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***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES***

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The Council met at 14:00.

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon delegates, before we proceed with the programme for the day, I am told that we have some birthday children in the House today. So, on behalf of all of you, I take this opportunity to wish hon Phala a very happy birthday, as well as our acting Chief Whip today, hon Sithole, a very happy birthday to you also. May you be blessed with many, many more years. Thank you very much.

Hon delegates, I'd like to remind you that the rules, in particular Rules 21, 22 and 23 of Rule 103 will apply. I would

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also like to welcome the Minister of Human Settlements, the Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, all permanent delegates, MECs and special delegates, as well as representatives from the SA Local Government Association, Salga, that are in the House and on the virtual platform. I thank you all for joining us today.

Hon delegates, I've been informed that there will be no notices of motion or motions without notice. We shall now proceed to the First Order of the day, and that is the Policy debate on Budget Vote No 33 – Human Settlements Appropriation Bill B4 of 2026, which is a section 77 Bill. I have the pleasure to call upon hon Minister Simelane, the Minister of Human Settlements, to open the debate. Minister, you have 20 minutes.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

(Policy debate)

Vote No 33 – Human Settlements:

The MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: Deputy Chair, the hon chairperson of the select committee, hon Mxolisi Kaunda, our

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Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, Me Thandi Mahambehlala, hon members, fellow MECs who have joined here and some online, ngiyabonga [thank you] Mthombeni for coming all the way from KwaZulu-Natal to support the department in person, director-general, deputy-directors-general, chairpersons of our boards and our entities, fellow South Africans, good afternoon. It is an honour and a privilege to stand before this august House to present Budget Vote No 33 of the Department of Human Settlements.

I deliver this Budget Vote speech under the theme: Restoring dignity through sustainable human settlements. The restoration of the people's dignity is central to the implementation as a department, as mandated by our Constitution. We do this mindful of the fact that this year, the country commemorates the 30-year anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the people of South Africa.

Section 26 of the Constitution enjoins us as the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures within available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of the right of citizens to adequate housing.

*Sepedi:*

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Batho ba Limpopo ba nthutile gore ...

*English:*

... the Constitution teaches us that ...

*Sepedi:*

... ga go na le yo mosehlana.

*English:*

... human beings of equal worth.

As a democratic state, we have carried this mandate for years, founded on the will of the people, by ensuring that we achieve the progressive realisation of the right of citizens to adequate housing amidst the conflicts and multilayered challenges of the human settlements sector, which is characterised by rapid urbanisation and housing backlogs.

Of course, we remain steadfast in our task to restore the dignity of our people through the delivery of sustainable and integrated human settlements, and I would like to overemphasise integrated.

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The recent release of our 2025 General Household Survey by Statistics SA indicate that the proportion of households living in formal dwellings increased from 73% in 2002 to 84% in 2025, demonstrating an improvement in the living conditions and living standards of the people of South Africa. That's a giant leap of an over 10% increase, meaning that 84% of our population today in South Africa live in formalised dwellings, leaving us with 11% in informal settlements.

We are mindful of the fact that there's still a lot to be done to fundamentally address the challenges of the human settlements sector in our quest to house the nation adequately and restore the people's dignity.

Notwithstanding the challenges we have faced, such as the availability of land, natural disasters and a lack of resources, we remain resolute in achieving our Medium-Term Development Plan, MTDP, targets as enshrined in our 2024 to 2029 plan.

Key to this plan and the obligation of the Constitution is to heal the divisions of the past, we must lay the foundation for a democratic and open society, we must improve the quality of life, we must build a united and a prosperous South Africa

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that enables every South African to take his or her rightful place as part of the family of nations.

We pursue these objectives, looking into our responsibility and constitutional mandate ... delivering no less than 2 878 social housing units and making sure that 2 000 of them are fully tenanted, the registration of 21 918 title deeds, the delivery of around 39 000, close to 40 000, housing units, the completion of 25 186 serviced sites across the programmes and provinces, unblocking 195 projects within budget availability, but also ensuring that 11 358 First Home Finance subsidy applications are approved, with 9 231 subsidies disbursed to qualifying beneficiaries. This is a programme that deals with the gap market.

We intentionally eradicated 6 950 mud houses across the rural and communal land of our provinces, particularly in the rural edges of our cities and towns. ... delivery of 744 military housing units. We bow and take pride in those who fought and brought this freedom to us ... that we have to bring them back dignity for their sacrifice. ... 11 215 solar installations to advance the resilience and sustainability of poor households.

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So, despite these challenges which we have encountered in the previous financial year, we are comforted by the significant strides that we have made in some of these programmes, as I've articulated above. This includes reaching 48% of the MTDP targets in the delivery of title deeds. Arriving at 48% is not a small feat. It brings back the dignity and control ... ownership to the custodians of the people who have received social housing from government.

We have eradicated 8 176 uninhabitable mud houses, which is close to the target we had set, and of the 212 blocked projects which I spoke about earlier in the year in the House, 85 of those stalled projects have been unblocked.

We know that budget constraints is another contributing factor to us not meeting our targets. However, we send a strong message to some in our communities who often cause unnecessary delays to our projects, who receive houses and sell them and move them without following government processes as enshrined in our policies.

It still remains our concerted effort to expand our first home housing ownership, where we have managed to deliver 10 856 to our gap market. In addition, we have dispensed 5 195 of the

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8 183 subsidy approved applications to enable rural households to have access to formal housing.

We appreciate the assistance we have received, particularly from the province through MEC Mthombeni on the traditional leaders who have availed land for us to be able to build houses in a very viable way, which we usually do in towns and cities, but this time around in rural areas.

It is equally encouraging that the programme has primarily benefitted women and young people, whom we believe are the backbone of our society and the future of our nation.

In line with our priorities, our inclusive growth target and ... job creation of more than 4 000 jobs have been created through the construction of houses and the administration of the programme. If you actually look into the overall target of what we have achieved, as we wrap up what Statistics SA did, we have created over 12 200 interim jobs in the programmes that we are running, focusing on women and young people.

Through our Housing Development Agency, HDA, we exceeded our land-related target by acquiring 2 447 hectares in well-located areas for human settlement development, against the

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target of 1 000 hectares. We have surpassed this target. Our intention is to bring our people closer to where convenience and livelihoods in cities are.

We also would want to complete the five integrated implementation plan for Priority Development Areas, PDAs, which we are running with provinces through enhanced collaboration with municipalities.

In terms of serviced sites, provinces in combination delivered 24 251 against a combined target of 13 000 for 2025-26, achieving almost 163% of the planned budget, indicating a significant aggregate performance in the delivery of serviced sites. This is a target for the housing of people, particularly ... young. They may be unemployed, they may not qualify as part ... but we give land that is serviced, that has roads, that has electricity, that has sewer ... for them to be able to build for themselves.

The key stumbling block to the availability of housing is land. So, we have ensured that almost 14 000 people have received land for free from government ... to be able to build for themselves. I don't know if you don't ... clap for this. It's another story.

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These achievements are critical in advancing spatial transformation, improving access to strategically located land and strengthening the pipeline for sustainable human settlements.

The demand for affordable rental housing, particularly in big cities, remains very high. However, I'm happy to report to this august House that just yesterday we as a department handed over 1 200 units to Somerlife Social Housing here in the City of Cape Town. The project houses 1 200.

However, what do we still have to push for? Out of the 1 000 that are housed, 15 000 applications were received, which means we have rejected a whopping 13 000 people. What is comforting is that we already have two pipeline projects under the Social Housing Regulatory Authority, SHRA, in the City of Cape Town, in the Western Cape, to house even more.

A month ago, the Deputy Minister also handed over units in Mitchell's Plain in the ... [Inaudible.] ... area to make sure that we also allocate closer to the needy and not only the usually known and comfortable.

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This session will be attended ... Tomorrow we are hosting – of course it's an open invitation – an investment networking session to showcase the strategic land parcels and the hectares, which I have indicated above in relation to the 2 447 hectares, where we want to partner and collaborate with business so that we can be in partnership, even financially, to build this.

The HDA is relating these commercially viable and socially transformative projects or possibilities into the open market so we can accelerate. We are saying we are doing that because we do not want to wait for the fiscus to increase.

