an independent audit around the country once again. Because ultimately, even though the backlog is that we have just over 4000 pit toilets, ultimately, we were pit toilets are not covered or they keep popping up, we want to make sure that we are knowing in real time where these inappropriate structures are. So that the independent audit will be really excellent to be able to get a very good sense of where we are and where these things are going.

As I often said, the big problem is that the schools will build toilets, but they will keep the pit in the school and not seal that pit, which is where the danger is, because often children may even use that pit while it is still there. And that is where the danger happens. In all those priorities I indicated in the first question, one of the key priorities is to make sure that we go back to schools to make sure that those pit toilets are physically removed from the school. Those are the intentions and plans that we have in place. Thank you.

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Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Thank you, hon Chair. Good morning, hon Minister. You have made it clear in many discussions that you are committed to expanding infrastructure, including eradicating pit latrines. What impact is this currently having on the budget and also in the past on the inadequately implemented or delayed projects in terms of infrastructure development and will the audit lead to investigations and possibly criminal proceedings against subcontractors and contractors who have not adhered to their memorandum of understandings, MOUs?

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. Hon Du Plessis, yes, as I indicated, delays are an incredibly disheartening thing particularly when it comes to something as urgent as this. Because remember, we are dealing with a backlog. These are not even future identified projects, these are backlogs! It is incredibly frustrating to have implementing agents who are repeat offenders who keep getting business from the state, yet who keep failing us when it comes to meeting the deadlines. So, without being controversial, it is my wish that implementing agents who do not comply and who do not meet the targets when they have been given a government work, or who abandon sites, they should be blacklisted from doing further business with the state. It

cannot be that we keep doing business with the same people who are letting us down, yet they are getting government money to do this work. It's a process that is not necessarily allocated within my ambit in the DBE. But it's certainly something that I would like to explore about how we get government to start being harsh on companies who don't meet the deadlines.

At the same time, I would like to emphasise that measures are already in place in the provinces. The accounting officers there, the heads of department, HODs, have established ways and means of holding the companies responsible for these delays to account. So, the accounting officers have become very critical, especially in reporting matters that require criminal investigations. So, we rely on the provinces, when projects are delayed or criminal investigations should be launched, to report these matters, especially because they are the accounting officers.

Once we start not tolerating this kind of sloppy or poor work by implementing agencies, then people will realise that the government will bring in consequence management and that you cannot keep doing the same deal and get your money even though you are not delivering. Therefore, I would urge members in this House, when you visit the various provinces for

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oversight, to ask the HODs and MECs in particular where they have instituted criminal proceedings. Where have they instituted criminal proceedings against persons suspected of corruption or the like?

I want to urge members that as you conduct your work you are also our eyes and ears, and that where there are delayed and abandoned projects, please do reach out to us, to me in particular, to report the things so that I can follow up with the provinces. Because it is very important that we utilise our power. There is over 400 of us, if each and every one of us made sure that in our own constituencies we look at what requires government attention, and we make sure that government is responsive. I promise you, we can be able to clear backlogs, we can be able to be better and more responsive as government. So, I do ask that as you conduct your oversight visits, we are more than prepared to make sure that we follow up on those. Thank you, Chair.

Ms M KENNEDY: Thank you very much, hon Chair, and good afternoon hon members. Hon Minister, indeed, it cannot be that 30 years of political freedom, and specifically, 28 years of our world-renowned Constitution that our children should still be falling into or dying in pit toilets at the premises of

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government schools subjected to indignity of the worse order. What measures have been put in place for total eradication of pit toilets at our schools and what time frames have been put in place in this regard?

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair and to the hon member. As I indicated, there are two sets of numbers that we need to look at. There was the initial audit that was done, which gave us just over 4000 pit toilets and the deadline that we have for that. And I will be honest with members to say we have not moved at the pace that we have meant to have moved when that first tally was done several years ago of over 4000 pit toilets.

There have been massive delays, and I have made it clear to my colleagues in the provinces that we cannot delay this any longer because we cannot keep justifying that children are not safe in schools. So, the original figure was just over 4000 pit toilets and as you asked, the timetable for practical completion is by 31 March 2025. That is the end of the financial year.

Hon members, as I have indicated earlier, it is my wish that, firstly, because the data is often unreliable, that we clarify

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the situation or find a mechanism that allows us to either inform schools and the community when they find pit toilets or inappropriate infrastructure or have an independent audit once that backlog is cleared. That is why I say there are two different figures. The first is the 4000 I am talking about, and the second we have just over 200 pit toilets that are still in the backlog, and that is an important distinction. That is so important because I do not want to come here in April 2025 and then you say, oh, but I found a pit latrine, but you said they were eradicated. The 4000 pit toilets are the backlog. What I want to do in addition, once the backlog is cleared, is to do a new independent audit so that we know in real time how many of these inadequate structures are still there and how we can respond as quickly as possible to remove them.

We know that it often happens that you build toilets in a school and then they are not properly maintained, so people go back to using pit toilets, and that is the problem. So even if we have cleared the backlog, the provinces have to make sure that the new toilets are maintained. Otherwise, it really defeats the purpose because then people will go back to pit toilets out of desperation because neither the flush toilets nor the waterless toilets that they get will be maintained.

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So, it is a multi-pronged approach, and even if it is difficult, it has to be done. I agree with you that we have no choice, but we have to make sure that our children are safe.

Schools should be places of safety and learning, and ultimately the issue of adequate sanitation is not just about being able to use a toilet, but also about dignity, not just the dignity of learners, but also the dignity of teachers. It is not fair to expect teachers and students to go to a school where there is no adequate infrastructure. And there are no proper sanitary facilities. As I said before, this is my only concern. It is one of the things I am determined to put right. Thank you.

Mr B J FARMER: Thank you, Chairperson. Hon Minister, please forgive me, but I am not that satisfied with the answers you have provided. To say that we will monitor what the provinces does is telling us that by the end of this term, we will still have pit latrines. To now say, "but we will deal with the backlog and then after do a fresh audit" it is saying, we do not know how much in total we have standing here now. I really find it difficult to accept. Because we know exactly how many schools we have. We know exactly where they are. We could have done a reaudit already. It seems as if people allow provinces

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to drag their feet again to allow for shady contractors to be appointed again. We are in the Seventh Parliament!

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Farmer, your time is running out, please ask your question.

Mr B J FARMER: My question is when do the Minister envisages the final pit latrine to be eradicated? Give us a date, please.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair. It is a pity that the member is not is not satisfied with the answers. Hon members, I must be clear, I am not here to sugarcoat the reality. I have to be honest with you. You are leaders of this country, I have to tell you the truth. And I have to tell you the honest reflection of what we have on the ground. If you are not satisfied, then we as leaders in the country must fix it, including myself. I am sorry if it is called "comfort" when I am telling you that the backlog was sitting at over 4000, we have just over 200 that are left. And I am saying to you that I am worried that even when we have cleared the backlog, we have to have an independent audit so that we can continuously check that there are no more re-

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emerging pit toilets in the system. Remember, people are not static. People move to places of economic opportunities.

We know that schools become overcrowded over time because people move to the cities. That is why it is important that we as a system and as a sector constantly check whether the schools are still safe. I cannot come here and tell you that because it makes you feel good and obscures the situation. The situation is a dynamic and constantly moving target and that is why I am giving you the numbers. The numbers are the backlog, and I will tell you what I would like to do in my term when my term officially starts, after the backlog is cleared. One of the things I would like to do in my term is an independent audit, when we are not just the data from the provinces, but an independent audit that would give us real time data. I agree with you that not knowing exactly what we have in the system is not good enough. But remember that people are dynamic and moving and the sector is not static.

Secondly, I also need to explain that the delivery of education is a provincial competence. I work with the provinces I do not instruct the provinces, MECs do not report to me. They work with me as their colleague and that is the law. Unfortunately, hon remember, I have to operate within the

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confines of the law. So, when you say we cannot let provinces drag their feet. Yes, I agree with you, we cannot let provinces drag their feet.

I have to make sure in the meeting of the Council of Education Ministers that I convene, that I constantly, - And this is a standard item, by the way, in that meeting. I have to make sure that I am constantly impressing upon provinces that no province should, and I have been clear. No province should send any infrastructure money back to Treasury without spending it, because it is simply not good enough.

Infrastructure needs across the country are dire. All I am trying to say is that I cannot give you a very comforting answer that says, by this date everything will be fine, no child will be ... [Inaudible.] ... But I can assure you that I am doing everything in my power to clear the backlog I inherited in my time in office. And I will make sure that I institute an audit to make sure that in real time, I know what is going on in the schools. And that I will support provinces who have the constitutional obligation to provide these services to people.

I am not abdicating my responsibility, I am working within the confines of the law and that is the real answer, hon member.

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It may not be neat, it may not be tidy, but it is the truth. That is what I am required to come and tell you in this House. Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much, hon Minister. I know that many of us will say that this is indeed cold comfort, but we accept it, and we accept the challenges. But Minister and colleagues, the Minister was absolutely right when she talked about oversight. It is incumbent on all of us to ensure that we exercise oversight. And I can tell you of an experience from my previous life in KwaZulu-Natal, KZN. We visited a school that had no running water and no electricity, but in the report, I saw that they had toilets for very important people, VIPs. After the meeting, I said to the principal, "You know, I want to take a look at this VIP toilet, because when we talk about a VIP, we get a nice impression. So, I said, 'Let me go and have a look". And when we went down to the toilet, it was a pit toilet. So, I said "where is the VIP toilet here"? He said "no, they broke a hole in the back wall, so air comes in, so it is a ventilation improved pit". So, where is the dignity in that? So, I like what the Minister was saying that we need to remove those pit toilets completely. They must not be there physically. We will be following up on that one able Minister.

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Question 101:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, hon Mokae is asking the question around recent budget cuts and what it means, in particular, for provinces and schools and how this will affect poor communities?

So, I want to ... this is a very important question. And thank you hon member for this question because it's something that has been ongoing and it's been part of an ongoing conversation in South Africa.

Firstly, I think I want to make it clear that the budget cuts that the education sector is facing are not unique to us. Health and education are the worst hit but believe you me the budget cuts are across the board. They are across the board in government and so, this is why it's been very important for me to have a full understanding of where the provinces need assistance, where their deficits are coming from and for me to do a full analysis to engage with our provincial colleagues to find out where are you in terms of being able to essentially provide essential purse.

But a significant portion of the national budget may be allocated to basic education, but how it works is that this

budget is sent to provinces, which is what I was trying to point out to the hon member that provinces have immense powers when it comes to the delivery of education. Almost 80% of the budget in the Department of Basic Education, DBE, goes to the provinces.

In addition, how Education Departments are funded is that equitable share that goes to the provinces, each province decides how much ... how big the portion of the equitable share they will spend on education. Of course, we recommend a certain portion, but of course, different provinces have different needs.

So, provinces get two sources of funding, grants that come directly from DBE, so, 80% of our money goes to the provinces; and the equitable share that goes to province and then the province decides how much is allocated to the provincial Education Departments.

So, to answer your question, various provinces are still now in the process of deciding what their basket of posts are going to look like in 2025 because we've been undergoing this process. When I say we, I'm saying myself and the provinces have been doing this process of looking at where are their

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budget deficits, where are their most ... where are they finding the most amount of pressure? And some provinces are yet to declare what their post provisioning is going to look like. So, we are still waiting for that process and I will be guided by that.

However, I haven't just simply sat back and said, well ... you know ... because these are ... you know ... this is a provincial problem. Ultimately, I'm responsible for the outcome of education in the country and I've taken upon myself to engage with the Minister of Finance, Minister Enoch Godongwana, to say to him that it's important that we do everything in our power to shield frontline services from budget cuts. Because if we are sacrificing teachers due to budget cuts we're going to have unintended consequences. We will have larger classrooms, then we will have a larger teacher-to-learner ratio and we must do everything in our power to make sure that we shield provinces from making these cuts.

I want to make it clear that this is a whole of government fiscal challenge that we are going through. But in spite of that I am still making the case to the Minister of Finance and in Cabinet that, ultimately, it is education and of course,

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health, but Minister Motsoaledi must make the case for himself.

For me, I am making the case that it is education that needs to be insulated from this kind of budget cuts and that we are able to, at the very least, shield teachers, in particular, from, essentially, the budget cuts because we want to make sure that we look after teaching and learning time in the classroom and we want to make sure that we look after our education outcomes. Because we do not want the budget cuts to mean poorer education outcomes for our learners.

So, that is how I have undertaken to resolve the issue. But the member is right, if these budget cuts continue, they can threaten the quality of outcomes, particularly in poorest communities because in other communities or in affluent areas often the School Governing Bodies, SGBs, are able to top up some of their teachers. But in poorer areas it is only just the state-funded posts that are provided.

So, we have to make sure that we shield as much as possible from the budget cuts. Thank you, Deputy Chair.

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Mr O J MOKAE: Hon Deputy Chair of the Council, and once again, welcome, hon Minister.

Minister, my follow up question is as follows: Just as you are still in line with the budget cuts and how it's affecting provinces in a department. Following the May 2024 elections, while your department had no executive authority, a tender went out for a single supplier to act as a managing agent for the National Schools Nutrition Programme, NSNP, which was totalling close to R10 billion.

What led to the Minister to halt or scrap this tender? And what have you put in place to ensure that every learner in this country is well fed with the contract that is fair and is prudent? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Deputy Chair, just as background information, when I became part of the Department of Basic Education I became aware that there was a policy shift in the way in which the National School Nutrition Programme was to be done and I requested more information because members will know that the programme is a R10 billion budget line item in our budget, which is a direct grant that comes from Treasury and that R10 billion contract or that

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R10 billion line budget item is responsible for feeding 9,7 million learners around the country. That's a daily meal provision. And, members, often that might be the only meal a learner will receive that day.

So, looking after the school nutrition programme is incredibly important because there's no child that can learn on an empty stomach and we have to make sure that we insulate that R10 billion grant at all times.

Even now in the context of budget cuts, that budget and that budget line item has to be insulated from further cuts because it's very, very important that we, at least, look after that because we know that there are many children for whom that is the only meal they received that day.

I became aware of the policy shift that there was a move to move the model of the school nutrition from a decentralized model to a more centralized model where, essentially, the contract or the distribution or the management of the school nutrition programme would be done at a national level.

Now, that would be a R10 billion contract a year over 10 years, with the possibility of extending for another three

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years. So, in total that would be between R100 billion and R130 billion contract that is managed centrally.