Possibilities of an increase through the fiscus is minimal, but we carry a responsibility and a mandate to utilise what we have in our hands to deliver even more than what the fiscus gives us. We are hoping that it will deliver no less than 3 031 social housing ... which will allow us to even exceed our annual targets.

Furthermore, nearly 2 800 ... were successfully tenanted, reflecting the sustained demand for well-located rental accommodation. As I indicated, the implementation of social housing projects across the country resulted in 12 022 jobs.

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Working with provinces, we continue to make significant progress in advancing transformation, skills development and the participation of the previously disadvantaged through one of our entities, the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority, PPRA, for the property sector.

In line with our Budget Vote of 2025-26, where we were leveraging technologies for resilient, sustainable human settlements, we hosted a successful summit in Innovative Building Technologies, IBTs, in February this year. Importantly, this was not merely a summit as a discussion platform, but we have already consolidated an IBT plan which sets aside 2% of our Sustainable Development Goal, SDG, to make sure ... roll out ... [Inaudible.] ... housing, particularly to assist and take out families that have been affected by disasters in a much faster approach. The MECs for Human Settlements across the country are championing this programme. So the 2% of the human settlements development grant may be allocated to IBT-related housing projects in all provinces.

We are saying, jointly with National Treasury, that we'll assist provinces in the implementation, but also ensure that

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it prioritises local manufacturers, emerging contractors, youth and women.

To show our commitment to IBTs, we have ensured that the 2024 White Paper for Human Settlements provides for the policy foundation for innovation and alternative building typologies. ... you walk around the world, you see the advancement in relation to IBTs.

Our Housing Code norms and standards and implementation guidelines have already been developed and have been funnelled through into an implementation framework in relation to what National Treasury demands. So, the summit marked the end of experimentation but the beginning of implementation.

During the 2025-26 financial year, the department identified 212 blocked housing projects, which were blocked for one or other reason. Of these, I committed to the House that we would undertake no less than 50. However, I'm here today to report that 85 of those projects were successfully unblocked, with North West and Free State taking a lead, followed by Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

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We are sharpening our accountability ecosystem, such where contractors and officials of government fail to deliver. Through the NCOP week, hon members reported of a stalled project on the N12 which they had visited. The report about the contractor is already on our table with the province and we're moving forward to ensure that we unblock that project. That is what oversight accountability is.

We are proud to announce that all our rental housing tribunals are now active and functional in all our provinces. We came at the beginning of the financial year last year ... all of our housing tribunals had challenges. We have brought staff from the department to support them in municipalities and we've ignited their facility for all of them. We hope that this will unblock quite a number of ... land availability to ensure that people are able to build privately in sustainable and well-assessed areas of land. However, it can also be that the tribunals themselves can provide free and efficient dispute resolution mechanisms to ensure that people do not lose the land, and usher in tenants and landlords operating both in the public and private housing market.

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We are ramping up our efforts to address the challenges of illegal land invasion and occupation, embedded of course in what the tribunals will help us ...

Hon members are aware that the department has drafted and published the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Amendment Bill ... Act and it was gazetted. We are currently going around the country in relation to public comments over a period of 60 days. It started in May and it is closing on the 16th of June 2026. Our target as the department is to table the Bill in front of the august House during August this year 2026.

What will this say? It will say that if land does not belong to you, you need to follow processes to acquire that land. However, it will also protect a landowner, be it private or public, to have the right to protect his or her land.

Our baseline has been reduced by 20,6 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF. This has resulted in the reduction of our urban settlements ... grant, what we call the USDG, by 19,7 billion over the MTEF period, with 5,7 billion in 2026-27, with 6,4 billion in 2027-28 and a further 7,1 billion in 2028-29 to fund the Metro Trading Services. We

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are not cancelling the grant as it is and wiping it away. We're saying that we are ... [Inaudible.] ... with dedicated urban support grant into direct metros and following urbanisation where it goes. So there shouldn't be a distortion that it is depleting and government cares less about poor people.

The informal settlements ... grant has also been reduced by 490 million in 2026. We have also reallocated 2,9 billion over the MTEF from our ... [Inaudible.] ... SDG grant to the informal settlements upgrading partnership grant, ISUPG, to support non-metro provinces and small ... medium provinces to upgrade their informal settlements.

The allocation of the 2026 MTEF period will support the implementation of the sector's MTDP targets, including conditional grants amounting to 81 billion, with 26,9 billion allocated for this financial year.

Conditional grants funding for the current financial year therefore totals 23 billion, representing 87% of the annual allocation, and these funds are distributed as follows: provincial departments will receive 15 billion, which

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constitutes 64% of the total allocation, metros will receive 8 billion which constitute about 36%.

As I table this budget before this august House, let me remember that this budget is not merely about allocation. It is about delivery, it is about dignity and it is about transformation. Through this investment, we must ensure that they translate into real change in the lives of South Africans.

This can only be true to the 30th anniversary of our Constitution, which is a significant milestone, where we must also continue to double our collective efforts to ensure that we meet the housing expectations of the people through the delivery of adequate, safe, durable, climate resilient and sustainable typologies of houses.

I present Vote No 33, the budget of the Department of Human Settlements, to the people of South Africa. I thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much Minister for your presentation of your budget.

Before we call on the first speaker, I would like to welcome all those in the public gallery and say to you, you are most

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welcome and I hope that you will enjoy your stay with us and join us whenever you can. Thank you very much for being here with us. Hon delegates, I now call upon the chairperson of the Select Committee on Co-operative Governance and Public Administration, my homeboy, the hon Kaunda, to present his report for 15 minutes.

Mr T M KAUNDA: Deputy Chairperson, the House Chairs, the Minister of Human Settlements in our Republic of South Africa, hon Simelane, also the Deputy Minister, hon Mahambehlala, whom I always have a debate with her about her name, about invasion and all of that. Anyway, greetings to my leader, the hon MECs, my MEC from KwaZulu-Natal, thank you, Mthombeni, and all other MECs, the programming Whip, Chief Whip, permanent and special delegates of this House, Salga delegation, fellow South Africans.

Hon Chair, it gives me great pleasure to participate in this important debate today. I would like to formally table the report of the Select Committee on Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Public Service and Administration, Human Settlements, and Water and Sanitation before this House. I will use this time allocated to me for the benefit of the ANC. The people's movement that delegated me to represent them in

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this House calls for dedicated time for committee chairpersons to be recognised in the budget debates in our plenaries.

Allow me to dedicate this debate to one of our greatest revolutionary icons who devoted his life to the liberation struggle until his eternal rest. I speak of the former KwaZulu-Natal Housing MEC, hon Dumisani Magagula Makhaye, who was a true servant to our people. I had been so fortunate to work closely with him in the movement and in government. A particularly memorable occasion was his visit in Ward 57, Bhambayi, Inanda, eThekweni municipality during the early 2000 where I was still a ward councillor. He was responsible and he was also there to officially launch and hand over the project. The first housing project of Bhambayi area which became the turning point for the development of this area, which is the heart of Mahatma Gandhi settlement and located next to the house of the first President of the ANC, Dr J L Dube, ...

*IsiZulu:*

... uMafukuzela onjengelanga.

*English:*

Prior to the democratic breakthrough of 1994, Bhambayi was one of the most severely underdeveloped informal settlements in

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the region, characterized by extreme poverty and deprivation. Today, however, the area has been transformed beyond recognition, boasting well-constructed access roads, traffic signals, ...

*IsiZulu:*

... kunamarobhothi laphaya Sihlalo kunamadolobha amanye angakabi nethuba lokuthola amarobhothi kodwa eBhambayi kunamarobhothi.

*English:*

The Dube Village shopping centre and the two new schools built by the ANC government, namely; Kasturba Gandhi Primary School and Inanda Comprehensive High School. The latter of which ranks among the best performing schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Indeed, the lives of the people of Bhambayi have changed considerably. Too much remains to be done to meaningfully improve the material conditions of our people, particularly on the economic front. It is this reality that necessitates the urgent pursuit of radical socioeconomic transformation.