And my fear was that should anything go wrong in an instance where you've got a centralized over R100 billion contract, 9,7 million children stand the chance of starving because I'm not exaggerating when I'm saying there are some children for whom that meal is the only meal they'll receive that day. So, I was uncomfortable with the prospect of risking 9,7 million children going hungry should anything go wrong because we know big contracts of this nature can be vulnerable to corruption or inefficiency and I requested that the department cancel the tender while we are doing our due diligence to find how we can best support provinces to make sure that they deliver quality food to learners every single day. Thank you.

Ms D W FIENIES: Hon Minister, is there a sustainable plan with costing that the department has in place regarding the discussions you as the Minister had with the Minister of Finance regarding these budget cuts? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon member, once I became aware of some of the challenges that the provinces were experiencing, particularly as it pertains to the budget cuts,

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I requested the department to work with the provinces, to do an analysis of the provincial budgets so that we can determine where the deficit is and where their pressure points are. And this was an important undertaking to do because, ultimately, if we are going to approach Treasury we need to make sure that we know what the problem is, we know where we are struggling, and that is why I requested the DBE to work with the provinces to get a sense of where they are struggling. And once we received that information, we send then a consolidated analysis to Treasury to say, in terms of the provincial Education Departments these are the challenges that we are facing, and we are requesting that we want to have an engagement with you, particularly now before the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement, MTBPS, so that we can see where provinces can get assistance. That's what we have undertaken to do.

So, I'm hoping that we may be able to have a constructive engagement with the Minister before the MTBPS and I'm hoping that I've made a compelling enough case to him to showcase that education does require additional funding, at least within this year. And that provinces are facing real pressures and that, should we then continue to have these kind of budget cuts, we are going to have a problem where provinces are going

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to have to be forced to choose between hiring teachers or transporting learners to school; and those are impossible choices. So, we really have to try and insulate the sector.

It's also just particularly important because, of course, as we know, in the basic education sector or at least in the education chain, between DBE and Department of Higher Education and Training, DHET, this is where we are manufacturing people who will form part of the economy.

So, we've got to make sure that we look after what we do here. It's an incredibly important service that we do and if we're ever going to make any dent on the seven out of 10 young people who are unemployed or the 30 million South Africans who are living in poverty or the inequality that we are experiencing in South Africa, then we have to make sure that people are educated, they receive quality education. And wherever you come from you should be able to access quality education close to where you are.

So, that is the compelling case that I'm making to the Treasury. Of course, Treasury is ... has to ... they are undertaking their own process as the Minister is putting together the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement. And I'm

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hoping I can be able to report back that the case was compelling enough and that we're able to shield and cushion provinces from these kind of budget cuts. Thanks, Chair.

Ms M SIWISA: Chair, before I proceed with my question, maybe I must make you aware that the follow up question that was posed by Mr Mokae is not in line with the original question. You must just be aware that he moved from shortage of schools to nutrition. But nonetheless, let me ask my question.

Minister, education is one of the most basic things that we need. Through education we've got Ministers, Presidents, business people and we've got activists out there.

So, it can't be that we are still speaking about budget cuts across. Education shouldn't have been on the list of a budget cut because already it was suffering throughout the years.

So, Minister, while you are waiting for your response and putting your case forward to the Minister of Finance, which measures have you put in place to ensure that these budget cuts do not put further strain on the quality provided and these rural schools, which will most likely feel the brunt of these budget cuts, because we can't wait for a response from

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the case that you're going to put forward? So, what plans are in place in case you don't win the case with the Minister of Finance? Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr G Govender): Hon member, I just looked at the question that came from hon Mokae, it does cover budget cuts and how it affects education. So, I think the issue of nutrition will also be covered under that.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, the member is asking if we can wait for Treasury.

Hon member, Treasury is where we can get assistance for provinces. As I indicated, provinces are largely responsible for the management of their own budgets. I couldn't sit aside and simply say this is a provincial competency, therefore, I cannot intervene. I had to make sure that I step in to assist the provinces as much as I can.

So, what measures have I put in place? The first one was to request a budget analysis because - as I indicated before - we can't go to Treasury when we don't know what we are dealing with. And so, we did an entire sector analysis to understand

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where the deficits are, where provinces are struggling, where the pressure points are; and that's an important step. I think it's important, if you're going to fix anything, you must know what the problem is and having that information on hand was the first step.

The second step is to petition Treasury on behalf of the provinces to assist the provinces because I agree with you, as I was explaining a little bit earlier, particularly in no-fee paying schools, those schools depend entirely on state-provided posts for their teachers. So, if there are cuts, it is those schools who will be affected disproportionately to schools where there are, perhaps, other means of raising funds where the SGB can hire additional teachers and the like.

So, when we are looking at budget cuts, we are looking at them in the context of saying, how do we shield and cushion the poorest people from experiencing severe budget cuts that will affect their education outcomes? Because it is my view that regardless of whether you come from Sandton or Qwa Qwa or Mqanduli, at the end of the day you should be able to receive the same kind of quality education regardless of where you come from.

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But at the end of the day we are dealing with this in the context in which we are dealing it in, in the sense that there are budget cuts across the country. Things that as I ... I must indicate, I have inherited and I'm simply finding solutions here.

So, the issue around budget cuts over the past ten years on education and health and other fine line services. Well, that has been something that has been ongoing. This has been the product of what we've dealt with in our country.

But now what do we do? I can't simply say, well, you know, I wasn't part of the problem and therefore, I can't be part of the solution. As somebody who's leading the sector I need to come up with creative ways to make sure that we shield provinces from these kinds of budget cuts. And that's why I've taken the step to engage Treasury. And I'm afraid, we have to wait for Treasury because, well, that's where we would get the additional funding. We wouldn't be able to get it anywhere else, especially when one looks at the large numbers and the deficits that we are seeing in some provinces. So, Treasury is the right channel and that's what I would have to wait for.

Thank you.

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Mr H J VAN DEN BERG: Minister, it has not been pre-arranged for us to ask you the questions in a row, although it seems so, but at least you can know that the Northern Cape province is taking education very seriously. [Laughter.]

The recently signed Basic Education Laws Amendment, Bela, legislation will be an even bigger financial burden to the Education Department. Given that the department has had to deal with some very serious supply issues in the recent past, I remember the textbook and study material fiasco, how will a centralized procurement system, as legislated by the Bela Bill, be enforced to Education Departments? And what guarantees do we have that the very same will not happen this time around? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, I mean the Bela Act, yes, does make provision for ... where provinces and schools can elect to procure centrally. Unfortunately, there are no guarantees that you can insulate the system from corruption or mismanagement.

But what is very important is that one of the things that we are doing at DBE, even though the procurement of learning material is done at the provincial level, we do monitor

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whether provinces have essentially covered what they need to cover.

At the moment we are sitting with just over 90% of all provinces. So, by that I mean, what we monitor is once learning materials have been released, have they been ordered in time? So, schools should not wait until January to order their textbooks and their learning materials and the workbooks. That kind of ordering should be happening now towards the end of the year for 2025 so that you're not having a backlog in January where people are rushing around to deliver textbooks.

And then the second thing is, as DBE, even though that process is managed by provinces, we also monitor, has each province, as you mentioned the textbook crisis that happened before, is something that we need to absolutely avoid. So, we monitor, has each province ordered and have they received their allocation of learning material?

The general statistics and the average that we sit with is that all nine provinces sit with over 90% of textbooks that are delivered. Of course, my intention is to try and get this to 100% to make sure that every single school in every single

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district in every single province has the learning material delivered.

But again, I do want to say, hon members, that this is also where we do need your assistance, particularly at the time before ... where, as learners are going back to school, where there are issues of textbook deliveries or workbook deliveries that have not been done, should these things be flagged with the DBE? Then we can have a targeted intervention with the province to require and request why this has not been done.

It's important, in terms of us being able to monitor whether that has not been done because it's not fair that some learners only encounter their workbooks in the middle of March. These are the things that make learners fall back into the system.

I think the system is working better now as we are seeing over 90% of delivery of learning material. But I think it could be better and I think that we could get to 100% and I think the best way ... the only way we can get there is also with your help, where you are finding places and schools in your constituencies where these things have not been delivered,

that you escalate it to us so that I can make sure that I can intervene directly. Thank you.

Question 112:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, the member has asked how the reduction of 2 400 teaching contract positions will affect the Western Cape. So, members, as I indicated, various provinces are still in the process of declaring their basket of posts for 2025. The Western Cape has come out to say that they will not be able to fill contract teaching posts to the tune of 2 400 because of the budget cuts that they are facing. However, I must still indicate that I do not have a full picture yet of what other provinces are facing, because there are still some provinces that are still yet to declare their basket of posts. But I also perhaps need to use the platform to clarify what provinces mean when they say they will maintain their same basket of posts, or they are going to reduce the same basket of posts? It is important to note that no teachers are going to be retrenched. It has been a little bit disheartening to sometimes hear members or leaders in our country saying these are ... because it does cause mass panic, because our teachers work under incredibly difficult conditions. And for swirling rumours that people are going to be retrenched and lose their jobs, it is not helpful because

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while we are facing budget cuts and while the system is under pressure, there are no teachers that will be retrenched. I want to make that clear, but what it does mean - and this is where the case to Treasury is important - is that because of the budget pressures, provinces may elect to not fill certain posts in particular, or they may elect to say we are not going to extend, or we are not going to expand the number of teachers in the school, or in the province. So, obviously that is not ideal either. While I am making the commitment and the clarification that this does not mean that people are going to be retrenched. We want to get to a place where our country does not have to say we cannot hire more teachers. We want to be able to say, if you need teachers, you need to be able to hire them. So, schools have been trying to work around this. And the Western Cape government has made me aware. And as we were asking these questions from them ... I have asked them how they are intending on insulating the province or at least the education system in the province from these budget cuts? So, they have indicated that: firstly, they are going to protect learners with special education needs and will make sure that there are no reduction of teachers in those schools; secondly, what they have done is that they will make sure that there are no cuts to school meals or learners' transport, and that they will continue to make sure that daily meals are

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provided; and lastly, they have said that they are safeguarding the funding that schools rely on for operational expenses such as utilities, stationary, and other essential supplies. But I must indicate while they have made these undertakings, it is still very difficult to see - as I am undertaking my listening and learning tour around the provinces - because the MECs are telling you that ... Look, I am going to have to make some tough choices here. So, I think it is important members to say that as a country, we must decide what is more important. Health, education, safety, service delivery, or other things. And I think we have gotten to the point now where because our economy has not been growing for the past ten years or has been growing under 1% for the past 10 years because there have been some questionable policy decisions that have been made in the past, we are now at a point where there is no new money. So, government, not just the Department of Basic Education, the entire South African government must make tough choices and prioritise, in my view, education, health, policing, and service delivery, those things need to come first before any other vanity projects and before bailing out SOEs. And we are at that point now where we are no longer trim the fat, but we hit the bone now. So, we must make tough decisions, and I am hoping that the Seventh Administration will take the

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opportunity to make that revision and those priority choices.

Thank you.

Ms M M BAINS: Good afternoon, hon Chair, I forgot to unmute myself. Can I proceed?

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr L Govender): Yeah, can we see your face, hon Bains?

Ms M M BAINS: Okay, can you see me now?

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr L Govender): Yes, we can see you now. Please ask your question.

Ms M M BAINS: Okay. Good afternoon, hon Chair and hon members. Good afternoon, hon Minister, my follow up question, I think the Minister partly answered because it was about the teachers that will not be retrenched, but the contract teachers won't be reappointed. That was my concern, because I wanted to hear what the Ministry is going to tell us by not reappointing contract teachers? The rural schools and the poorest schools will they not still have the ability to - like we say - go 10 steps back ... If the Minister can just explain to us whether will it not affect the teaching and learning, especially in

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the rural schools? The next one is ... with my oversight ... I am staying in the West Coast. I am so glad that I hear the words that the Minister uttered by saying she is not going to sugarcoat the reality, but what I picked up is that they are cutting, or the contract teachers will at the end of the day not the chance to ... [Time Expired.] ... Oh yeah, they will not have the chance to go forward ... staying in the rural areas ... Can the Minister please explain that to me?

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Yeah. So, Chair, I just wanted just maybe ... I think the member was asking about poorest schools. So, as members will be aware that there is a quintile system in South Africa and those schools serving poor communities are classified as Quintiles 1, 2, and 3. So, there is an effort, hon member, to ... because those schools depend entirely on state provided posts, there is an effort to make sure that schools in Quintiles 1 and 3 are protected somewhat from these budget cuts. But as I indicated, if the situation goes on and the matter is continuing unabated and we do not arrest the free-for-all, we might not be able to protect those schools in the future. But as for now, we know that because the state paid educators' posts are mostly protected from these cuts, and the intention there is to protect the poorer communities from these budget cuts, because schools that are

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in Quintiles 4 and 5 are often likely able to hire additional educators from funds that they can raise either from school fees or fund raising that the school governing body, SGB, does. So, the Quintiles 1, 2, and 3, where we need to make sure that we hold on as much as possible because those are the schools that cannot fundraise themselves and they cannot hire additional teachers. So, to the whole question about poorer schools, yes, it is a concern. And that is how generally provinces look at these things, and that is how generally they make some of these decisions. Thank you.

Ms Z M NGCOBO: Hon Minister, according to Statistics SA, 27,5% of the population is under the age of 15, which amounts to 16,8 million people. The provinces with the highest number of children under 15 are Limpopo and the Eastern Cape. Despite a reported 3,2% increase in compensation for Basic Education personnel, this translates to a 2,2% real cut when factoring inflation, indicating that the increase does not reflect a real value again. The 2024 mid-year population reports from Statistics SA predicts a growth in the population of children 18, emphasising a shortage of schools in rural areas.

Considering this, is the Minister willing to admit that the allocated budget reflects poor planning and has failed to consider the environmental factors above. Are there innovative

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fiscal approaches the department has exploited as a trade-off for these budget cuts as this will safeguard and ensure the right to quality basic education of these unserved communities?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr B A Radebe): Over to you, hon Minister. You must remember that only one question can be asked. But you can answer more to explain the policies of the department within 5 minutes.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, hon member. Are these budget cuts a result of poor planning? I think these budget cuts are a results of various things and I encourage the members to use portfolio committees perhaps to ask some of these questions, from Treasury, for instance, or even from the Auditor-General, because in my view, these budget cuts are because of various reasons: firstly, in the past decade alone, we have lost R1,5 trillion to corruption; secondly, we have spent over R300 billion bailing out SOEs in the last 10 years; and lastly, our economy has not grown over 1% in the last 10 years. If you put those three things together, you are bound to, firstly, not be able to fund the very essentials in your government and that is the reality. So, when I analyse as to why are we here? Because I am

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assuming that is what the member is asking. What led us to this point? When I look at the past 10 years, this is what we see. We spend more servicing our debt as a country than we do allocating to education as a budget. We spend way over R300 billion just servicing debt. So, we are not in a good way. So, I mean so when you ask her whether it is poor planning or not, I think a mixture of all these reasons. But we must arrest the situation. We must turn things around and that is why I like your second question when you asked what innovative fiscal approach will you do? Firstly, I think doing the analysis with the provinces is helpful because we have never seen a complete picture ... because again, the function sits with the province. We have never had a complete picture of what we are looking at in terms of what has been the effect of budget cuts over the years. Now, we do have a complete picture. So, now Treasury has a complete picture of saying this is where we are; secondly, I think we must be a lot stricter with ourselves as government, that there should be no budgets that should be sent back to Treasury because of under expenditure. It makes no sense, especially when we are under so much pressure in terms of budgets, and I have made it clear to the provinces that, for instance, things like infrastructure, there should be no reason why any provincial department is able to send money back, because we should be

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making sure that we are aggressively dealing with infrastructure backlogs. So, innovation is also about how do we work together as different government departments. I think often in the past there has been a lot of working in silos as department. But we must work together because there are certain things that are not my core business but that affect my department, for instance, safety in schools. I must make sure that I work with the Minister of Police and to deal with safety in school, because there is no way in the R330 billion where I can make sure that every single school has an armed guard at the gate. There is nowhere I am going to ever find that money. So, we must find ways of working across government departments to be able to meet the need. And, hon member, around innovation, I think we also must bring the private sector on board. We must, where people are prepared to invest in our education system, we should be making it easier for them, whether it is providing libraries, whether it is helping us eradicate toilets or building new buildings, we should be able to partner with the private sector to make sure that we get more out of very little. Thank you.

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: I could not hear my name. Thank you.

Minister, in short, after all you have said, and the right

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answers you have given, do you perceive the budget cuts as a national crisis for education? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair and thank you to the member. Hon member, about a week or two ago, I presented again to my earlier point, I received quite a bit of criticism when I called the press conference, and I essentially shared the analysis of where we are in terms of our budgets in the various provinces. And I think again, it is important to play open cards with the public and to play open cards with all of you. And even though it is uncomfortable information, but we need to know where we are, otherwise we cannot fix the situation. So, once we looked at that, the department also analysed the numbers, and we realised that if we have to project, if we continue getting these kind of budget cuts for the next financial year and for the next three financial years, then about three provinces, or four provinces are not going to be able to meet their obligations. And by that, I mean they are not going to be able to pay their bills. So, it is a crisis if we continue in this vein. So, that is why I was making the point earlier that I think as the Seventh Administration, we must look at government spending. Where are we spending our money and prioritise? And I do not claim that prioritising is going to be easy, and I do not claim that this

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is an easy process. Believe me, I get it. It will be difficult. But we must look after the future of the 13 and a half million learners who are in our system. Otherwise, we risk locking out millions of children out of the economic opportunities they deserve. We risk maintaining the inequality we have seen in this country for too long. If we do not get education right, we are never going to fix inequality. If we do not fix inequality, we are never going to see a reduction in the unemployment statistics and in the poverty statistics. So honestly, if you were to ask me, I think that we are the department that requires the most amount of attention. But of course, I can respect that the Minister of Finance has a tough balancing act on his hands, and he must look at various things. But I do maintain that we cannot risk going back in terms of the quality of outcomes in our country. And that we need to essentially start to improve so that when learners leave our system, they leave our system with the quality product in their hand that they can walk into an economic opportunity so that they can live lives of dignity. Otherwise, we stand the risk of failing millions of children. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, Minister, for the good answers you provided. The next follow up question is coming from Mr Gericke. Okay, if I do not see

him in the House, then the praesidium should have been informed if there is anyone who is going to take that question. There is no one. Alright, we jump to the next question then. The next question is coming from hon Mpungose. Question 114, Minister.

Question 114:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair. The hon member is asking about investigation into delayed infrastructure projects and criminal proceedings and how we are holding people accountable. First of all, I want to be clear that delays in infrastructure projects are completely unacceptable. Of course, these delays are due to various reasons. Some of them are not necessarily intentional and some of them are not necessarily due to shoddy work, but where they are preventable, we should be able to prevent them. That's why I was making the point earlier that where implementing agents who do business with the state are repeat offenders who do not deliver on time by doing shoddy work in schools, and by being contractors who walk off site without meeting deadlines, we have to be harsher on these implementing agents. They cannot fail in Limpopo only to go and get a contract in KwaZulu-Natal and again fail in KwaZulu-Natal only to come and get a contract in the Western Cape.

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There has to be a central way in which we as government can propose that if you cannot deliver against what we have asked you to do, you cannot do business with the state anymore. Because, wherever I go and even when I go to the provinces, the provinces are clear that there are delays. Sometimes the delays are as a result of people that they have employed to go and do the work. It is a deep frustration of mine because often the problem is not necessarily the money because we have an infrastructure backlog grant which is protected, which comes directly from Treasury to the provinces.

So, that's why I was saying earlier that I don't expect provinces to send money back because as I'm going all over the country, I know that the backlog is great. There is a backlog. Sometimes the problem is not the money, sometimes the problem is those who are implementing. So, we also have to be a lot tougher on people who do not abide by what they have been contracted to do. It's just not good enough anymore to cuddle people who are repeat offenders because they are the ones who are primarily giving provincial departments adverse audit findings. Ultimately, we are not meeting our targets in terms of being able to restore dignity to the people by delivering infrastructure. That is something that's just quite unacceptable.

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Regarding the issue on criminal proceedings against contractors, you are absolutely correct that the provincial departments, particularly the accounting officers, the heads of departments, HODs, and provincial departments are obligated to go and report these things to the police for investigation, for instance, once there is suspected corruption or something that is of a criminal nature. These should be happening as a matter of course where there is suspected corruption with contracts. Provincial departmental heads should be able to identify these and they should report them.

I also want to say this - and perhaps members might start getting tired of me saying this. But I really hope you will indulge me when I say this because there is almost a sense from the member's question that there are particular sites she might be aware of, for instance, that have been built and left unattended. I am asking again that when members do oversights or when they are in their constituencies and they are seeing a project that has had inexplicable delays, they can contact their provincial colleagues and ask what is going on.

Sometimes the issue is that they have given themselves three years to finish the project. Sometimes there has been a legitimate delay. I think it is important that provinces are held accountable when there are inexplicable delays, but also

when members identify sites where there has been construction and there has been inexplicable delays or it has been entirely abandoned.

Personally, I would like to make a commitment to you. I would like to follow up with those provinces to find out what's going on because we can't have a situation where we start building government projects and then they are left unattended and then they are essentially looted. It's a waste of public money. I also ask that we require your help so that you become our eyes and ears at least where I am concerned. I remain open to engaging with you if you can identify those sites so that I can get the necessary questions and answers.

Mrs N N CHIRWA-MPUNGOSE: Thank you so much ...

IsiXhosa:

... Sihlalo, mandibulise phaya kuMphathiswa.

English:

Following the NCOP provincial week that conducted oversight in Gauteng, Minister, it was brought to light that there are several repeat offenders who start projects but fail to complete them. They abandon sites or claim that the initial

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budget that was requested is depleted. All in all, the cost of abandoned projects in Gauteng over the past few years is above R600 million. There are currently no criminal investigations against any of them. The Minister in reply is rightfully stating that there is an obligation to bring forth to relevant bodies for investigation to take place. However, this isn't done in these provinces. None of them are barred from ever doing business with government. All we have is the regurgitation from provincial officials that contracts are being terminated.

There have been no tangible consequences that are instituted against government officials, both in the technical sense and the political heads or officials who enable this behaviour and contractors who have made it their living to thief the government. Our question is: Minister, what will you do to ensure that the money that was robbed from our people is recouped? What will you do to ensure that perpetrators are brought to book with tangible consequences? What steps are you going to take to make sure that this becomes the result of what we are asking for? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you to the member. I am glad I seem to have repeated

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offenders blacklisted on my campaign. I am glad I seem to have the support from the NCOP because I really do feel passionate about this. Honestly, whenever I go to provinces, this is the exact ... they are all telling me the same thing. I am currently in the fourth province on my national tour, and I can almost see from the document that the same companies are doing the same thing. I can't understand why these people are able to get government contracts when they have demonstrated that they are unable to be trusted. But as I indicated earlier, this is really not my lane in terms of how we get companies blacklisted. That is something that is that is part of the Treasury process. It's definitely something I want to have a conversation and a discussion with the Minister of Finance, on how we can rely on Treasury to have a bird's eye view of which of these companies are repeat offenders in the system, and how do we make sure that there is consequence management.

Hon member, the issue around criminal investigation is that the HODs in the provinces should be reporting criminal investigations to the SAPS and to the Hawks. As I said, where this is not being done, I would like to know so that I can engage my colleagues - the MECs, about why has there not been a criminal investigation to a specific project in a particular

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place. As you indicated here that it is in Gauteng, I will definitely get more information from the member because I have just recently done a provincial tour in Gauteng last week.

I would like to know where these projects are and to understand and engage the HODs through the director-general. If a contractor has walked off, I would like to know what is being done to recuperate public money - what is being done to effectively make sure that we claim back that money from that contractor and what is being done to report people so that they are held criminally liable for that kind of behaviour and for that kind of tardiness. I agree with you that we can't keep doing the same thing and expect different results.

In the context of fiscal challenges and budget constraints, we have to be strict about where we spend our money and how we spend our money and if we are getting value for money. There cannot be money that is wasted in this kind of context when we are talking about how we can get teachers or how we can get scholar transport. When we are having those conversations, we can't be wasting money. So, I agree with you about repeat offenders being brought to book, but I'm also saying that it's important that the HODs report these matters and when it is

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not happening, flag it with us so that we can ask the MECs about these incidents. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, hon Minister. On the issue of the incomplete project, this misdemeanour is in all the provinces. I think that we have a friend in the NCOP that is going to help you to deal with those misdemeanours. The next question is from Dr Scheurkogel.

Dr I SCHEURKOGEL: Thank you, House Chair. Minister, I can see that the EFF understands the cases of delayed infrastructure as they promised to build one within five years. The promise was made in 2019 and yet they haven't even broken ground - five years later. But in comparison, Minister, where the DA governs, provincially, it has a rapid school build programme which builds schools in record time. Has the Minister considered replicating this programme nationally? [Laughter.] [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr B A Radebe): Over to you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair.

The Council of Education Ministers, which is basically made up

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of the nine MECs, has undertaken to obviously work together because infrastructure has a particular budget that goes directly to provinces, particularly clearing infrastructure backlog. In the Council of Education Ministers, CEM, we are working with the MECs to make sure that we are helping them where there are blockages. How can we help them unblock those? Again, we should note that it is those provinces that need to be responsible ultimately for the delivery of infrastructure.

That's why I was saying earlier that I have made it clear to the MECs that there can be no money sent back to Treasury for infrastructure because each and every single province has infrastructure backlogs - either through maintenance that needs to be done in various schools or through schools that need to be built, or through classrooms that need to be added. Really, the work is great. There's a huge amount of work.

I also encourage MECs to learn from one another and for provinces to learn from each other. I know that the Rapid School Build programme in the Western Cape has really worked well. I am aware that there are members from provinces who came here a couple of years ago, or a year or two ago, who came to see the programme in action. You would find in other provinces, for instance - what Gauteng has started to do in

order to speed up the building of some of those additional classrooms where they essentially decentralise procurement directly to the school to make the addition.

We can't wait for a long procurement process to be able to build a classroom. The point I am trying to make is that provinces have to be creative. Where a province is doing well in delivering something, they must learn from each other because ultimately that's why we have a legislated full body that is called the CEM, because we still can't be dealing with backlogs.

Regarding the issue of infrastructure, it's about the delivery. Money is often not a problem - and I am not saying all the time, but often. So, if one province is getting it right, and it is delivering at a rapid pace, then provinces must learn from each other and ask others what they are doing to make this work. As I have said, I agree with you, the Rapid School Build programme has been working in the Western Cape. I am aware that people and provinces have been sharing best practises.

I have also identified that in Gauteng, the issue of extending schools very quickly is working quite well. I think the

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provinces must learn from each other. At the end of the day, what I expect to see is people using their infrastructure budgets well, and making sure that we restore dignity as much as possible. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, hon Minister. The next follow-up question is coming from the hon Peter from the Eastern Cape.

Mr M M PETER: Thank you to the Chair and to the Minister. Minister, my appeal to you is to give us a straight answer. My second appeal is that you should die for the sins of the others who were Ministers before you. So, don't give us a long explanation, rather provide a short one so that we can understand. Minister, given the alarming rise in the theft, vandalism and violence within schools, what concrete measures is your department taking to address the safety concerns through investments in security infrastructure, such as fencing, gates, and other prevalent measures, particularly to reduce the backlog in school safety provisions? Furthermore, Minister, are there any formal discussions or collaboration between your department and the Department of Police to enhance the security in schools, especially during weekends and holidays, when these criminal activities tend to be more

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prevalent? If so, what are the outcomes of these talks, and how soon can we expect tangible improvement in schools?
Minister ...

IsiXhosa:

... izikolo ziyaqhekezwa kwaye abantwana bethu bafunda besoyika. Ingaba isebe lakho liyasebenzisana kusini na neSebe lezamaPolisa ukunqanda lo mkhuba ingakumbi ngexesha leeholide? Fela ke ityala labaPhathiswa ababekhona ngaphambili. Enkosi.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you. Hon Minister, you can answer the question. There are many questions within four minutes.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair. Hon member, believe me, I have been giving nothing but straight answers. In fact, the hon member there even complained that he didn't like what I had to say, and I had to explain that I'm giving very straight answers. So, I am telling you as it is, and I'm not sugarcoating anything because I do believe that as leaders here, you are absolutely entitled to understand the full picture for what it is - imperfect and raw, but it's ultimately your responsibility.

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IsiXhosa:

Andiqinisekanga ke ngale yokufela izono zabaPhathiswa ababengaphambi kwam kodwa ndiza kuzama ukucacisa kuba sendilapha ngoku. Okokuqala, lungu elihloniphekileyo, siyasebenzisana neSebe lezamaPolisa. uMphathiswa weli sebe, uSenzo Mchunu nam...

English:

... have even in this short period of time of the Seventh Administration had to have interactions about...

IsiXhosa:

... izinto ezithile...