In paying his final tribute, President Mbeki recalled hon Makhaye's early involvement in the liberation struggle and his unwavering commitment to realizing the ANC's vision of a

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better life for all in the post-apartheid era. The President described him as a man of both thought and action; one who dedicatedly fought for a non-racial, non-sexist, and prosperous South Africa. President Mbeki further noted that hon Makhaye has discharged his obligations with exceptionally determination, skill, courage, boldness, discipline, and also enthusiasm. It is precisely this spirit of determination, skill, discipline, and enthusiasm that underscores the great need for outstanding patriots such as Magagula. We need not one - not two - not 10 - but a thousand of Dumisani Makhayes. MEC Makhaye travelled the length and breadth of our province, tirelessly building houses in informal settlements and deep rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal and ...

*IsiZulu:*

... sikubona Mthombeni uyibambe khona lapho kulolo khondolo ...

*English:*

... we are grateful of the work that you are also doing - leaving an indelible mark on the lives of the people. His immense contribution to bringing about a transformative social order position in the country as is in the case of the ANC. At least in Angola, Mozambique, Vietnam, Cuba, and Chile, the

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counterrevolutionary was exported from outside. The historical task in South Africa is not to further constrain the forces of the national liberation, peace, and social progress, but to unshackle them. "The problem is not too little, but too much opposition"

The ANC-led government has since its democratic breakthrough been always guided by the Freedom Charter. The foundational document that continues to inform the policy direction pursued and implemented in the Republic of South Africa in the advancement of the National Democratic Revolution. The clause that guides the execution of the constitutional obligation to provide decent shelter to deserving South Africans is in the Freedom Charter:

"There shall be houses, security and comfort".

It asserts that all people have the right to live where they choose, decently housed, bring up families in comfort, and that slums shall be demolished. We are very grateful with the work that the hon Minister is doing in her department to deal with the slums' clearance, especially in the provinces where there are major challenges.

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The ANC-led government has therefore decided to shift its mandate from housing to human settlement in order to move beyond merely building detached houses, but the holistic human settlement approach that prioritizes spatial integration, economic inclusion, and reliable access to social amenities like schools, roads, clinics, and transport nodes. This policy shift was further inspired by the wise and visionary words of President Nelson Mandela, who proclaimed:

We owe it to all the people of the subcontinent to ensure that they see in us not merely good leaders waxing lyrical about development, but as the front commanders in the blast furnaces of labour, productive investment, invisible change.

The social wage that the ANC-led government has presented to the people of South Africa can never be matched even by the developed countries in the world. Notwithstanding the challenges that still persist, including poverty and the emergence of corruption as a scourge that intends to reverse our gains, which we are not going to allow, that is why we are in the Republic of South Africa.

The provision of the free-basic services like water sanitation, electricity and refuse collection for the poor

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communities is a testimony of the pockets of intervention that have been put in motion to achieve better human settlements.

The ANC policies have ensured that we live in a democratic country. Prior to 1994, state-sponsored economic and spatial exclusion kept the African middle class artificially suppressed and exceptionally small. And after 1994, after we've ascended three positions of power, South Africa saw a dramatic explosion of the African middle strata, upward mobility driven by progressive legislations, affirmative action, and broad-based black economic empowerment, transformed the middle class from the white domination to the black African domination. The big elephant in the room remains.

Hon Minister, we can't agree more with you on your analysis and policy posture that requires reforms. In each corner of our country, we are now observing building of new mansions, I call them, even in rural areas. Migration of people who used to own properties in suburbs are now coming back to both semi-rural and deep rural areas. These present economic opportunities. But if not guided, it will reverse the work done in transforming our spatial setup.

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Municipalities should be engaged by Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements to fast-track the process of fully integrating traditional authority areas of Amakhosi into the spatial development framework for land use management purposes. The most pressing challenge that remains is the derationalization of the economy, whereby fundamentally altering the patterns of wealth ownership and the means of production by dismantling the untransformed economic structure that continues to exclude the majority of our people, particularly Africans and blacks in general. Without these fundamental changes, our total liberation cannot be fully realized.

It is encouraging to note, however, that through the implementation of free education and early childhood development towards university education, significant strides have been made in turning the tide in favour of our people. Hon Minister, we're in full agreement with your analysis and the policy reforms that you have outlined before us as the committee.

As we proceed, we therefore call upon the Minister to look at the issue of these land use management interventions to ascertain that in areas of Amakhosi, at least there is land

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and the land audit must be conducted to reserve the land for schools, clinics, malls, parks and recreational facilities, worship sites and other social amenities that need to be implemented to ensure that we have fully fledged human settlement.

We may be running a risk of building houses of people who do not need such interventions; who just need to be allocated a service site to build a top structure. So we welcome your intervention to emphasize to municipalities the allocation of service sites instead of building houses for communities who may not be in dire need. We also urge the department to continue to intervene to the poor communities to give the full package of the settlements.

We have been observing the emergence of new developments in our communities. Cornubia in Durban, as an example, is the real testimony of human settlement development, which embraces spatial changes. Which have presented a new city in Durban, which is a mixed-use development, where houses are being provided, new school, new clinics, sporting facilities, parks, mini-industrial zone, a new mall, the state-of-the-art infrastructure bridge, roads, which is also complemented by both the provincial department and SA National Roads Agency,

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Sanral, on the N2 and to Mount Edgecombe Interchange. I therefore commit that we will bring members of the select committee to conduct oversight in this development, hon Minister, to see the good work your department is executing.

In KwaZulu-Natal and in the country, there are catalytic projects that have been implemented and some of the planning stages are planned in bigger numbers. The journey we have traversed in bringing about material changes to the people's lives is undisputable. Since we ascended the position of power after 1994, the ANC continues to take pride to its service delivery record, which we have delivered more than 4300 houses in the country. Also reserved 1,3 million service sites as well as 13 million South Africans who became beneficiaries today, they own houses and also being provided with title deeds to ensure the security of tenure. There are challenges on the implementation of this noble program in different municipalities among factors that influence delays include availability of land, as we have mentioned them.

I would like to encourage all South Africans, especially youth, to seize the opportunity uh to get registered on the 20 and 21 June on the opening of the registration. [Time expired.] Thank you very much, Chairperson. I submit.

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Mr S A DUMA: (KwaZulu-Natal): I'm always automatically getting antagonistic, thank you for that on a lighter note. Let me greet your good self, hon House Chairperson. You're not delivering. You are being offensive. Let me also greet the Minister, Magujwa Mphembe kaLokothwayo, the Deputy Minister Mahambehhlala, hon member Kaunda, and we are very honoured. I think I must just highlight this first, that this department is led by two colossal women. They complement each other. They know the new dimension of how we live.

*IsiZulu:*

Wathint' abafazi wathint'imbokodo!

*English:*

Indeed, when you give them a chance, it's always strategic. Thank you so much, Minister, for gracing our shows and presenting this authentic and stronger, restoring dignity.

In case I sound like hon Kaunda, in case I sound like hon Minister, we are singing from the same hymnbook. We are deducing this from the Freedom Charter, 1955. So, it's something that is encapsulating that theorem. So, we are not monolithic. It's the reality that we started dreaming about

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these things during oppression and during the bad times of our country.

Minister Simelane has already discovered this very strategic intervention in fighting against global warming. This year, on February 3rd and 4th, there was an Innovative Summit Technology dealing with the issue of building a new innovation. It's something that I thought also deserves a serious round of applause.

On behalf of the people of KwaZulu-Natal, we thank you, Minister, for all the support to the executive authority responsible for ensuring that we house the nation. Through your support, we constructed more than 8 835 houses in the last financial year. With this year's allocation, we are aiming at accelerating the construction of houses that we put on hold as a result of the shortage of funds. In addition, the Minister has demonstrated a clear understanding of the fact that many major cities are facing challenges caused by urbanisation.

In this regard, Minister, welcome R9 billion allocated to metros from the urban settlements' development grant. This will undoubtedly strengthen efforts aimed at speeding up the

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provision of bulk infrastructure and service sites. In particular, the victims of flood in eThekweni Municipality benefited immensely from the urban settlement's development grant.

I don't think the Minister is able to blow her own horn on the role of what has happened at Cornubia. This is the only square kilometre area where you can find in the ... of the ... . You are able to find those who are oriented or discovered or identified as the capitalist class. You are able to find the middle class. You are also able to find those who are vulnerable, who couldn't afford it ordinarily.