English:

... particularly as it pertains to schools. Members will remember...

IsiXhosa:

... esa sehlo saseKatlehong apho uPasta Mboro wambonzeleka esikolweni exhobe ngeesabile efuna abazukulwane bakhe.

Kwanyanzeleka ukuba sisebenzisane neSebe lezamaPolisa kuba izehlo ezinje ziqala ekuhlaleni ziphumele ezikolweni.

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English:

I want to say this on a very serious note - on a very sombre note...

IsiXhosa:

... ukuba ibuhlungu into yokuba ootishala boyike ukuya kufundisa abantwana ezikolweni kuba besoyikisela ubomi babo okanye ukutsotswa. Abantwana besikolo abakwazi ukuhamba nee-iPads zesikolo ukuze bakwazi ukusebenzela emakhaya kuba besoyika oonqevu ukuba bazixuthe.

English:

But at the same time, I need to also emphasise that schools are not insulated from the communities they exist in. If communities are violent, that violence will find itself in the school. Schools are unfortunately not exempt from what we are seeing in that particular community. So ...

IsiXhosa:

...lo mbuzo wakho ofuna ukuqonda ukuba ingaba siyasebenzisana kusini na namapolisa ubalulekile kakhulu kuba thina silisebe asikwazi ukwenza umsebenzi wamapolisa.

English:

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What have we done? Firstly, we have a framework in which we have partnered with the Department of Police that says, firstly ...

IsiXhosa:

... isikolo ngasinye...

English:

... should be attached to a police station in its local community.

IsiXhosa:

Loo nto ithetha ukuba amapolisa aya kubeka phantsi kwanto ebebeyenza xa esiva ikhwelo kwisikolo esithile...

English:

... that's number one. Secondly, we have minimum norms and standards for infrastructure.

IsiXhosa:

Kula mbuzo wakho ngocingo, isango nezinye izinto zokukhusela isikolo.

English:

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So, we have minimum norms and standards, but we have to make sure that those are met - that every school has a gate. Ideally, we would want every school to have security personnel. We want to make sure every school is protected. But there are some schools, hon member ...

IsiXhosa:

... umzekelo, bendiye eGqeberha, eMotherwell apho inqununu ibindixelela ukuba waxhwilwa ekhonjwe ngompu.

English:

So, the point I am making is that this is something that can be resolved by the Department of Basic Education but has to be a whole-of-government approach and a whole-of-government response. People who target our schools need to know that the state will respond with the might of the state. In my view, schools are national assets. Anyone who vandalises a school should be reported and should be arrested, because you are playing with ...

IsiXhosa:

... ikamva labantwana baseMzantsi Afrika.

English:

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There should be no forgiveness for ...

IsiXhosa:

... abantu abenza loo nto.

English:

This is why I want to quickly say that before I run out of time that this is why we want to also work with communities ...

IsiXhosa:

... kuba uya kufumanisa ukuba abahlali bayabazi abantu abaqhekezayo ezikolweni kwaye bayabazi ukuba baza kuphinda babathengisele kwalapha ekuhlaleni. [Kwaphela ixesha.]

English:

Thank you, hon Minister. The next follow-up question is coming from the hon Sibande from Mpumalanga.

Mr M P SIBANDE: Thank you, Chairperson, and thank you, Minister. The quality of school buildings is critically important in the drive for improving education. Good quality facilities provide teachers and students with conducive environments that are responsive to the changing needs and

could make a real difference to learning and teaching.

Therefore, my question: Is there a plan that ensures that all the delayed projects are completed in time and that teaching personnel will be available to teach in those schools? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair. Hon member, with regards to a plan for delayed projects, as I said, provinces have an infrastructure grant that goes directly from Treasury through the Department of Basic Education to provinces - this is one of the grants that is still very much protected even in the context of budget cuts. The reason why we have a grant like this that is protected is because we want to make sure that we clear the infrastructure backlogs that we have in the provinces. So, it is important that provinces don't ... and I would like to encourage the fact that when the NCOP engage with our provincial colleagues and MECs, we need to look at the issue of conditional grants.

It is unlawful for conditional grants to be spent on anything else. So, the school nutrition grant is meant to be spent on school nutrition, and the infrastructure grant is meant to be spent on infrastructure. It can't be shifted around because those conditions exist for a reason. The plan we have in place

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is obviously the provision of money to provinces to make sure that they clear infrastructure backlogs. It is also important that provinces have an active plan in place to do maintenance. You often find that even in a province like Gauteng, which does not have pit toilets, for instance, the big issue would be the maintenance of schools that have aged over time - the infrastructure has aged. So, we have to constantly be doing preventative maintenance in schools. Provinces are allocated an infrastructure grant that seeks to clear those backlogs. There is an infrastructure grant within the very budgets that they have. It is important to ask that when the House interact with our provincial colleagues, we look very closely at the issue of conditional grants that they must not be spent on anything else other than what they were intended to do. It is important that we look after those grants. There is a reason why they are ring-fenced for particular thing.

Hon member, you are right, infrastructure is absolutely one of those things that is actually important in delivering quality education. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, hon Minister. The follow-up question will come from the hon

Breedt from Free State. [Interjections] Ooh, you must respond first and then ...

Question 109:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, Chair. The hon member is asking in relation to the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act of 2024, on how are diverse communities in local cultural communities going to be empowered in terms of language and cultural policy? It is important to note that as per the President's announcement on 13 September, certain sections of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act that concern in particular language policies of public schools are subject of an ongoing consultation between the various parties of the government of national unity. The President has given this process three months to undertake, and that these consultations are going to be led by the Presidency. It's going to be very important for me to not pre-empt the outcomes of those consultations and that the department must be led by what the outcomes of those consultations are as he has decided to undertake this process.

However, to your question there are other provisions in the Act that have not been suspended. As you know it is sections 4 and 5 which have been suspended. But there are other sections

of the Act which are not subject of consultations which are essentially aiming to protect and promote the culture of learners at public schools.

First, the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act requires that governing bodies of public schools take into account amongst other factors the cultural beliefs of learners at school when determining the code of conduct. Secondly, the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act as it stands also requires that the school governing body, SGB, of a public school include exemption provisions in the code of conduct for learners in terms of which a learner or a parent of a learner may apply to the school, the governing body, to exempt the learner from certain provisions of the code of conduct on account of spiritual beliefs.

The point I am making is with regard to the language in the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act that that is the subject of an ongoing consultation that is led by the Presidency.

Secondly, there are certain sections in the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act that do promote culture in public schools. Those are the two provisions that I have listed which are essentially seeking to promote culture by saying that,

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firstly, the SGBs must take into account when developing a code of conduct, that is, the cultural beliefs of learners. Secondly, a learner or a parent may apply for a learners to be exempted from certain things because of their cultural beliefs. That is how the culture and language will be promoted in the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act as things start. Thank you.

Ms T BREEDT: Thank you, hon House Chair. Congratulations on your first 100 days in office, and I think it is appropriate. Hon Minister, as you know and you said it in the Budget Vote debates, less than 5% of the Grade 6s go to school in their mother tongue. Half of the Grade 1s never finish. So, mother tongue is very important and if memories suffice you and the Deputy Minister were very clear about mother tongue education. How would you like that be improved specifically making mention of clause 4 and 5 in the language policy of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act? How would you be taking a stance, and what would your role be and would in fact be taking a stance for mother tongue education with this ongoing consultation regarding clauses 4 and 5? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair. Thanks to the hon member. You are absolutely right, hon

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member. In the department there is a strategy for mother tongue-based bilingual education which we seek to implement. We are seeking to try essentially extending the mother tongue-based bilingual education implementation to go far beyond Grade 4 because we have seen that children who study in their mother tongue and an additional language, for instance, English, perform much better than children who do not.

If we look at the statistics right now in grades 1, 2 and 3, children are taught in their mother tongue based on where they are. In Grade 4 they switch to be taught in English. Particularly poor kids who come from poor background where they interact with the book for the first time when they are seven-year-old, to teach them in one language, their mother tongue for three years and then on the fourth year in Grade 4 they switch to learn in English. Learning in English is something that has contributed to children not being able to read for meaning.

I agree with you the use of mother tongue language is absolutely critical so that we can make sure that we increase our literacy rates. The results was showing us that children who do in their mother tongue and an additional language, say for an example English, for as long as possible they have a

higher chance of achieving better results in terms of literacy and numeracy. The data is there to stress to us that mother tongue-based bilingual education in particular is something that is important. Even outside of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act and the consultation process that the President is undertaking we already have a strategy in the Department of Basic Education to say how do we extend the use of mother tongue-based bilingual education so that we can see our children more and more starting to increase our literacy rates.

The statistics that came out two years ago that indicate to us that a sample of children that was taken shows that 80% of children in Grade 4 cannot read for meaning is a cause for concern. That says to us that we have a literacy problem.

Whichever way or strategies we can utilise to increase our literacy levels we must use that. If there is a data that suggest that utilising mother tongue-based bilingual education for longer in the school is assisting with literacy, then we need to look at that.

I also want to bring the attention of the members of section 29(2) of our Constitution which says, everyone has a right to

receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public education institution where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effectiveness of access to and implantation of this right the state must consider a number of things. Things of equity, practicability and redress. The point I am trying to make is the use of mother tongue education is enshrined in section 29 of our Constitution. Where it is practicable learners and anyone should be able to access quality education in their mother tongue. Thank you.

Ms D W FIENIES: Thank you, Chairperson. Hon Minister, how does the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act respond to situations where school governing bodies use language and admission as policies to exclude learners from previously disadvantage communities access to education at specific schools? Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, hon member. Part of the reason why the President has essentially suspended the implementation of clauses 4 and 5 of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act is to try and have a national dialogue. In fact, over the weekend he indicated at the national teaching awards that it is very important for him

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that in the interest of unity in South Africa but in the interest of making sure that deliberations around this matter from various stakeholders are looked into. This is why he has undertaken to lead this process. I look forward to getting a direction from that process, from the Presidency. I think it is important that as the department we don't delve into our views in particular sections 4 and 5 right now as there is an ongoing process in the next three months. I think once the Presidency has completed that process, we can first implement what has come from that.

Also, members should understand that over and above this the Minister is empowered and equipped with the powers of creating and passing regulations which accompany an Act. This is where we can make sure that where things are not clarified, or where things are not clear, we can clarify them in the regulations. We can make sure that we put certain measures in place to make sure that that Act is sound and it provides guidance to various schools and SGBs on what need to be done.

I also must indicate to the member to your question that while I am saying we will wait for the process that the Presidency has undertaken, I must also say that whatever school governing bodies, heads of departments, HODs, or provincial education

departments do, it has to be guided by the Constitution. Exclusion, discrimination and the like cannot be allowed to happen regardless of whatever legal framework will look at because the Constitution is the supreme law. Whatever happens even in this process of consultation no one can exclude people on the basis of race, on the basis of language, on the basis of sexual orientation and on the basis of gender because the Constitution reign supreme. It is just important regardless of the process that is being undertaken by the Presidency that we understand that even our education laws are subject to the Constitution. Thank you.

IsiXhosa:

Nksz M MAKESINI: Mphathiswa, niza kwenza njani ukukhusela lo mthetho ubaluleke kangaka ukuze ningabavaleli abantu ukuba bafunde ngeenkubeko zabo, amasiko abo nokuba abantwana bakwazi ukuya esikolweni kwaye bakwazi ukufundiswa ngeelwimi zabo, hayi ukuya kuphela kwiBanga 4 kuphela. Kaloku xa umntwana ekwiBanga 4 nimbekela ecaleni, uza kuphinda abuyele umva alibale kuba abantwana balibala kwangoko.

Ingaba niza kuyenza njani imithetho neenkqubo ezizakwenza ukuba umntwana makangene ukusuka kwiBanga 1 ukuya kwiBanga 12

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kungekho nto eza kumenza angakwazi ukuqhuba afunde ngolwimi
azalwe nalo kwaye aphila ngalo ekhaya ...

English:

... with the hope ...

IsiXhosa:

... lokuba wena Mphathiswa ekugqibeleni ...

English:

... after the three months you will not boycott, you will go
so that ...

IsiXhosa:

... ube yinxalenye xa kusayinwa lo mthetho ubalulekileyo kuba
unguMphathiswa weMfundo esiSiseko. Ndiyabulela.

UMPHATHISWA WEMFUNDO ESISISEKO: Ndiyabulela ...

English:

... hon member. You raised an important point of how we make
sure that we keep children who enter the system ...

IsiXhosa:

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Hayibo Sihlalo!

IsiZulu:

USIHLALO WENDLU (Mnu B A Radebe): Yini?

English:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: You are distracting me.

[Laughter.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): No, I am not even looking at you [Laughter.] If you can put your shoes, I will not be distracted.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: How do we make sure that learners who enter the system enter the system from Grade R all the way to matric and they remain in the system. This remains a big priority for us because the overemphasis on matric results alone is not a good indicator of whether or not we are doing well by our children because ...

IsiXhosa:

... kaloku singakwazi ukuthi kulo nyaka sinabantwana abangama800 000 abaza kubhala iBanga 12. Kodwa ke kulama800 000 kufuneka ukwazi ukumlandelela umtwana ubone

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ukuba kwaba bantwana ngomphi owaqala kwiBanga R ukuza kuphuma kwiBanga 12. Siyayazi ukuba abantwana ...

English:

... drop out along the system, which is why we need to strengthen the system. Part of the reasons why ...

IsiXhosa:

... abantwana beyeka isikolo lungu elihloniphekileyo kukuba umntwana xa ethe akaphumelela akaphindi abuyele esikolweni. Ngoko ke, thina silisebe simxhasa njani umntwana ukuze siqinisekise ukuba ...

English:

... there is no reason to fail because it is not because of your ability, it is because ...

IsiXhosa:

... thina asikwazi ukukuncedisa ngolu lwimi ulwaziyo. Yiyo loo nto ke ndisithi, ...

English:

... this strategy of mother tongue-based bilingual education ...

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IsiXhosa:

... yeSebe lezeMfundo esiSiseko yenzelwe loo nto, ukuze ulwimi okufundiswa ngalo lukhaphane nolunye ukuze umntwana xa efika kwiBanga 1 efundiswa ngolwimi lwakhe sikwazi ukuyiqhuba loo nto noko ...

English:

... for a longer time where you are doing the bilingual education because the literature suggests ...

IsiXhosa:

... ukuba abantwana ...

English:

... learn better ...

IsiXhosa:

... xa befundiswa ngolwimi abalwaziyo ...

English:

... in addition to another language. And so, that is why we are saying ...

IsiXhosa:

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... ukuba abantwana xa beqala iBanga 4, le nto bendithetha ngayo ithi, abantwana ...

English:

... when they turn 10 ...

IsiXhosa:

... xa befika kwiBange 4, ukuba abakwazi ...

English:

... to read for meaning. Science and the research suggests that they will not be able to catch up. This is why it means that we have to be intentional about improving our literacy levels ...

IsiXhosa:

...nakanjani na, nokuba yeyipni na indlela eza kuqinisekisa ukuba abantwana bade bafike kwiBanga 12. Kodwa ke lungu elihloniphekileyo nalapho, nganmanye amaxesha abazali baye bangafuni ukuba abantwana bafunde ngolwimi lwabo. Abazali baye babe noloyiko lokuba, ukuba umntwana wam ufunda ngolu lwimi uza kuyaphi. Ndifuna ukuyicacisa ke ukuba, ...

English:

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... the mother tongue bilingual-based education ...

IsiXhosa:

... ithi ziza kukhaphana.

English:

Their statuses ...

IsiXhosa:

... ziza kulingana ukwenzela ukuba - kaloku siyayazi ukuba eziklasini ootitshala xa becacisa iifoniki bacacisa ngolu lwimi umntana alwaziyo. Kodwa ke, awukwazi ukufundisa umntwana ngolwimi oluthile kodwa xa kufika uwiwo lubhalwe ngesiNgesi ...

English:

... because that is where the disjuncture comes and that is why ...

IsiXhosa:

... abantwana beshiyekela ngasemva ...

English:

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... and it's often not their fault. So, it is important that
...

IsiXhosa:

... siyihoye loo nto ...

English:

... because it is not just about giving expression to section 29 of the Constitution, which is there, it is not just about giving expression to section 29, it is also about a strategy to make sure that we improve literacy.

So, there is scientific evidence to say that when children are taught in their mother tongue their literacy rates do in fact improve.

IsiXhosa:

Enkosi Sihlalo.

Afrikaans:

Mnr N H PIENAAR: Goeie middag, agb Minister.

English:

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Thank you for coming back to this prestigious House. It's always great to have you here providing us with insight in your department. Hon Minister, can you provide us with an updates in relation to the three months postperiod the President has granted to deal with certain clauses of the Act?

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair, and also thanks very much to the member. The NCOP is indeed my favourite House of Parliament. [Laughter.] I like the interrogation. Hon members I give you my undertaking I will never shy away from being interrogated about the work that we do because that is your job, and it is my job to respond. I like interrogation, I like the difficult answers. We may not always agree on the answers themselves but at least you can be assured that I will always provide them.

With regard to the question that the member has asked about the status or the update, well member, we know that that process was announced by the President on 13 September, and so he has undertaken to lead the process on his side to engage with parties, political leaders and other stakeholders, and political parties within the government of national unity, but also more importantly with other stakeholders who have petitioned him about this particular clauses. So, we know he

has given that process three months and we will be making sure that we keep abreast as the department to understand where the process is at all times so that we can be guided by the outcome of that consultations. Thank you.

Question 113:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon Chair, Mr Feni asked about the transfer of early childhood development, ECD from Department of Social Development to Department of Basic Education, DBE. But also speaks directly about steps being taken to address the needs of children with disabilities and ECD. So, in 2021 hon members, the President and the premiers officially signed orders to move ECD function from the Department of Social Development to DBE.

This handover took effect from the 01 April 2022. All related resourcing, including staff, budgets and equipment have now moved to the DBE. However, I must indicate hon members that, because ECD was housed in a different department with different needs for outcomes, the transfer to DBE is not a simple one. It's not a lateral one, because we need to firstly look at ECD centres and see how we can make sure that they are in line with the kind of requirements that we have.

The reason why I indicate this is because while ECDs were under Social Development, their core function was to provide care for children who are between certain ages. Now that it is moved to DBE, the function of that ECD is to provide early child education, early child learning.

Immediately now that presents challenges, because ECD practitioners now need to be qualified in a particular way. Once they are qualified, they need to be remunerated in a particular way. There are certain things that we need to look at and how do we register these ECD centres. Also, how do we expand access because we know that there are millions of children between zero and four, who are not in early child learning environment in any way.

So, while the function was officially moved in 2022, the department is in the process of developing these processes to see how we can register ECD centres with the Department of Basic Education. What do ECD centres need to do to be recognised? Also, what are some of the things that they need to do to change from being just only a daycare centre, but to being an early child learning environment?

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The reason why this is important and the emphasis moved from simply just looking at matric results as I was saying earlier, but focusing on early childhood development is because we know, if children are starting to read to solve puzzles, to manipulate simple numbers from an early age, they stand a better chance of being able to go through the system and essentially be able to read for meaning by 10.

Let me make an example, if your child goes to an affluent school or an ECD by two or three years old, they are able to interact with the book for the first time. They're able to play and solve puzzles for the first time. But if you are from Mqanduli, chances are your child will probably only interact with the book for the first time only when they turn seven.

We are then saying we are giving children three years to be able to read not only just read, but to read for meaning to read, for understanding, and it's unfair. Frankly, this is part of the reason why we are not meeting our targets. That internationally when we are being assessed, we're not meeting our targets as it as it pertains to literacy because we haven't emphasised enough in the past on early child learning. So, that's what we have done.

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With regards to making sure that these ECD centres are inclusive as much as possible to the hon member, that's part of the reason why we want them to be registered so that we can know where they are. We can know what facilities they have so that we can make sure that they are also inclusive in the sense that they can provide a safe learning environment, even for children with special needs.

So, it's a huge undertaking that has just begun, but we have to do it because it is frankly critical to make sure that children are able to start reading and learning and being able to read for meaning at a much earlier age. Thank you.

Mr M FENI: Thank you very much hon Chair and hon Minister. Let me also congratulate hon Minister on your signing of the Basic Education Laws Amendment, Bela Bill as the Department. As you already alluded hon Minister, that early childhood development is pivotal in addressing education inequality and reducing in income disparities.

What has been the impact of relocating ECD to the Department of Basic Education and also especially on practitioner employment? The second one: What are the challenges that ECD practitioners faced concerning compliance with DBE norms and

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standards, including qualification and professional body registration? Thank you, hon Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, hon Feni. I do wish to just point out to the members that when you ask a follow-up question, you're permitted to ask one question. But over to you, Minister, for your response please.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon Chair, the hon member asked about the challenges that have been there with moving ECD to or the impact that it has. The intended impact hon member as I indicated earlier, is to make sure that we improve our education outcomes. Because we want to make sure that the 5 million children who are not in any child in any early child learning environment, they get into an early child learning environment.

But we also want to make sure that ECD's are not just daycare centres, they are places where children can learn. Because that's how then, as I say, you start to bridge the gap between those who have and those who have not. Because it's important that regardless of where you come from in South Africa, you have access to early child development learning at the

appropriate age so that you are able to be on par with your age mates.

Part of the reason why we are getting left behind in the literacy rates when it pertains to Grade 4 by reading for meaning when children turn 10 is because of those very disparities. As I indicated earlier, the literature suggests that if a child can't read for meaning when by the time they turn 10 they are unlikely to ever catch up. So really the investment in early child learning is absolutely critical if we are going to get our literacy levels up.

But there have been significant challenges because, as I said, the status in Social Development was one thing and the status of ECD is going to be something very different under DBE. Under DBE, they have to be centres of education, of learning. So, we also have to make sure that the practitioners in the ECD's are trained and are remunerated correctly. You asked around about employment. The practitioners are trained, they are remunerated fairly. Because sometimes you find that ...

IsiXhosa:

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... umama unendlu anayo omama aqokelele abantwana balapha ekuhlaleni abahoye ngokwakhe engakhange afumane uhlobo oluthile loqeqesho eza kuqinisekisa ukuba abantwana bayafunda.

English:

So, it is important that we are able to register these ECD centres by going there physically and seeing how many we have. How do we do this mass registration? What status do they enjoy? How many practitioners are there? How many practitioners are trained? Are we making provision for children who have special needs?

That's why part of what we are doing is partnering with the University of Johannesburg to create a screening tool where when we do register an ECD, we go and identify things like learning to identify developmental delays early so that children who do have special needs can get the assistance that they need. So, ...

IsiXhosa:

... njengoko ubona ukuba ...

English:

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... the status shifts from just being a place to look after children, but to be a place where you educate children. And so, while the shift has been made last year in April, but to move the function fully is going to take some time, because we've got to get our systems and our policies right and we've got to find the money to employ people who are trained in early child learning. Thank you.

Ms N P MCINGA: Minister, what specific programmes or interventions are being implemented to support children with disabilities within the early childhood development framework. In particular, could the Minister clarify types of disabilities being addressed such as visual impaired, which is the blind, hearing impaired, which is the deaf, physical disabilities and learning disabilities, and explain what targeted interventions are in place for each of these groups.

Minister, please, when you answer my question, please don't use words like, not whatever strategy. You are in over 100 days now. And also, don't refer to what the department and the previous Ministry did and all of that. You now as a Minister, what is that you're going to do? Don't tell us stories. Tell us ...

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IsiXhosa:

... ukuba yintoni oza kuyenza wena ngengoMphathiswa ungasixeleleli ngeentlanganiso uthi ...

English:

... you are still going to have a meeting with the President.

IsiXhosa:

Ingaba wena njengoMphathiswa uza kuthini?

English:

Minister don't send us to go to oversight and come and account to you. You, account to us. We are the supreme House. You said we do to oversight; we must come and tell you. It doesn't go like that. You, account to us.

IsiXhosa:

Indima Mphathiswa mayicace. Enkosi.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, I do want to perhaps clarify a number of things. Hon member ...

IsiXhosa:

... andinithumi ukuba niye kongamela (oversight) ngumsebenzi wenu lowo.

English:

All I'm asking is that ...

IsiXhosa:

... xa nisiya kwenza ukongamela ningamalungu ePalamente, xa nibona izinto zingahambi kakuhle ezindaweni zabantu bethu, loo nto yivezeni kurhulumente ukuze urhulumente athathe uxanduva. Bendikunikile ithuba lakho, ndicela nawe undinike elam ithuba ukuze ndikwazi ukukuphendula.

Xa izinto zingahambi kakuhle kurhulumente, kufuneka amaLungu ePalamente la anyuliweyo ngabantu baseMzantsi Afrika, nina bantu bonyuliweyo kuba sonyuliwe lungu elihloniphekileyo. Sithunyiwe ngabantu boMzantsi Afrika awuthunywa ndim. Uthunywa ngabantu boMzantsi Afrika aba bakuthumele ukuba ube kule Ndlu.

English:

So, I'm saying that when you do identify shortcomings in communities that you go to, let us know so that we can be responsive, we can be quick, and we can then go solve those

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things. But our people expect you to represent them equally and fairly.

Hon member, when you are asking about what we are doing about children with disabilities. As I indicated, the ECD team ...

IsiXhosa:

... - asingawo amabali ke la lungu elihloniphekileyo, zizinto ezibonakalayo nezenzekayo ...

English:

... in the in the in the Department of Education.

Ms N P MCINGA: Chairperson, on a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, Minister. The next follow-up question will come from Mr Nzimande.

An HON MEMBER: No Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): Mr. Nzimande, if you can just give us one moment. What is your point of order hon member?

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Ms N P MCINGA: Can the Minister stop abbreviating, she must say what ECD is.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): That's not a point of order hon member. Please take your seat. Mr Nzimande you are welcome to continue with your follow-up question, Sir.

Mr E NZIMANDE: House Chair, I will expect the Minister to respond within the context that she has signed the deliverable agreement with the President. Therefore, whatever policies, whatever the government is looking for or is undertaking to do, it's what we expect the Minister to account to. So, all what I'm trying to say is that, maybe it may not be important for the Minister to tell this House how she feels.

But what she can do and what I would expect now that the Minister has already acknowledged the fact that budget cuts have serious implications which you may need the departments in provinces to even consider no new entrances in terms of employment.

Now, if that is acknowledged and it could be the strategy, the question is: How is the Minister going to assist in relation to the special needs of children living with disabilities,

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taking cognisance of the budget cut? That we live up to what is promised in terms of the ECD framework to uphold the principle of the Constitution of equality and the equality that is to be given in terms of training. So, the training of ECD ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): Your time has expired, hon member.

Mr E NZIMANDE: So that's the question.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Minister, your response please.

Mr E NZIMANDE: Minister, that's the question that, how are you going to then develop strategies to ... [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): Hon member if you can take your seat. Your time has expired.

Mr E NZIMANDE: Thank you Sihlalo [Chair.]

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon member, you're absolutely right that in the context of budget cuts and the acquisition

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of this new function, we've got to be creative about how do we, as the member cautioned that I must not use acronyms, how do we make sure that early child development centres are places of learning and safety for children. Now that they're in the DBE, we are able to roll out early learning opportunities.

You asked in particular around the learners who have special needs. There are a couple of strategies. The one is the one that I indicated to the member that, we've developed a screening tool that will assist ECD centres as they become registered to have people who go to ECD centres and screen children to and to see if - because sometimes particularly now that we are taking on zero to four, the learning delays or some of these things will not be able to be picked up soon enough.

We want to be able to utilise the fact that now that the ECD centres are within DBE, we must make sure that we are screening children so that we can alert parents. Because often sometimes the issue is that as the previous hon member indicated, the issue is a learning impairment. That doesn't mean that the child needs to necessarily leave the school and

go to a special school or the issue is around the fact that they need glasses.

All of these things, these can be detected early enough, and we can have those interventions at an early stage before children essentially get lost into the system. However, there are also children who have profound disabilities that then need to go to a particular school that caters for them. And so, we want to be able to.

Currently we've got schools of specialisations, and we've got all these kinds of alternative schools that children can go. But we want to be able to roll that out so that they can also cater to zero to four, so that even when a child has a profound disability even at a young age, they are able to go to school. What we don't want is, we don't want children just simply because they have special needs, then they are simply seen as people who will never be able to be active participants in the economy.

Honestly, I have in my provincial visits I've gone to places where I've gone to schools of specialisation where children even with profound disabilities are doing incredible things. They're doing incredible things with their hands. They're able

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to get these things sold. And so, it's important to instil dignity in children by making sure that we are developing those tools or specialisation in special schools, and we are rolling that out to ECD.

Mr E NZIMANDE: Chair, is she answering me?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): What is the point of order, hon member.

Mr E NZIMANDE: Is she still responding to me?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, Minister. Have you concluded your response? Indeed. Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): The final follow-up question to this Minister will come from the hon Britz. Hon Britz.