Hon Kaunda has already elaborated on the semantic understanding of that area. Also, the Minister contributed. It was in the year 2024, Minister, you came into the province of KwaZulu-Natal. You visited that area and you said, we are going to make it happen. Indeed, you've already delivered. Already, 113 families are there, and we are pleading the indulgence that you must come and open that big project that has been identified coming with the President in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

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I've already highlighted that there are those families who were affected by the devastating flood of April 2022 who are now living in that area, and already on top of that, you went an extra mile by identifying and giving us the grant on taking the new project called Montclair, the procurement of that, so we were able to custom and house our people. We started last week that the relocation of these families to this upmarket area is a display of an efficient integrated approach involving all spheres of government.

The Cornubia Integrated Human Settlement is being developed on a strategically located land parcel and is 14 years into the development cycle. It was also decided to establish the Dube Trade Port, which incorporates the King Shaka International Airport. Importantly, one of the key strategic reasons for the relocation was to establish an integrated multi-modal logistic platform that will link the national road and rail systems and to support the seaport of Durban and Richards Bay with the added value of infrastructure to accommodate intercontinental widespread. Critical to the basis of the decision to relocate the airport was research that revealed that airports had the potential to shape business location and urban development in the 21st century.

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We are able to highlight this thing today, Minister, as a result of that. Hon Mbimbi, hon Kaunda has already mentioned that the late ANC spokesperson who was then the MEC, may his soul rest in peace, uShombela, uDumisani Makhaye together with former Mayor of eThekweni championed efforts to build decent houses in Cornubia.

Fast forward to 2026, we're accelerating the eradication of legacies of the Group Areas Act of the apartheid system. This act effectively prevented non-whites from owning properties or even running their business within developed white-owned areas. Today, it has been made. Today, it is harvesting the results. Together with the Minister of Human Settlements, we are changing all of this.

I do want to pass a special thanks to His Excellency, President Matamela, on the issue of Presidential eThekweni Working Group, hon Minister, in particular, co-chairs, Mr Mike Mabuyakhulu and DDG in the Presidency, Ms Baleni, for ensuring this becomes a success story. Project of this special type, Cornubia, is the only geographical landmark, as I've already highlighted, that is able just to give us the dream where President Mandela spoke about that "it is possible that we could co-habit together as one nation."

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Phase one in Cornubia is largely completed with 2,762 breaking new ground houses completed and occupied at 99% transferred. Two hundred and thirty-two affordable housing units are still to be built, and the balance of nine residential sites is being developed as we speak. However, I must caution, hon House Chairperson, there is a new thing that is coming where the beneficiaries are able to occupy these houses. But some of them are selling these houses and some of them are also renting to drug lords and some of them are even given to illegal immigrants who are doing a lot of things, including criminal activities.

We've already started. We've formulated a team of inspectors who will do covert operations in identifying all the culprits, and eThekweni as we speak, there is one lady who's already been arrested, is in court as we speak, and there were three Mozambicans who were arrested last week as part of these fraudulent activities in the department.

In addition to provide much-needed housing of scale consisting of various typologies that include full subsidised units, a particular subsidised gap, affordable housing, rental opportunities and targeted open market, it is estimated that

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43 000 permanent and 387 000 construction jobs will be created over the next 15 to 20 years, hon Minister.

There were issues where you'll find that there are projects that have been halted for different reasons. Among those projects is the issue of Thubalethu. Minister also came there in that area, and she came with a proper solution. Because you'll find that in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, probably in the country called South Africa. There are issues that are roles and functions of the municipalities, but we can't just fold our arms and say that the municipality failed when they failed to issue bulk infrastructure. We must do something in terms of the interventions. We've already done that, at Thubalethu, a certain portion has already been occupied.

There is also the issue of Alfred Duma, the issue of Jozini, iNkosi Mtubatuba, all those areas we have just intervened in ensuring that there is a project. Some of our projects for the 2026, as I draw forward this thing, in the financial year where district municipality had failed dismal to provide funding for the provision of bulk infrastructure, which is why I was already highlighting the issue of Melmoth and Mthonjaneni municipality.

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We visited the area and the Minister has already given us the grant and, in that process, R19 million for the construction of water infrastructure in the area. We've invested millions toward the provision of electricity. As a department, we've already spent R350 million to more than 1,1 billion providing bulk services, which is actually a municipal function. I've already highlighted the issue of Mbulwane, which is in the area, of Alfred Duma local municipality to unlock bottleneck there by allocating R9 million for the upgrading of the sewer pump.

In conclusion, a commitment to work I've highlighted because we know that another requirement of a developmental state is to demonstrate capacity to implement the planned project in time and accurately. The developmental state has a responsibility of ensuring a united focus on the achievement of the outcome for the success story. We understand, hon Minister, that the year when there are local government elections becomes very cumbersome. There will be serious rhetoric, there will be those who will be masquerading as revolutionaries, and they are pseudo in their current.

They won't be coming with any solution, they will just be saying that they are going to do one, two, three, which is a

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hogwash. Some have been given a platform and they've failed  
dismal. Because it's a financial year that encompasses local  
government, they will be trying their luck. Aluta continua!  
This government is going to provide now and provide after.  
Thank you so much, hon Chair.

Dr I SCHEURKOGEL: Modulasetulo [Chairperson], hon Minister,  
fellow members, ...

*Afrikaans:*

... en my fellow [mede] Suid-Afrikaners, goeie middag.

Minister, about a year ago, many of us stood in this House  
calling for your resignation. Many of us were part of that  
crowd. Now we call on you for accountability, for those who  
failed to provide everyone with the opportunity to have access  
to adequate housing.

The DA, we entered into the Government of National Unity for  
one reason only, to help rescue South Africa. We are here to  
ensure South Africans receive the dignity promised to them in  
the Constitution adopted in 1996. That is why we are here.

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Members of this House can stand on this podium and grandstand to play to the crowd, but that will not put a roof over the head of a single South African family. The fact is, Chairperson, since 1994, billions have been lost due to corruption, no consequence management and poor performance. Now, chairperson, let me put that money into perspective. Close to 100 000 houses were not built because officials and politicians did not care.

Minister, we can debate line items in this budget for hours. We can argue about percentages, allocations and expenditure patterns, but South Africans do not live inside spreadsheets. They ask simple questions. Do I have a roof over my head? Do I have water in my tap? Do I have electricity? Can I drive on safe roads? Can I find work? Can I raise my children with dignity? In Ibibio, in Nigeria, they say one tree does not make a forest. So, without services, you don't have dignity.

At the centre of these questions is the Department of Human Settlements, DHS. Township establishment, informal settlement upgrades, correcting apartheid spatial planning, they are imperative, but none of these progress indicators have value if we do not give South Africans dignity.

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Minister, regardless of constitutional competencies and spheres of government, you are the head of the DHS in South Africa, and leadership carries responsibility. Every South African understands this principle. If you're 18 or 100 years old, when the parents speak, you listen; leadership with accountability.

You have the privilege and the authority of leadership. When a report lands on your desk that municipalities are failing, you have the privilege to pick up a phone and say, executive mayor, why is this not fixed? You can call a mayor and ask, why is the family in Khuma still living in asbestos conditions after 11 years without proper water and electricity? You can call the Premier of the Free State and ask, why is G-Hostel still not completed after promises that it would be completed in 2024? Why are projects like Dark City and Silver City in Mangaung still incomplete while people continue waiting for dignity? That is your responsibility, Minister.

Human Settlements is not merely about handing over RDP houses and holding ribbon-cutting ceremonies. The real strength of Human Settlements is ownership. It is a title deed. It is a dignity of saying, this house belongs to me. I'm also working towards that dream of one day saying, my home fully belongs to

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me. That's dignity. That's security. That's ownership. That is what South Africans dream about. Millions of South Africans are still waiting for this opportunity. This budget cannot be about how many houses were delivered. It must be about whether we're restoring dignity and creating ownership, because a title deed changes a family forever and impacts generations.

Minister, we visited projects in the North West where over 1 600 housing opportunities were promised, yet barely over 200 were completed. It further proves that the District Development Model has failed because there was no co-operative governance between departments. And who suffers, the people of Matlosana.

There's another reality that we must confront. Contractors continue failing projects, province after province, yet ...  
[No audio recording available from this point. Text inserted from member's speech notes.] ... many are still not blacklisted. The same individuals simply register new companies and continue to receive tenders, while communities suffer.