Mr J H P BRITZ: Hon Minister, I do acknowledge your passion for basic education, and I do sense a frustration with

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budgets, infrastructure and project management. So, let me add to your frustration. Given your departments shortfall in budget, can you elaborate on how the mandatory Grade R will be funded? Thank you Chair.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, the hon Birts is correct. I mean, at the moment Grade R is partially available to some schools in South Africa. I wouldn't venture and give you the statistics because I would need to be sure of how far we are with that. So, we are not starting from absolute zero. There are schools that already have Grade R and they've already started rolling out Grade R.

But what the new legislation now does is that it makes it compulsory for every single school to have Grade R. Which of course members I have been talking very passionately about while, while why early child learning is absolutely critical. But the truth of the matter is, we're going to need additional budget to be able to roll out compulsory Grade R. And so, at some point, once the commencement of the act begins, we're going to have to have a discussion with Treasury about how we're going to make sure that we fund Grade R are fully.

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There are three things that we need to consider when we're talking about funding of Grade R. Number one, we need to make sure that we support schools and provinces to be able to build additional infrastructure in their schools. Because of course Grade R's, have particular needs, whether it's different bathrooms that are that fit the little ones. Whether it's classrooms. Whether it's jungle gym. Those things are important for their learning and development. So, infrastructure is going to have to be funded.

Number two, we are also going to have to fund the Grade R teachers and be uniform about how you fund grade art teachers. In some provinces, Grade R teachers right now are receiving a stipend, which is not fair because they are in effect, accredited and trained educators in Grade R. So, you have to make sure that the remuneration of Grade R teachers is uniform across the country. So, you're going to have to make sure that we are going to hire more teachers to go to Grade R.

The other thing is that we're going to have to make sure that we fund and hopefully we can have this conversation with the Minister of Finance before February 2025 is, we're going to have to make sure that we get learning and teaching material to Grade R. So, that's definitely additional funding that we

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need and that's going to have to be a very tough conversation that we're going to have ahead of the Budget Speech in February because of course now the Act will commence.

The Bela Bill has been signed into law. Only clauses 4 and 5 have been suspended. The rest of the act we've started to essentially put together an implementation plan on how we're going to implement. Part of that plan is going to have to answer the question that you asked, how is it going to be funded. We are going to as the other member said, don't tell us about that you are waiting for Treasury. We are going to have to go to Treasury because that's where we get our budget allocation from hon member.

So, I will have to go to Treasury. I will have to have a meeting as other members are saying, please don't tell us about meetings. I will have to have a meeting with the Minister of Finance so that we can make sure that Grade R is funded. That is important. It is important that every single child has access to early child learning so that we can make sure that the system is equal. It doesn't matter where you come from, but you must have access to the very same things. Thank you.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr D R Ryder): Hon members, we have come to the end of questions to the Minister of Basic Education. I would like to thank the hon Minister for availing herself here today to answer the questions and invite her to resume her seat. Hon members, I will now call on the Minister of Higher Education to come to the podium to respond to Question 120 which was asked by the hon Fienies. Welcome Minister.

Question 120:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Thank you so much, Chairperson and good afternoon to members of the NOCP. The question is from hon Fienies, the question is about providing an update on the steps the department is taking to stabilise governance, administration and management of National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, and if not, why not, and what steps are we taking so far as the department? What I want to indicate before the hon members is that on the 1 August 2024, we amended the terms of reference of the administrator of NSFAS, and amongst those who also indicated that we are going to call for nominations of the board members as the measure for us to stabilise the institution, to bring back governance, administration as well as management in that entity, hence you are aware that the board was dissolved early this year and

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then after that the administrator was appointed in April this year. The measures that we have put in place in trying to monitor the implementation of the terms of reference by the administrator who have established regular meetings with the administrator, together with relevant stakeholders, and we are in a process of appointing the board.

We tried to up the game. The minimum requirement was a Master's degree, and the department is supporting the administrator as well as the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, with the termination of the direct payment contracts, hence you are aware that there were fintech companies that were dispersing funds to the students, and we are appealing that outcome of the Western Cape High Court, because we still believe that those fintech companies were not properly appointed, and as the department, we are also monitoring the performance of the NSFAS administrator. As to date, we've received 260 nominations. The notice in the government Gazette was issued on 13 August, and the closing date was 21 September 2024. The Minister has engaged the Auditor-General and the National Treasury on financial reports of NSFAS. We have received assurance from the Auditor-General that their revised audit report would have been completed by 30 September, and we have established that the Auditor-General of SA, AGSA, indeed

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met with the audit team working with the administrator because we don't have an audit committee of NSFAS currently.

They met on 30 September 2024 to finalise the audit for the 2022-23 financial year. The department has also advised that the audit for the 2023-24 will commence beginning November 2024, with an anticipated completion date of December 2024. These measures will ensure that annual financial statements for the years 2022-23 and 2023-24 are submitted to Parliament. The department has further advanced all monies due to NSFAS to ensure it meets its obligations. The department is engaging multiple stakeholders on the Comprehensive Student Funding Model and sustainable free framework to ensure that it is able to support future needs of NSFAS. As to date, we are still waiting for SIU to complete their investigation, and once the report has been finalised, we are going to bring it to the attention of hon members, and we want to assure you that there will be consequence management. Thank you so much, Chair

Ms D W FIENIES: Hon Minister, I just want to check with you in terms of the timeframes regarding the appointment of the chief executive officer, the chief financial officer, as well as the chief audit executive for this institution. Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Thank you so much, Chair, once more. Once more. Once the board has been appointed by the Minister, and we want to also bring to your attention that it is going to be vetted and there will be interviews as well, because we want to make sure that you are bringing on board credible people who are going to assist in terms of turning around the entity as far as governance is concerned. Once it is appointed, it is then going to facilitate the process of appointing the chief executive officer, the chief financial officer, as well as the chief audit executive. Thank you.

Ms N S DU PLESSIES: Thank you, hon Minister, and thank you for improving the framework of NSFAS, as you are aware that education and higher education is the best form of redress. Minister, are you able to clean up the mess left by your predecessor and stop the theft at NSFAS that has been taken by a select elite? Many of the systems or the tightening of the frameworks would address this, but I'm asking, specifically, are you a Minister of integrity and can you stop this so that our people can be educated throughout? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Yes, thank you so much, Chair, once more. Yes, hon member, I'm a Minister of integrity, I believe you also observed when one was taking

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oath. I'm committed to clean governance. We are going to make sure that we turn around the entity, we're going to make sure that we root out corruption as per the call of the President. Thank you.

Ms M SIWISA: Thank you, Minister. Minister, we know the crisis of NSFAS, we know where we come from and we know the disadvantages that were put forward by the whole mess of NSFAS whereby you'd find that money is being paid late into students accounts, which means that it put some of the students vulnerable to either commit criminal acts to get easy money. Some girls are exposed to sugar daddies, some even decide to just go back because they are frustrated because money is being paid late because of the former or the previous administration that was dealing with NSFAS. What guarantee can I be given because in January, the tertiary institutions will be opening, what guarantee do we have that by the time students are done with registration, they'll also have access to their money? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: I did indicate that we are in a process of turning around the institution, trying to stabilise governance, administration as well as management of the entity. We are indeed trying to make sure that come the

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new academic year, we have actually attended to some of the challenges that we're facing. I'm not going to shy away from the fact that we have fiscal constraints, as my colleague has already indicated. However, we are putting in place measures to then try to close the gap of those challenges and predicaments that we face from time to time during the opening of the new academic year. However, what I want to indicate before the hon members is that there was a ministerial task team, that sat and came up with a funding model which is called a Comprehensive Student Funding Model. However, the budget that we have in that regard is only R3,8 billion which is for funding the missing middle. It comprises of R1,5 billion from the National Skills Fund, NSF, and R2,3 billion from the Sector. Education and Training Authorities, SETAs.

Now, the challenge is, we don't fund this budget from Vote No 17. It then says, I'm going to repeat what my colleague have actually raised here to say we are planning as the department, we have already sent out a request for an urgent meeting with the Minister of Finance so that we secure guarantees for funding sustainability of NSFAS because it requires seed funding which is going to be then a contribution by government to ensure that it is sustainable and we it won't have any

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challenges. For now, we are still facing the challenge with this bursary scheme, which is NSFAS, and this one which is comprehensive funding model, which is more of a loan that is funding missing middle. Thus far, we only have 1 300 students that are being considered, while ensuring that NSFAS does not ignore the provisions of the National Credit Act. Yeah, we do have challenges, but we are hoping with time, once we put together our board, we fill a critical executive positions within the entity, and to having engaged the Minister of Finance, all those issues will be put to arrest. Thank you.

Mr E NZIMANDE: Thanks, Chair, I'll be quick. Minister, last year in this House, Ramorwesi indicated the impact of the budget cut that the resultant of it will lead to about 87 000 prospective students that will be adversely affected for financial years 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 which is about 120 000. On that you'll agree with us that it will be drawn from obviously the destitute population, which is black in particular. What are the strategies that the Minister is having to ensure that those individuals that were not able to access NSFAS acquire necessary skills that are needed in the labour market. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Yes, but it is not more of a follow up, but I'm going to respond to the question. It looks like a new question because now it speaks about what the plan in place is that we have as the department to empower those who do not have access to and as far as skills revolution is concerned, that's the question. Hon member, I think you are aware that as the department, we're in the process of changing the shape and size of our Post-school Education and Training, PSET, system, and in changing the shape and size we are then focusing on Artisan Development Programme, and that program is targeting the 3,5 million of young people that are not in any employment, not in education, not in training. So, we do have a plan in place, which is the expansion in ensuring that there is access and success by trying to balance the gap between accessing education and the exit strategy that one must have moving forward. Thank you.

Question 104:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Chair, the department has established centres of specialisation programme which is suitable to implement the industry oriented high quality vocational education and training in line with the regional and international standards. In developing these centres, the department have been working with international partners like

Brics countries, German Development Agency, Japan International Co-operation Agency, and the number of local industry association. This programme has been recognised by international labour organisations as good practice in apprenticeship and artisan development.

The department has invested R238 million to upgrade infrastructure at these centres. Remember, these centres, we are working in partnership with German Development Agency and Japan Development Agency private companies. Through Brics, the department, assisted by India, developed what is known as Gandhi-Mandela Centre of Specialisation for priority trades at Tshwane South Tvet college. A number of trade test centres at Tvet colleges have also increased to 35 by the end of 2023, and this trade test centres have tested trades of 790 artisans, of which 700 have qualified as artisans.

In partnership again with our sector, education and training authorities, we have also built 17 skills centres in support of local economy as well as the District Development Model. We have a number of skills development centres already built in various provinces, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. There is a number of those training centres.

We also have seven planned skills development centres in Kwazulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. Those are the provinces that have those planned skills development centres as we move forward with trying to change the shape and size of our Post-school Education and Training, Pset, system. Thank you.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Hon Minister, you mentioned 709 artisans. When were these people trained? Is this the only amount throughout the past 20 to 30 years or is this for this year? I also appreciate the fact that these centres have been built or reported to have been built. However, there is no visible impact of them, and I just like to find out if there is any genuine impact, other than 709 artisans trained in an undefined period of time. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Yes, there is an impact. It's just that for now one doesn't have a breakdown from this 790. Where are they placed because we have a programme which is then responding to the trained artisans of work integrated learning programmes as well as placement programme. So, if maybe the hon members would want us to provide that breakdown, we are then going to send it. Thank you.

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Mrs N N CHIRWA-MPUNGOSE: Chair, our question is to find out what the Minister is doing to ensure that all tertiary institutions, especially and including those with campuses that are based in townships and rural areas, are empowered and infrastructurally to be capacitated to offering a variety of sporting codes, as is the case in previously whites only tertiary institutions. Please kindly include and cover Tvet in your response, Minister. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Thank you so much for the question hon Mpungose. Because we took an oath to say what we are going to raise before the members and for consumption by the public, we need to be honest. There is a gap in terms of infrastructure development as far as sporting codes or sporting infrastructure is concerned, particularly in rural areas and townships. However, the department is in the process of trying to close that gap.

We had a session as part of a stakeholder engagement by the Minister and ... [Inaudible.] ... 100 days. It is one of the issues that was sharply raised by stakeholders to say that when you look at the nature of our Tvet colleges, particularly those in townships and rural communities, they do not have sports facilities and even when you look at the entire

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infrastructure of the teaching and learning environment, it's quite different.

We took a decision that this is going to be our focus for this term of office as the department. We then instructed the officials to just conduct sort of an audit or a study so that we get to understand the infrastructure that we have in our institutions of higher learning, particularly in rural areas and townships. So they are still working on that. We're hoping that it is going to give us a guide to say this is where we need to focus as we expand our Pset system as far as infrastructure development is concerned. Your point has been noted. We are going to look at it as we move forward. Thank you.

Ms T BREEDT: Hon Minister, speaking of Higher Education facilities and specifically I want to go to traditionally tertiary institutions. We've just had an August 2024 ShanghaiRanking, and the only of our 26 tertiary institutions that have managed to improve was the University of Johannesburg, and only two of our universities are ranked in the top 500 in tertiary institutions globally.

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So my question would be this hon Minister, how are you going to ensure - and I hear that you are planning to focus on sporting stadiums and that's good - but I'm not getting a clear plan as to what are we going to do to ensure that not only our tertiary institutions, but these centres of high learning where artisans are trained is actually really internationally recognised and is improved and is seen by the world as leading in their fields? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Thank you for the question. This is the challenge that we are facing currently as the sector. However, we are focusing on innovation and creativity, as well as technology. There is a good story that we can share which is happening in Vhembe Tvet college, of which we believe that we can as well benchmark that to other traditional tertiary institutions, particularly our Tvet colleges, as well as our community education centres.

We understand that there are gaps. We also decided to take this to the attention of Human Resource Development Committee so that it is going to look at it and see how best we can turn around those institutions, both our cities, as well as Tvet colleges because we can see that whatever we produce, we cannot compete with the other institutions globally. However,

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with the world skills programme or competition that we attend to, or we also participate in as South Africa, we are hoping that there will be some changes.

What we have said is that we need to maybe benchmark from China and India because they are close by and they are part of Brics, to see what is it that they are doing because they compete at the global level, and they also win in those competitions. But when it comes to us as South Africa, we are lagging behind. But we are hoping with time - because we have clear strategies on how best we can turn around our Pset system broadly as far as innovation, technology and creativity is concerned - which curriculum review is going to be part of those programmes that we are going to bring on board in turning around our Pset system. We are hoping we are going to get it right in no time.

Question 115:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Hon House Chairperson, in response to the inquiry regarding the potential crisis of assessment and evaluation delays in the Tvet sector, the Department of Higher Education and Training has taken several interventions to ensure that students are not subjected to preventable delays in receiving their certificates and

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diplomas after completing their academic programmes. What we have done is that we put in place our examination IT system and certification issuance. Also, in terms of certification progress, the Chief Directorate National Examinations and Assessment has made significant strides to eliminate any backlog in the issuance and printing of certificates to further support the students. The following intervention that has been put in place is diploma issuance as we are standing today, says between 01 of January 2024 and 30 September 2024, the Certification and Historical Records unit within the department has made significant progress. A total of 7 234 national diplomas have been issued with an additional 4 084 diplomas awaiting printing pending the delivery of stationary from the supplier.

The process of issuing diplomas considers both theoretical achievement and relevant practical experience ranging from 18 to 24 months, depending on the programme. Candidates whose diplomas applications were declined have been informed to resubmit their applications following the prescribed appeal process. In terms of interventions to mitigate this challenge, the department has implemented the following measures:

Tracking and distribution were all printed. Certificates and diplomas are couriered to Tvet colleges with tracking waybill

numbers to ensure accurate tracking and easy retrieval upon receipt.

There is a temporary confirmation letter that we also issue in case where student experience delays in receiving their printed diplomas due to logistical challenges such as stationary shortage of college relocations. The department provides confirmation letters and these letters can be used by students for employment or further study purposes while awaiting for the final certificates to be issued. We also work together with the private colleges to try and arrest the problem that hon members have actually observed.

The department has established measures to ensure smooth handover of qualifications, even in cases where private colleges have relocated thereby reducing delays in certificate distribution. Because now we are in the fourth industrial revolution, we also provide the screenshots to students. Those who are requesting via WhatsApp to say I do not have my results or my certificate, could you please at least provide me with the statement of results? We then provide screenshots to students.

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In conclusion, on this matter, the department remains committed to ensuring that students are not subjected to preventable delays in receiving their qualifications and ongoing system improvement co-ordination with Tvet colleges and mitigation measures, such as confirmation letters, are part of a broader strategy to ensure students can access their documents in a timely manner and progress with their careers or further studies without any disruptions. Thank you.

Mrs N N CHIRWA-MPUNGOSE: Minister, the Tvet management systems vary across institutions and in many institutions, there is a crisis of a thorough proper management. This is because government has allowed this tertiary industry to be run like high schools where there is no set system of minimum management standards in running the facility in instituting and issuing qualifications and processing the funding of students who rely on government for their education. Are there plans to, at least, standardise and or centralise the technical components in the Tvet sector and also noting the culmination of response that you are citing if there are plans to do so, by when will all this have been implemented? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: What is happening now, that is, what I am talking about in terms of our implementation strategy, is ongoing. It is not that it is something that we are still going to do. We understand that there are hindrances there and there, but we are trying to improve our systems as per the indicators that I have just shared with the Members of Parliament. What is happening is that - these impact on resulting is that the capturing of the internal continuous marks, we are training examination officers and it is designed to ensure that they keep and validate the marks of the candidates. The department has also appointed a team of moderators to conduct site-based moderation, where Continuous Assessment, Cass Marks are moderated and verified for compliance.

If the Cass Marks of the student are missing, this will affect the system, which is likely to miss all the students of a particular centre who are in the same mark sheet and therefore capturing must be strictly monitored by the heads of department. We have the heads of department that we have put in place to make sure that they monitor the implementation of these measures. However, as indicated earlier, the department has run out of the diploma certificates, which might be one of

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the challenges due to the delays in orderings by service providers, that is, Government Printing Works.

However, the service provider has committed to delivering the flexor plate for diploma certificates by 21 October 2024 and the department is hoping that these measures will eliminate delays of the issuing of results, certificate and diploma to eligible candidates. We understand that there are gaps, but from time to time we are going to improve our systems so that they are responding to the needs of our learners. Otherwise, we are noting that challenges as raised. We have systems in place to turn around the institution and to respond to the challenges. However, there limitations of which they will be reviewed from time to time up until we get it right in this regard. Thank you.

Mr M F MOKWELE: Hon House Chairperson, let me thank you for the opportunity and also thank the hon Minister for the comprehensive response. Indeed, it is clear that the department is very much adamant that they want the education college to be taken more seriously as the real response for the economy of the country. Minister, my only question that I want to pose to you is that, does the department have the monitoring tool to ensure that colleges adhere to all the

measures that you have outlined? That is the question that I wanted to ask you. Thanks, Minister.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Hon member, the department conducts training session with campus managers, examination officers, deputy principals and head of departments on processes of issuing of results certificate as well as diplomas. These trainings are conducted in February and March every year and are attended by senior college officials. The training sessions are also focusing on critical process such as registration of candidates and verification of candidates through preliminary schedule that must be confirmed by student to attest that their personal details are accurately captured. Inaccurate registration data such as wrong Identity Documents results in delays of the finalisation of the results.

So, in respect of the students who pass qualifications across multiple examinations, those are reconciled by the system. However, the system can miss some of the candidates due to inaccurate registration data, and in this case, students are receiving their statements of results that they must apply to the college so that examination officers can forward their applications to national exams for consolidation. When the department received the application for the certificate that

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records are reconciled within seven hours and the certificate is printed and couriered to the college, we are making strides in this regard. Thank you.

Mr P J SWART: Hon Chairperson and hon Minister, most of all your efforts in your department to address the delays in the certification process are noted. Students continue to face unacceptable waiting periods for the documents and this is severely affecting their job prospects. Could you provide - because I have heard all the interventions that you are busy with. I did not hear clearly that the backlog has been solved. What are the current backlogs and for how many years it has been coming on for students waiting on the certificates and the backlogs. I just need some time frames. When the backlog in issuing the settings will be fully cleared and what concrete measures will you put in place to ensure, going forward that students receive these certificates within a clearly defined period, post qualification?

Minister, your department's failure to issue certificates on time denies and prolong these graduates the opportunity to enter the workforce and ensure the much-needed jobs for a country facing such alarming unemployment. We cannot afford any longer and allow these inefficiencies to continue.

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Minister, the time frames. Will your department engage with sector experts to ensure that Tvet qualifications are relevant so that graduates can join the workforce seemingly after graduation? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Chairperson, yes, there is a challenge with some delays as hon Mpungose has indicated. It also frustrates learners because they cannot proceed with either careers or also have access to some of the opportunities, be it job opportunities or entrepreneurship. However, I did indicate that between 01 January 2024 and 30 September 2024, the certification and historical record unit within the department has made significant progress as far as backlog is concerned. A total of 7 234 national diplomas have been issued with an additional of 4 084 diplomas awaiting printing pending the delivery of stationary from the supplier. In terms of making sure that some of the content or the curriculum that we provide in our Tvet colleges responds to the needs of the economy, I believe, I did indicate that we are in a process of reviewing our curriculum.

As far as Tvet colleges are concerned, working together with the industry, so that indeed we deliver programmes that are in need or in demand in the job market so that our learners are

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going to be employable or they can also, be employers themselves through entrepreneurship programmes. We are working together with the human resource development committee to also investigate that. We have separate engagements with the industry to try and make sure that the programmes that we produce in our Tvet colleges are responding to the needs of the economy. Also, the President has just established the just energy transition InterMinisterial Committee that seeks to address the issues around the skills that we produce versus trying to create the balance with the needs of the economy. The department is part of that programme and we have been given a responsibility to look at the skills of the future. Our target as we move forward is going to be on energy economy, hydrogen economy and broader energy electricity-related programmes that we need to focus on.

But hence our visit to China, amongst the areas that we want to focus on is automobile economy through Educational Visits Co-ordinator, EVC programmes that we want to introduce in our Tvet colleges. Vhembe Tvet College is doing very well because they have actually come out with a very good innovation in relation to EVC. Thank you so much.

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Mr M M PETER: Hon Chair, let me thank the hon Minister for giving us direct answers. Thank you, Minister, you are the first Minister to answer straight. In light of the fact that Tvet colleges are faced with multiple challenges, such as programmes are insufficiently responsive to the current lack of market, lack of focus on digital skills, training for Tvet lecturers, inadequately developed programmes, poor leadership, lack of management skills, inequitable resources and lack of support from your department. Whether there are any symbolic reforms, strategy or restructuring to improve the quality and efficiency of the colleges? What steps will you take to ensure a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to Tvet education to eliminate the stigma against South African colleges?

IsiXhosa:

Kubi kwezi kholeji, Mphathiswa. Enkosi.

English:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Hon member, we understand that there is that misconception that maybe our Tvet colleges are not delivering as expected. But with the programmes that we have put in place in trying to rethink our [Inaudible.]
14:06 system provision in South Africa where we need to structure our Tvet programmes and the entire [Inaudible.]

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13:58 system in partnership with the industry and through our Tvet industry alliance that is going to be forged. We believe that it is going to change the perception on the ground around our Tvet colleges.

In most industrialised countries like China and Germany, Tvet plays a very important role in producing the skilled workforce that underpins industry and propels economic growth. Our strategy for moving to occupational programmes aims to bring a paradigm shift in Tvet by developing the idea that Tvet collage prepares you to become more of job creators than job seekers, so that the public discard the idea that Tvet is a refuge for those who failed in the general education system.

The programmes are developed in partnership with the industry and are reviewed by the industry. This is our intervention that we have put in place as we change the shape and size of our [Inaudible.] 12:55 system. The department is phasing out Nated programmes which are outdated and theory based in favour of the occupational programmes that are industry based.

Lecture development is key on ensuring that they are kept up to date with the industry norms. We are in the process of developing lecture development centre in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in a Tvet college. This will assist

in the continuous development of the lectures in line with their fields.

Different interventions are implemented to inform youth about careers at Tvet colleges through our outreach programmes and career Expos. The department and Sector Education and Training Authorities, Setas are conducting current guidance at schools, public spaces and train stations. We are also part of the world skills that I spoke about earlier on, where we take our Tvet students to go and compete with their peers at the international platform where they learn best practices. But we are going to expand in this regard because we want to make sure that even those learners who are coming from townships as well as rural Tvet colleges participate in these world skills movement programmes so that they get exposure and learn from the best. Thank you.

Question 122:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: House Chairperson, hon members, what we need to understand is that the universities will struggle to operate without raising tuition fees as their operations, including staff salaries, need to increase at the minimum, at the same rate, as the consumer price index or rate of inflation.

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The Higher Education Act of 1999 does not empower the department to regulate fees. However, workshops are underway and further consultations are being planned to ensure an agreement on the exact rate of increase for the 2025 academic year, is reached, so that the university tuition fees remain affordable for students, while quality is not compromised. Because if we can then make a mistake of not providing enough resources for either operational reasons or salaries or other resources, but the university might need to ensure that they provide quality teaching and learning environment in our institutions, that would then compromise the quality. And some of the universities may not even be in a position to operate without at these tuition fees.

Those are the issues that we need to take into cognizance and the Higher Education Act, indicates that universities are autonomous, of which is one of the areas that we need to look at as we move forward, because as it stands, universities are autonomous. Thank you.

Mr M P SIBANDE: Thank you, very much, Minister for your response.

Afrikaans:

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In Afrikaans is dit: Dit is water onder die brug.

English:

My question is, are there any measures employed by the ministry to mitigate these realities, especially as it relates to the 'missing middle' who don't qualify for financial aid scheme? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: House Chairperson, this is going to take me back again to one of the questions that hon members raised. Thank you for your response and we understand that we should employ some of the mitigation measures to these realities, especially when it relates to 'missing middle'.

However, there are interventions that the government has put in place in this regard. Through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, Act, there is a provision for this to be done. There is a comprehensive student funding model in a form of a loan. Which the Minister announced, this year early. And funds were set aside to offer income contingent loans to those students who fall within the 'missing middle' bracket.

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And thus, far there are 1300 students that are being considered while ensuring the NSFAS does not ignore the provision of the National Credit Act. I did indicate that the budget is 3,8 billion funding for the 'missing middle' which comprises of 1,5 billion from the National Skills Fund, NSF, and 2,3 billion from the Sector Education and Training Authorities.

And then the limitation is that this budget is not budgeted from our budget Vote no 17, which then requires that we should engage the Minister to secure guarantees for funding sustainability of this. And through seed funding by government.

We are still in the process of engaging the Minister then to make sure that he then set aside seed funding for this comprehensive student funding model, so that we are not found wanting in the year 2025. But for now, we have catered 3,8 billion funding for the new academic year. But the challenge is that the turnout is very bad because for now we are sitting at 1300 students, that have applied and qualified. That will be considered for this fund. Thank you.

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Mr J S MAJOLA: House Chair, hon Minister, both poor economic performance and high unemployment, according to Labour Force Survey, the most recent one. To be precisely dated 23 August 2024. Indicated the two things. I quote, firstly, it indicates that 36,9% unemployed amongst the black population, secondly, the survey predicts that we are going to have a very small percentage of employable black population.

Hon Minister, having listened to your response with regards to your empowerment, in terms of influencing the increases in the university. But you further indicated that you do have platforms, you mentioned workshops. Using your influence, do you have a plan in ensuring that we are giving every child and affordable opportunity, as section 29(b) of Chapter 2, of the Constitution dictates? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: House Chairperson, it's true that we need to execute our constitutional obligation, as stipulated in section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. However, I think it's very important for us from time to time, to read it, interpret it and analyse what it says. It says everyone has a right to a basic education, which the state through reasonable measures must make

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progressively available and accessible. Through reasonable measures, I want to put that one in bold.

And also, we have some of the acts that are empowering us to make sure that we empower our people and our society ...

[Inaudible.] ... the National Skills Development Act, which we provide skills and critical skills to our youth, in particular those who are not in education, those who are not in employment and those who are not in any training institutions. We provide training programmes.

However, there is a gap that we have identified that in most cases those training programmes that were provided, they were not making any economic sense, because they were not responding to the needs of the economy. You train a person, there is no balance between access and success. You train a person, a person to stay home. A person who can't even think, who can't be creative, who can't even think of opening any business or to also venture into entrepreneurship. Or a person who's unemployable.

So, we're trying to turn around those training programmes that we provide to make economic sense in the post-school education

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and training, PSET, system. As we expand, as we change the size, as we change the shape of our PSET system.

Those are the programmes that you are coming up with and indeed we are also taking into cognizance the imperatives as prescribed in the Constitution, in particular Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights, section 29. Thank you so much.