When you last appeared before us in the National Council of Provinces, NCOP, you acknowledged weaknesses in accountability

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systems. So, what has changed? Has the department started to make an audit of companies and/or individuals that have failed South Africans to be submitted to the Department of Public Works, so that the people who steal hope are not given another opportunity to do so.

Because accountability cannot only apply to companies on paper. It must apply to individuals who repeatedly fail the people of South Africa. If someone repeatedly abandons projects and wastes public money, they must be prevented from benefiting from public contracts ever again. That would be real accountability.

Minister, you have the power to give South Africans more than that, you can provide them with dignity - dignity of a title deed. Dignity is relocation from unsafe asbestos conditions into a proper home with water, electricity, sanitation and ownership. That is the responsibility before us. That is the responsibility of this department. And that is my plea to you today, Minister; put it to work in this budget. I thank you.

Mr B S MABEBO: [No audio recording available for the first few minutes.]

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... opportunity, correcting the spatial injustice of apartheid and ensuring that every South African has access to a decent standard of living.

For many of our people. Particularly those living in ...  
[Audio cut off for a minute.]

... importance as well. Section 26 of the Constitution guarantees the right to adequate housing. The obligation requires government to progressively realise this right within available resources.

Despite the fiscal pressures facing our country, the budget demonstrates government's continued commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable communities through housing deliveries and infrastructure development.

The department's annual performance plan, APP, aligns with the medium-term development priorities aimed at reducing poverty, tackling the high cost of living and building sustainable human settlement.

One of the key priorities of the budget is accelerating housing delivery and informal settlement upgrading.

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The department has committed itself to supporting all nine provinces and eight metropolitan municipalities in the upgrading of informal settlements through Phase 1, 2 and 3 of the National Housing Code.

This is critical because informal settlements continue to grow as a result of rapid urbanisation and increasing housing demands. Communities living in informal settlements deserve more than temporary solutions, they deserve dignity, safety and access to services.

Dignity begins with access to clean water, proper sanitation, electricity, roads and refuse removal.

The focus of this budget must, therefore, not only be the number of houses built, but on the quality and sustainability of human settlement. Housing development must include schools, clinics, transport networks, recreational spaces and economic opportunities. A house without services is not dignity. A settlement without opportunity is not development.

Another important issue addressed by this budget vote is the challenge of housing backlogs and delayed projects.

Communities across the country are frustrated by incomplete

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housing projects, poor workmanships and long waiting periods. Some families have waited years for promised housing opportunities while projects remain stalled because of contractors' failures, poor planning, corruption and administrative delays.

The budget recognises the need to unblock stalled projects, strengthened oversight and improved accountability in housing delivery.

We must ensure that public funds are used effectively and that contractors are held accountable for poor performance. Communities cannot continue waiting for decades for promises that never materialise.

Deputy Chairperson, the issue of title deeds also requires urgent attention. A title deed is more than just a legal document, it represents ownership, dignity, economic empowerment and security for families. Without title deeds, beneficiaries cannot fully enjoy the economic value of their homes or transfer of wealth to their future generations.

The department's commitment to supporting provinces in accelerating title deeds registration is, therefore, welcome.

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However, stronger coordination is needed between Human Settlement Departments, municipalities and deeds offices to eliminate administrative backlogs and ensure that qualifying beneficiaries receive legal ownership of their homes. A house without a title deed limits economic empowerment and generational wealth.

We must also acknowledge the growing impact of climate change and disaster of human settlement and infrastructure. Floods and severe weather conditions continue to destroy homes, roads, bridges and municipal infrastructure, particularly in vulnerable and poor communities. Climate change is no longer a future threat, it is already affecting communities today.

This budget focuses on disaster response and emergency housing. Intervention is, therefore, important. However, government must move beyond reactive measures and invest in climate resilient infrastructure and better settlement planning.

Infrastructure development remains central to sustainable human settlement. Housing delivery cannot succeed without supporting infrastructure such as roads, water system,

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sanitation networks, electricity and public transport. Housing without infrastructure is an incomplete development.

For this reason, coordination between Human Settlement, Public Works, municipalities and other sectors of government is essential. Too often, projects are delayed because departments operate in silos, approvals are delayed or infrastructure planning is poorly coordinated. Government must function as one integrated system if communities are to see meaningful and lasting change.

We also welcome the department's commitment to strengthen monitoring system, data integrity and accountability. We cannot manage what we cannot measure.

Improved beneficiary management system, stronger grant monitoring and real-time project tracking will help eliminate duplication, corruption and ghost beneficiaries, while improving transparency in housing allocation and project implementation.

At the turn of budget reduction and fiscal pressure, every rand must be accounted for, every rand lost to corruption is a house lost to a deserving family. There must be a zero-

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tolerance to corruption, weak oversight and wasteful expenditure.

Despite the challenges facing the sector, the budget vote demonstrates a clear commitment to improving the lives of South Africans through housing delivery, infrastructure investment and integrated development.

However, success will not be measured by reports and targets alone, success will be measured by families moving into safe homes, communities receiving reliable services, young people accessing opportunities closer to where they live and vulnerable households finally experience dignity and security.

This is no time for business as usual, we need urgency, we need accountability, we need capable institutions and above all, we need delivery.

Chairperson, the budget before us represents hope for millions of South Africans who are still waiting for decent housing and basic services. Let us, therefore, choose delivery over delays, accountability over excuses and people over politics.

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For these reasons, we support the Human Settlement budget vote.

*Setswana:*

Motse re feta wa balala, wa baruakgomo re tsena ka ona.

*English:*

I thank you, Chairperson.

Ms S I MANI-LUSITHI (Eastern Cape): Deputy Chair, greetings to yourself, to the hon Minister of Human Settlements, the Deputy Minister, all the Members of Executive Council, MECs, on the platform, hon members of the NCOP, representatives from provinces, all government and NCOP officials. Indeed, it is an honour and a privilege for us as the Eastern Cape provincial government, the home of legends, to participate in this important debate of the NCOP on the Budget Vote of the Department of Human Settlements as presented by the hon Minister.

From the onset, allow me to indicate that the budget and the Minister was clear. It was honest, realistic, firmly anchored on the lived realities and the material conditions of our people. The budget vote tabled by the Minister reflected a

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deep appreciation of the daily struggles confronting workers and the poor of our country.

While simultaneously presenting a practical path towards restoring dignity of our people through sustainable, integrated human settlements. In many respects, it gave a true meaning to the longstanding progressive principle of "from the people to the people", a principle that demands that governance must always emerge from the aspirations, challenges and hopes of the masses we serve.

We participate in this debate fully conscious of the historic and the transformative responsibility carried by human settlements portfolio in our country. This debate is not merely a procedural parliamentary exercise, but a strategic national platform through which we collectively reflect on the progress we are making in restoring the dignity of our people in advancing the vision of a just, equal and humane society.

This year marks 30 years since the adoption of the Constitution of Republic of South Africa. A Constitution born out of struggle, sacrifice and the collective aspirations of millions who longed for freedom, equality, justice and human dignity.

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Our democratic Constitution remains the supreme expression of our values. of our liberation struggle. It commits us, as a nation, to heal the division of the past and to build a society founded on the democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights, a point correctly and firmly articulated by the hon Minister.

When the first democratic President of the Republic of South Africa, utata uNelson Mandela, signed the Constitution into law, 30 years ago, it was not merely an administrative or a ceremonial act, it was a profound political and historical moment that entrenched the obligation of the democratic state to progressively realise the basic rights and freedoms of our people, especially the poor, the marginalised and the historically dispossessed.

It affirmed that the dignity, equality and freedom of South Africans will no longer remain abstract ideals confined to speeches and declarations but would become enforceable constitutional commitments backed by the authority of a democratic state.

Central to this constitutional commitment is the right of every citizen to have access to adequate housing and to live

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in conditions consistent with human dignity. The democratic government understood that the struggle for liberation could never be separated from the struggle for land, shelter and decent living conditions.

Housing, therefore, is not simply about brick and mortar. It's about restoring dignity, advancing social justice, and fundamentally transforming the special inequalities created by colonialism and apartheid. It is therefore fitting that 30 years later, we gather in this august House to reaffirm the centrality of human settlements in the broader project of social transformation, nation building, and inclusive development.

Human settlements remain a strategic instrument through which confront poverty, inequality, unemployment and the apartheid spatial legacy that continues to reproduce exclusion and underdevelopment in many of our communities.

The Human Settlements Budget Vote remains one of the most important instruments at the disposal of the democratic state in confronting the enduring legacy of colonialism and apartheid spatial justice. For decades, the apartheid regime relegated the black majority to overcrowded townships,

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underdeveloped rural villages and marginalised settlements located far away from the centres of economic opportunity.

The democratic government inherited this painful special configuration, characterised by inequality, under development, poverty and social exclusion. It is therefore through this budget vote that we continue to give practical expression to the aspirations of our as captured in the Freedom Charter, which declared that "there shall be houses, security and comfort".

The work of building sustainable integrated human settlements is fundamentally about restoring dignity, creating sustainable communities and ensuring that our people live closer to economic opportunities, social amenities, healthcare facilities, schools and transport networks.

The delivery of integrated human settlements therefore becomes an important pillar of the transformative programme led by the democratic government, as it brings hope, dignity, social stability and the tangible dividends of freedom to the millions of South Africans.

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Human settlements are not merely about construction of houses; they are about building communities, stimulating local economies, creating jobs, empowering women and young people, and fostering social cohesion.

In the Eastern Cape, we continue to intensify our efforts towards accelerating the delivery of dignified housing opportunities to our people, particularly the poor, vulnerable military veterans, persons living with disabilities, women-headed households and victims of disasters and gender-based violence.

Despite the prevailing fiscal constraints and economic pressures, we remain resolute in implementing catalytic and people-centred human settlements programmes across the province.

Amongst the work we continue to undertake are rural housing projects aimed at restoring dignity in historically neglected communities, the upgrading of informal settlements, the issuing of title deeds to rightful beneficiaries, rectification programme, and the revitalization of blocked and stalled projects to ensure that communities finally receive houses that have been delayed for years.

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We are also prioritising the provision of bulk infrastructure to unlock sustainable human settlements development, ensuring that housing projects are not delivered in isolation from critical services.

One of the strategic interventions we are driving in the Eastern Cape is the strengthening of the collaboration between the Department of Human Settlements and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure under the leadership of the merge ministry. This institutional arrangement has enabled us to unlock strategic areas of coordination and integration between infrastructure delivery and human settlements development.

Through this collaboration, we are leveraging public infrastructure investment to support integrated spatial transformation, stimulate local economic development and support black contractors and emerging enterprises and expand opportunities for artisanship and skills development amongst our young people.

The alignment between the two departments is also assisting us to improve our planning, land identification, project implementation, and infrastructure coordination. In advancing

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this strategic alignment, the province has also established the Joint Human Settlements Property and Real Estate Forum, which serves as an important platform bringing together government, industry stakeholders, financial institutions, property practitioners, developers, and the built environment professionals.

The objective of the forum is to strengthen collaboration in unlocking human settlements investment addressing barriers to property ownership, expanding access to affordable housing opportunities, promoting inclusive participation within the property and real estate sector.

This forum is becoming an important catalyst in driving conversations around spatial justice, investment mobilisation, transformation within the property sector, and sustainable urban and rural development.

It further assists in strengthening partnerships required to advance the mixed-use development, student accommodation, social housing, township revitalisation, and integrated precinct development within the province.

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As the Eastern Cape, we support the budget vote tabled by the hon Minister because it continues to advance the historic mission of building a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, and specially just South Africa. We further welcome the continued support towards informal settlements upgrading, title deed restoration, and the strengthening of institutional capacity within provinces and municipalities.

As we move forward, we must continue to strengthen accountability, improve project management capacity, fight corruption and construction mafias, accelerate beneficiary administration systems, and ensure that every centre located towards human settlement reaches the intended beneficiaries.

The task before us remains enormous, but our collective commitment as a government must remain unwavering. Together, we must continue to build sustainable human settlements that restore dignity and deepened on democracy and improve the quality of life of our people. I thank you, Deputy Chair.

Ms M KENNEDY: Hon Chair, greetings to the hon members in the House, hon members on the virtual platform, fellow South Africans.

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The EFF rejects the proposed Human Settlements Budget Vote. The EFF rejects the Budget Vote of a department that is known only for its planning documents, while millions of South Africans continue to live in shacks, asbestos houses and structures, overcrowded hostels, hijacked buildings and unsafe informal settlements. This is from a department that is mandated to provide dignified human settlements, spatial justice and secure tenure. And, on that question this department has failed.

It has been 32 years after democracy, yet the housing crisis continues to deepen, leaving millions stranded in informal settlements and hazardous structures that continue to expand faster than the state can respond. Thousands of housing projects remain blocked, incomplete, abandoned or structurally defective, and communities across all rural provinces continue to live under collapsing mud houses, while government officials sit in air-conditioned boardrooms drafting yet another framework and review process.

This department claims to want to build sustainable and integrated human settlements, yet apartheid's spatial geography remains intact, and the poor are still pushed to the

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periphery, far from economic opportunities, transport networks, schools, clinics and social amenities.

The so-called integration agenda has become nothing more than policy rhetoric, while land in urban centres remains captured by private interest, property speculators and historical privilege.

The EFF maintains that genuine human settlements transformation requires radical state intervention in land ownership, urban restructuring and public housing development, for the market cannot resolve the housing crisis. Banks cannot become instruments of social justice. Private developers cannot be entrusted with the constitutional obligation of housing the people.

This report correctly raises concern about blocked and incomplete housing projects, but it fails to appreciate the scale of the crisis. Across all provinces, communities are trapped inside unfinished developments with collapsing walls, leaking roofs, absent sanitation infrastructure and unsafe electrical connections.

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We know this to be true, as in Mpumalanga, residents continue to suffer from incomplete projects and poor workmanship. In the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, there are informal settlements and housing backlogs that remain unresolved, while the department continues recycling promises.

In eMakhazeni Extension 11, incomplete housing projects stand as monuments of state failure, and in Limpopo, a province that is predominantly rural, a major ongoing crisis is the presence of unsafe mud houses, which are highly vulnerable to extreme weather.

Limpopo keeps getting hit by heavy seasonal rains and terrible floods, which damages or completely washes away homes, especially the ones built right near riverbanks. This, while the provincial government shifts its limited housing budget away from long-term projects to fund emergency shelters, temporary housing and complicated relocation plans.

Recently, legislative and oversight reports indicate that the Limpopo provincial ... housing backlog currently sits at over 96 000 units, a figure that continues to grow due to budget constraints and delays caused by nonperforming contractors.

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The backlog is so bad that reports note that it will take nearly two decades for it to clear at the current rate of delivery, and our people are frustrated because of system loopholes and cheating on the housing waiting list. Across the country, communities wait years for the deeds, while syndicates involved in corruption manipulate beneficiary lists.

Limpopo's backlog is part of a much wider issue, as reports from this department estimate that South Africa's overall housing backlog affects millions of households, with over 3,4 million registered on the National Housing Needs database.

The EFF, furthermore, raises serious concerns regarding the continued deaths and injuries caused by unfinished and unsafe infrastructure. Children continue to die in sinkholes and hazardous construction sites because of state negligence and poor project management. These are not accidents; they are the consequence of corruption, poor oversight and political incompetence.

The report touches on construction mafias and extortion, but the response remains weak and cosmetic. The emergence of criminal syndicates in construction is directly linked to the

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collapse of state capacity with law enforcement, tender corruption and political patronage networks. Communities are now trapped between corrupt contractors, criminal extortionists and a paralysed state.

This department also often speaks about disaster management and emergency housing, yet communities affected by floods and fires continue waiting years for intervention. The centralisation of disaster funding has created a bureaucratic paralysis. Provincial and local governments lack capacity, while affected families remain displaced indefinitely.

The EFF, therefore, outrightly rejects the continued building of houses on floodplains, wetlands and riverbanks without proper spatial planning and engineering assessments, and we reject the budget of a department which treats people as a disposable population, relocating them to environmentally unsafe areas while affluent communities enjoy properly planned infrastructure.

Climate change demands a new housing approach. South Africa requires climate resilient housing with proper drainage systems, energy efficiency, durable materials, water harvesting infrastructure and integrated public transport

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planning, yet this annual performance plan, APP, contains no bold and measurable climate adaptation programme for vulnerable communities.