Mr K CEZA: House Chairperson, Minister what measures has the department taken in ensuring that institutions such as University of Johannesburg, the Vaal University of Technology and the University of Venda, who have previously increased tuitions fees for students in the past, will instead provide free student registration, allow walkings registration and cancel historic debt? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: House Chair, I think I did indicate earlier on hon members, that when you look at the act, the Higher Education Act, universities are autonomous, as it stands. And it is our responsibility as this House, if we feel that there is a gap in High Education Act to make some amendments. So that we can be in a position to impose those conditions to say you cannot increase due to economic reasons. But as it stands now, there is nothing we can do.

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However, what I've said is that we are going to sit down with them. We are going to engage them to say, the economic conditions on the ground as it stands now, doesn't actually allow you guys to increase tuition fees due to the challenges that we're facing as far as economy is concerned. But what we need to take into cognizance, as we move forward, is to revisit Higher Education Act, as Parliament. Thank you very much.

Mr M BILLY: House Chairperson, Minister, my question is, noting the importance of good teaching for best education outcomes. When will the department shift their focus from being mostly directed towards students and start addressing the quality of tuition through proactive campaign across all tertiary institutions, including Technical Vocational Education and Training, TVET colleges, universities, community colleges and other recognized institutions of higher learning, aimed at attracting and retaining quality educators to build our economy by preparing students for real jobs? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: House Chairperson, as we try to change the shape in terms of curriculum development or curriculum review, as we try rethink our education system in South Africa. In particular our TVET college system. Amongst

the priorities that you are going to focus on, is to also upskill and reskill our educators in those institutions of higher learning. Because there is no way they can produce what we desire as government and the society if we don't upskill and reskill them. So that whatever skills that they have, they should align with the curriculum that we are going to bring on board, as we change the shape and size of our PSET system.

However, currently there is no plan in place. Those are some of the propositions that we put for the attention of the Human Resource Development Committee, to also look at. And we also engage the universities to also train some of our TVET college lecturers, so that they also meet the requirements. Because some of them they don't even meet those. And what we said is that you are going to conduct an audit to see what qualifications they have, those that are already in the system. So, but if there are discrepancies, we can as well try to rectify it. Thank you.

Question 116:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Question 116 is about the current status of implementing the recommendations of the 2017 Fees Commission report for free higher education for the poor and working-class students by government and why has the

government failed to fully fund the National Student Financial Aid scheme and leaving students without the necessary financial support, and what alternative funding model is the government exploring to support students. That's the question.

And the response is, the 2017 Fees Commission makes numerous recommendations, which cannot be covered in an oral question. However, at a high level it can be confirmed that government has started implementing some of the recommendations, such as the income contingent loan, and supported the full funding of TVET students.

In addition, the question of the regulation of tuition fees is being investigated and will be extensively consulted upon. Other recommendations have not been implemented, such as the discontinuation of registration and application fees. It is likely that not all the recommendations will be implemented.

The authors of the Fees Commission report strongly recommended that I quote:

"Careful costing and actuarial analysis are necessary to avert the tendency to develop policy without requisite costing."

The department continues to work with the assistance of actuaries to facilitate the development of an implementation plan for comprehensive student funding model over time. And in the current economic conditions, government is confronted by realities of competing social needs, including early childhood development, and does not have funds to fully fund the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, although it must be acknowledged that the fund has grown exponentially from R441 million in 1999 to R51 billion in 2023,

The 2017 Fees Commission recognised the impact of constrained economic growth, and its recommendations leaned towards cost sharing model which do not rely exclusively on government in the future. Currently, government is exploring various options, including possibilities of building an endowment fund over time and is engaging the Department of Trade Industry and Competition, DTIC as well as international and local donors in this regard.

In addition, it is engaging the banks and National Treasury and whether a credit guarantee scheme is feasible. So they are still exploring those various options in trying to see how best they can implement all those recommendations of the 2017

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Fees Commission report, but looking at socio economic challenges that the country is currently facing. Thank you.

Ms Z N NGCOBO: Hon Minister, I am answered. Thank you.

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Hon Minister, regarding alternative funding models, would you consider an alternative tiered funding model that; one, seeks to ensure that loans not only cover the full cost of study of some financially disadvantaged students from low income households, but also that students with a slightly higher income, the missing middle, which receive partial funding, including, two, tailored repayment terms to ensure affordability and that state resources are replenished, such as making repayments compulsory only once the recipient secures a well-paying job? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: I think the idea that the hon member is bringing on board is similar to the funding model that we are implementing currently, the comprehensive student funding model because it has an element of a bursary, and it also has an element of a loan that covers the missing middle.

However, I would love to say the concept itself - so that I can compare notes, whether it doesn't say the same thing with the comprehensive student funding model, but I welcome your idea, and I would love to have access to the concept itself so that I can see whether it is doable or not. Thank you.

Mrs N N CHIRWA-MPUNGOSE: Kemoabetswe Thabedi progressed to doing her N6 in 2023 with no funding despite qualifying for and being successful in application for National Student Financial aid Scheme, NSFAS for her N6. This because the college failed to submit her claim to NSFAS. This gross occurrence Minister, highlights the prevalent crisis and how the department handles the TVET sector and TVET students. They are treated like their education isn't important, like they don't matter.

Minister in the case that colleges fail to submit claims to NSFAS, TVET students are left to being denied access to education. This case of Kemoabetswe has been brought to light by the EFF to the department in July, and like many other cases, we have brought to the attention of the department, there has been no intervention to date.

What is the department doing to ensure that funding of returning TVET students is not reliant on things like college systems sending claims to NSFAS? Why isn't there modus operandi that's developed in the interim Minister, that is availed to the students themselves with direct reach to the department and the entity until you develop a working system for TVET students and the funding of TVET students for ease and to avoid TVET students being treated like nonentities, as is the case with Kemoabetswe? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: The issue that you are raising hon Mpungose is common in the sector. That's why we are saying we're trying to stabilise the institution to bring on board governance administration as well as management. Amongst the critical issues that we picked up from our system, which then delays the funding decisions by NSFAS is that there is misalignment of data between the institutions with NSFAS.

However, we said what we need to prioritise is an integrated information, communication and technology, ICT system that we should put in place to make sure that there is no misalignment. When we visited NSFAS here in Cape Town, when I asked them why there is no decision on this student's application - I cannot remember which college but the college

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did not upload some of the documents that should be uploaded by the college to confirm that the student is registered.

So, I said what we need to do is to make sure that we integrate our systems to speak to all the institutions of higher learning that we have so that there will be no delays. So, the issue that you are you are raising is genuine and it exists, but we are working on it. Thank you.

Mr M F MOKWELE: Hon Minister, it is a known fact that this country's economy is not performing as expected hence there are competing priorities in the budget. So, hon Minister, my question to you is that, can the government encourage the private sector to fund universities, not based on their subjective needs but on the country's priorities? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Hon member, it is a constitutional obligation for us to ensure that education is accessible to all as per section 29 of the Constitution. The department continues to engage all stakeholders, including the private entities and to ensure that they align with the constitutional imperatives as prescribed in section 29 to promote access.

We are in a process of engaging all our industries within the country to come and invest in education, because when we're investing in education, that then translates to investing in the economy itself. So, we welcome the idea, and we are going to make sure that we enhance our engagements with the private sector. Thank you.

Question 123:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Alright. Hon Deputy Chairperson, the question is about the progress on the response by the University of Fort Hare regarding the concerns that have been raised by the former Minister of Higher Education in 2023 whether the university has any comprehensive plans in place on how it has been addressing some of the serious governance challenges that led to negative publicity?

The response in this regard is as follows: On 14 December 2023, the then Minister of Higher Education wrote to the University Council and raised concerns and on 16 April 2024 the university wrote back the Minister responding to the letter concerns to which responses were provided as summarised below the independent process to determine whether management had not engaged in illegal cyber surveillance of members of

council. The chair indicated that there was no surveillance of council members.

The second one was about the appointment of a panel to conduct investigation into whistleblower complains. The panel of six audit firms is in place to deal with matters requiring investigations of complains. It is still busy with the investigation, and nothing has been concluded.

Regarding the issue around the security plan and the coast; a special security plan and coasting was attached for the Minister's attention outlining a breakdown of the allocated budget for various security measures and where these funds are derived from. For the year 2022, the total allocation for budget was R16 million, whilst with the heighten security risk the budget projected in 2023 was around R52 million. The University of Fort Hare was essentially allocated R70 million for security between the years 2022 and 2023.

On circumstances concerning the suspension of the three members of the council, the chair indicated that the circumstances around the suspension of those members esteemed from the email received from the provincial head of Special Investigating Unit, SIU, alleging that other two members of

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the SIU received a WhatsApp message and this one is quoted verbatim I do not want hon members to think that I am the one who is saying this. The WhatsApp message addressing certain comrades. This text was relating to the murders at the university. There seem to be a conspiracy against senior members of the university and some council members.

The names of the three suspended members of the council were included as being part of the group that was conspiring to assassinate. Some of the people of the assassination list were witnesses to the university cases. In light of the above, council resolved to suspending the three council members stating that the suspension was merely precautionary and was by no means a suction against the members.

It should be noted the three members took the university to court and were vindicated when the court ruled in their favour compelling the university to reinstate them in the council.

On the issue of the council to provide reasons why the Minister should not intervene as per the legislation, the council also indicated that it is not clear in the statute on what basis the Minister would need to intervene at the university. Remember the Higher Education Act that we spoke

about that it has some limitations because they are autonomous as per Act that we have that was passed by this Parliament.

On the question of governance challenges, the Vice Chancellor wrote to the director-general on 24 April 2024 informing the on 2 April 2024 the management committee decided to terminate the contracts of all service providers implicated in fraud and money laundering allegations following arrests of former and current University of Fort Hare's staff members and service providers by law-enforcement agencies during the Easter Weekend. He advised that all employees arrested over the Easter Weekend have been suspended and the disciplinary processes are also proceeding.

In the postadministration report the university advised that its institutional rules to give effect to the amended statute have been developed and approved by the council along with terms of reference for all senate committees and the institutional forum charter. In addition ... Alright, thank you. [Time expired.]

Mr M FENI: Hon Deputy Chairperson and hon Minister, I think you managed to capture some of the issues that I wanted to raise. However, coupled to what you have raised the Vice

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Chancellor, VC, of the University of Fort Hare further made some allegations publicly known that there was a syndicate that is in cahoots with politicians and service providers. In your report you highlighted specifically the staff. However, with regard to this allegation: Is there any progress and if there are any politicians you managed to identify can those be made known and how far is the process of investigations and also reports in terms of the law-enforcement agencies so that those can be brought to book because allegations cannot just be let loose by the VC himself? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Hon Deputy Chairperson, some of the matters that are not addressed in this response, we should take note that the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, is still busy with investigations into allegations relating to all the issues around maladministration as well as murders in the Faculty of Public Administration of the University of Fort Hare under the Proclamation Number: R84 of 2002 as published in the *Government Gazette* on 5 August 2022. The SA Police Service, SAPS, is also co-operating. Thus far 25 persons have been arrested by the SAPS, including the former head of vetting and investigation and former manager in VC's office. They are still investigating other matters that were raised and the ones the SIU has concluded its investigation, we shall

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account accordingly to the National Council of Provinces, NCOP. I thank you.

IsiXhosa:

Nksz N P MCINGA: Mandibulele, Sihlalo.

English:

Hon Minister, since your time was up, could you provide further information ...

IsiXhosa:

... uthathise kula ndawo ubuyeke kuyo, ubheke phambili...

English:

... because the information on the specific results or progress seen since the university council implemented measures to address governance issues at the University of Fort Hare given the university's rich history as a symbol of education and empowerment for many South Africans, the ongoing challenges particularly related to financial management have dented its reputation and attracted negative publicity. How will you ensure ongoing oversight and consequence management to prevent future issues and ensure accountability at this university? I thank you.

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The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Hon Deputy Chairperson, there is a turnaround plan in place and an organisational redesign proposal was submitted for council approval. Six supply chain management investigations conducted by the internal audit division informed by the Independent Assessor's Report were developed and completed.

The university advised that it successfully concluded a review and a clean up of its programme qualification mix improved plans to address areas of concern have been developed and their implementation have been monitored by senate and its relevant committees. Following the final Council on Higher Education and Training Panel Report emanating from the chair doctoral review and improvement plan, the university revised and approved the doctoral rules.

The university is also continuing to work with the relevant authorities such as the SIU and the SAPS to address some of the challenges that have been identified.

We are committing that there will be consequences after we have received the SIU report when they have concluded the investigation. Thank you.

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Mr B J FARMER: Hon Deputy Chairperson, I am sorry for the disappointment, but the Minister covered me quite adequately in her original response. Thank you.

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Hon Deputy Chairperson and hon Minister, Prof Jonathan D Jansen previously from the University of the Free State wrote a book titled *Corrupted*. In the book he addressed: *A study of chronic dysfunction in South African universities*.

That like many government institutions universities have been infiltrated by politicians who have little interest in the advancement of higher education but are more concerned with using their powers to siphon money out of these institutions. It is said that they use the same modus operandi used in other government institutions like municipalities. The student leadership leaks material information to potential bidders or contractors in return for which they are rewarded with a certain percentage of the tender value. The influence is so big that they can threaten management to circumvent governance policies. In some cases, the student leaders use their ability to instigate protests as their trump card.

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The University of Fort Hare has been plagued by fraud and corruption for decades. Will the Minister urgently implement Prof Jansen's proposal to root out the cause of corruption of Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu's alma mater?

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Hon Deputy Chairperson, unfortunately I do not know the book that the hon member is citing. It means for me to be in a position then to implement some of the recommendations by the professor who has written the book titled *Corrupted* I will have to read the book first. Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you, hon Minister. That closes the session on questions to you. Hon colleagues firstly, I must thank both hon Ministers for gracing the NCOP with their presence today. The hon Minister of Basic Education and the Minister of Higher Education. It was wonderful having them here and making the answers known to us.

Hon members, there is just one announcement that I want to make. It is regarding the declaration of the Members' Interests. Please note that the declaration date closes on the 14th of this month. So, those of us that have not done it,

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please go and do it because I would not want any member of this House to be cited for being in violation of declaring their interests.

Now you can do this by going to Marks Building next door at M314 and Adv Anthea Gordon with their team and they will assist you. Take your laptop with you. It does not take long. They will assist you on how to get on the system and to declare your Members' Interest. So please, do that. The deadline is the 14th of this month. Alright. So, please do that.

Hon members, I now declare this session closed. Thank you all very much. Thank you.

The Council adjourned at 17:46.