The continued existence of asbestos roofs and mud houses in this 2026 is a national shame. It is an indictment against the democratic state. Asbestos continues to expose poor families to deadly health risks, while government delays eradication through endless pilot programmes and fragmented intervention.

To this effect, we demand a fully funded national asbestos eradication programme with annual provincial targets and the emergency replacement of all mud schools and mud houses in rural provinces.

We demand direct labour-intensive state-led construction programmes that employ local communities and the establishment of state-owned construction entities to reduce dependency on private entrepreneurs, and on the immediate blacklisting of contractors responsible for defective and incomplete housing.

We demand the public release of all forensic investigation reports into housing corruption and criminal prosecution of

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all officials involved in maladministration and irregular expenditure.

We call for mandatory post-project structural audits before houses are handed over to beneficiaries and value for money assessment on all catalytic projects.

We demand a national contractor reliability index to prevent the recycling of failed contractors across provinces.

The issue of title deeds cannot be separated from economic freedom. Without secure tenure, black working-class families remain excluded from meaningful economic participation, yet government continues treating title deed restoration as a bureaucratic exercise rather than an urgent socioeconomic intervention.

However, even title deeds alone are not enough. The EFF warns against reducing housing transformation into ownership transfer without ensuring economic infrastructure, jobs, transport connectivity, health care facilities, schools, recreation spaces and industrial development around human settlements. Human settlements must not become warehouses for the poor.

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The review of the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act must also not become a reactionary mechanism to criminalise poverty and homelessness. The rise in land occupation reflects the failure of the state to provide adequate housing and urban land access. Poor people occupy land because they are desperate, excluded and abandoned.

The EFF supports dignified and lawful urban management, but we reject any attempt to weaponise legislation against the poor, while the state itself fails to meet constitutional obligations until the housing question is approached as a revolutionary instrument for economic emancipation rather than a narrow welfare function.

South Africa will continue reproducing apartheid geography under democratic management. The EFF rejects the Budget Vote and this whole performance plan. I thank you.

Mr R B MAKAMU (Limpopo): House Chair, greetings to the hon Minister of Human Settlements, Ms Thembi Simelane, to the chairperson of the select committee, hon Kaunda, my colleagues from executive councils from other sister provinces which are here, virtually and physically, at the NCOP House, hon members

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of this august House, fellow South Africans, it is an immense privilege to stand before this plenary today to join the policy debate on Budget Vote No 33 - Human Settlements.

I am here to speak for the resilient people of Limpopo, a province that is no longer a sleeping giant, but fully awake, active and moving forward into a trajectory of growth and dignity. Our work on the built environment is guided by our historical covenant. Thirty-three years into our democracy, we carry the weight of promises made by the giants of our liberation struggle. We remain firmly anchored in the immortal ways of the Freedom Charter, which declares, "There shall be houses, security and comfort.", as also said by MEC Duma in this platform. To understand the soul of our mission, we must look back at the vision of the very first Minister of Housing in our democratic dispensation, the late Comrade Joe Slovo. Minister Slovo famously reminded us that housing is not just about putting bricks and mortar together. He insisted that our housing programme must be an instrument to break the back of poverty, create employment, and restore human dignity. Today, as we debate this Appropriation Bill, we are here to declare that the spirit of Comrade Joe Slovo lives on in villages, townships and towns in Limpopo.

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I am proud to report that the Limpopo legislature has turned the corner. Our country is no longer one of the recovered. It is a story of ascent. In the previous year, I stood before the provincial legislature and committed that our department would deliver 2 923 housing units across rural and urban landscapes. Today, I bring a message of victory to this national House. We did not just meet the target; we shattered it. Through hard work, dedication and strategic injection of additional funds from the provisional Treasury and from the national Department of Human Settlements, we completed 4 532 quality housing units, surpassing our target by almost 1 600. These are not just numbers on the ledger or on the paper. These numbers represent human lives transformed. They represent child-headed households that now have a roof over their heads. The grandmothers who no longer sleep in fear. Our focus is strictly on quality. Earlier this year, heavy thunderstorms tore through Mbaula Village, destroying privately built structures. Yet, our government-built houses stood tall and firm against the wind and rain. This proves that we do not compromise on the safety and dignity of our people.

Furthermore, we delivered 1 162 sites, as the Minister was talking, directly improving access to basic water services and providing land.

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This performance is backed by stellar fiscal discipline, as we spent almost 99,8% of the human settlements' development grant, and the full 100% of our informal settlement upgrading partnership grant. We are the department that spends its budget on its people. Our premier has consistently charged us with a clear directive. She reminds us that development is about people and that public office is an opportunity to look our citizens in the eye and deliver on the promises we have made. In line with her call for a caring and responsive government, we have made great strides in restoring human dignity through major flagship projects.

Look at the Altoostyd Project, the Joe Slovo Integrated Human Settlements Development in Lephalale. The massive cataclysmic project is designed to address diverse needs through a multiphase strategic approach. We have successfully completed 200 housing units that our people are now occupying. We are busy working on services. We are also moving with speed to address density and urbanisation. The installation of service engineering services to our Tshikota Community Residential project in Makhado has reached 95% completion and will yield 118 high-quality units. In Marapong, 514 community residential units are at the final completion stage. With street paving currently underway, we also registered and handed over 1 500

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title deeds to our people through our Title Deeds Friday, as led by our capable Minister.

Our drive to build a better community is also enriched by global insights through our participation in the 13th World Urban Forum held in Baku in Azerbaijan, focusing on the theme: *Housing the World, Safe and Resilient Cities and Communities*. South Africa, led by Minister Thembi Simelane, engaged in robust international knowledge sharing on sustainable urbanisation. We have brought home global best practice, focused on smart infrastructure, resilient urban planning and inclusive community formalisation. We are actively integrating these lessons into daily operations in Limpopo to improve our provision of human settlements. This is an international benchmark to ensure that our housing solutions are not immediate shelters but forward-thinking, resilient communities capable of thriving in a rapidly growing world. In fact, in this trajectory, the people of Limpopo showed the true definition of the spirit of Ubuntu. As President Ramaphosa accurately noted, the response to the disaster requires everybody else. We cannot do this work in isolation from the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the Department of Human Settlements.

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We knew that local government is the frontline of our democracy. We are working hand-in-glove with our municipalities to ensure that they have the capacity to build sustainable human settlement. Hon Minister, the Limpopo province government values your leadership, your presence and your continued support. The budget presented today provides the necessary resources. Limpopo completely and unequivocally supports Budget Vote No 33 - Human Settlements. Let us match our words with action. Let us protect the dignity of our people and let us continue to build a South Africa that belongs to all who live in it. I thank you, hon Chairperson.

Mr E NZIMANDE: Good afternoon, Minister and the Deputy Minister ...

*IsiZulu:*

... ngibingelela abahlezi phezulu, ngibingelela umphakathi olalele le nkulumo-mpikiswano. Namhlanje le nkulumo-mpikiswano ingokuthi, le voti lesabelomali lama-33 lizozishintsha yini izimpilo zabantu. Usuke ulele ubucwayimbana uma ngabe wena usakhuluma nge...

*English:*

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... baseline information like a speaker who has just finished speaking assists for as information for planning. Our debate ...

*IsiZulu:*

... singuMkhonto weSizwe Party izolala ekutheni sikhombise ukuthi le voti lesabelomali ngempela, ngempela alizukuzishintsha izimpilo zabantu.

*English:*

It presents fundamental weaknesses that attracts impossibility for continued performance improvement. Hon Chairperson, the crisis of housing settlement in South Africa revolves around poor planning, inadequate budgeting, and execution of the plans. The plan before this august House, in fact, it evades accountability.

The obligation of the department is reduced through these plans to provide support, monitoring, and reports instead of material service delivery outcomes, such as actual houses delivered, title deeds issued, and informal settlement upgraded. This occurs while millions of South Africans continue living in informal settlements, backyard shacks, and mud houses. Millions of rand were wastefully spent on

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abandoned incomplete projects. The APP confirms that the reduced targets are due to its own choice of tightening the belt.

*IsiZulu:*

Uyabona uma ngabe ubona abebala bakuvumela wokwazi Ngqongqoshe ukuthi konakele. Uyabona bavele baphuma bonke nje ngebala labo, base beshiya abantu abanebala elifana nathi. Uma ungaqalaza nje, angazi noma bayaphuma noma benzani.

*English:*

The NDP, Integrated Sustainable Human Settlement close to economic opportunities, is a dream deferred. Fully subsidised housing delivered drops to just 28 000 houses in 2025 from more than 41 000 previously. Service sites also decline sharply and at the same time, when our people ...

*IsiZulu:*

... bezakhela nje izindlu, lo hulumeni wenu, ohambisana nalabantu abamhlophe engeke ngisabasho. Uvele nje uyodiliza izindlu zabantu. Awu! Siyakhala nabantu, sinani bantu baseThornville, sinani bantu basePretoria West, sinani bantu baseBhongweni le e-Eastern Cape. Angithi phela sebalala ngubo yinye nalabantu.

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*English:*

The plan sets unrealistic targets. Oh, what a contradiction. Setting ambitious targets against R20,6 billion budget cuts, the sharp reduction affecting USDG signifies unrealistic planning.

The department's own document reveals static expenditure growth over the MTEF period, whereas construction costs continue rising, urban migration increases, land and housing demand are rapidly growing. The budget does not match the scale of crisis. The department also continues to increase operational expenditure while delivery slows down. Millions continue being spent on consultant travel and advisory services while communities continue living in unsafe conditions.

When the Minister responded to my question in March 2026 on a breakdown of mud houses per province, the Minister provided a breakdown but with the exception of ... and KwaZulu-Natal. The reason was that they had not conducted an enumeration to determine the number of uninhabited mud structures. Meaning no approved plans for these provinces.

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Despite the absence of credible data, the Minister herein affirmed that for Eastern Cape R1,1 billion is set aside over MTEF period to deal with mud houses. How will the financial accountability be done in the absence of plans? Costing plans without credible data are done for malicious compliance. You see, this GNU lacks urgency and proper planning in dealing with disasters.

*IsiZulu:*

Awubuke nje lapha kwaZulu-Natal kusukela ngoDisemba we-2022 kuya kuDisemba we-2025 kwasetshenziswa imali engaphezulu kuka R1,3 bhiliyoni isetshenziselwa nje imindeni eyi-1062. Leyo mali ngabe yenze imizi eminingi kakhulu.

*English:*

The APP further lacks strong accountability measures, risk mitigation strategies and clear explanation on how targets will be achieved under reduced cut budget.

Several grammar formatting - I don't want you to get to it when you look at the plan, no professionalism. The document failed to provide sound outcome-based indicators, clear implementation plan and a more convincingly delivered narrative before being presented to Parliament. The informal

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settlement upgrading partnership grant declined drastically over the medium-term while informal settlement continued expanding.

*IsiZulu:*

Ubheke le KwaZulu-Natal, ubheke eMpumalanga nala e-Western Cape ...

*English:*

... there's a clear misalignment between output and output indicator throughout to the APP and consequently overall objectives of the department cannot be achieved in a situation like this. Owing to limited time, let me just raise a few important points.

*IsiZulu:*

Ku-programme l ngendlela abayihlele kabi ngakhona.

*English:*

If it's incorrectly couched, the department cannot achieve its core objective. There is a clear misalignment between the output and output indicators. Annual finance statements free from errors and mismanagement cannot be an output of an output indicator for an unqualified audit with no material findings.

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The latter talks to operative governance and promotes financial accountability in the broader sense unlike the annual statements free from errors and misstatements.

Similarly, the quarterly assessment conducted on the performance of human settlement grant metros ISUPG and so its own output indicator is both incorrectly couched and is intended to evade accountability. The correct output should be produced quarterly, assessment report conducted on performance of human settlement grant metros ISUPG.

Then the correct and sound output indicator is a number of quarterly assessment reports produced on the performance of human settlement grants conducted. Clearly, that shall provide sufficient and relevant information for accountability, including the quarterly expenditure report on the specific grant-related project. This is to track expenditure on the grant provided.

*IsiZulu:*

Ngoba sengishaywa yisikhathi, angivele ngikusho lokhu ukuthi. Sasithi uma sricula nabo laba, kuyobanjani sesihleli no-Tambo, sesibabona begingqika. Ngihlangane noMantashe ezihambela no-SG

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wenye inhlango. Sebecula sebethi kuyobanjani bebona uMkhonto ugingqika sebehlezi no-Verwoerd. Ngiyesaba.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: Hon House Chairperson, hon Chairperson of the NCOP, the Deputy Chairperson, hon Chairperson of the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Public Administration, hon Mxolisi Kaunda, the Minister of Human Settlements, hon Thembi Simelane, all Members of the Executive Council, MECs, present, hon members in this august House and on the virtual platform, the Director-General, DG, of National Department of Human Settlements, Dr Alec Moemi, fellow South Africans...

*IsiXhosa:*

... mandinibulise ngale njikalanga.

*English:*

Today, as we gather beneath the democratic mantle of this august House, South Africa marks thirty years since the adoption of our democratic Constitution, 50 years since the historic Soweto Youth Uprising of 1976, and 70 years since the historic Women's March of 1956. These defining milestones remind us that the struggle for freedom has always been

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inseparable from the struggle for dignity, land, shelter, and inclusion.

Human Settlements therefore remains one of the most powerful instruments of social and economic transformation, through which government continues to dismantle apartheid spatial patterns, expand access to opportunity, and empower women, youth, and emerging enterprises to participate meaningfully in rebuilding our nation.

At its core, the work of Human Settlements is about reversing the legacy of exclusion and inequality imposed by apartheid. It is about ensuring that poor and working-class communities are no longer pushed to the margins of development, but are integrated into centres of opportunity, economic participation, and democratic life.

Hon members, As we debate Budget Vote 33, our hearts remain with the families affected by devastating floods and severe weather conditions across parts of the country, particularly in the Province of Western Cape. It would be remiss of me not to place on record our appreciation to the officials of the National Department of Human Settlements, who acted with

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urgency and compassion, cutting through bureaucratic delays to bring relief to affected communities.

We equally extend our gratitude to the Gift of the Givers for their continued humanitarian support through the provision of hot meals, blankets, and clothing to vulnerable households, etcetera. These disasters are a stark reminder that climate change is no longer a distant threat. It is a lived reality confronting poor and vulnerable communities every day.

Through the Emergency Housing Programme, we continue to provide temporary accommodation, relocation support, and the restoration of damaged structures. Beyond emergency response, however, our responsibility is to build climate resilient human settlements capable of withstanding future disasters and protecting the dignity of our people.

Through the Innovative Building Technologies, the Department of Human Settlements is embracing fast, safer, and more sustainable methods of construction. The recent Innovative Building Technologies Presidential Summit confirmed that these technologies are no longer experimental alternatives, but a necessary component of modern housing delivery.

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Our government is now institutionalising these technologies within the mainstream human settlements programme to accelerate delivery, strengthen disaster response capability, support localisation, and create economic opportunities for women, youth, and emerging enterprises.

The value of Innovative Building Technology is evident in Limpopo, where two IBT houses withstood severe disaster conditions that destroyed surrounding structures, providing safety and protection to the families they sheltered.

We are encouraged by recent progress in KwaZulu Natal under the stewardship of Member of the Executive Council, MEC Sboniso Duma, Mthombeni. Following the commitment made by all three spheres of government to provide permanent solutions for victims of the 2022 floods, tangible progress is now being realised.

Last week, we witnessed the relocation of 113 households from Transitional Emergency Accommodation into permanent homes in Cornubia. These are families who endured immense hardship following the floods of 2022.

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Plans are further underway to complete an additional 450 housing units in Cornubia by March 2027. To reduce over reliance on the private sector in disaster response interventions, the department, through the Housing Development Agency, acquired the Transnet owned Montclair Lodge facility. Its refurbishment and operationalisation will provide dignified emergency accommodation while strengthening the province's preparedness and response capability in the face of increasingly unpredictable weather patterns affecting our country.

As we commend KZN's response to the 2022 floods we urged the Western Cape provincial government to follow suite and ensure that recent victims receive decent, permanent shelter without delay.

Despite a constrained fiscal environment and reductions across parts of the Human Settlements budget, we remain firmly focused on delivery, implementation, and accountability.

Our people do not live in policy documents or reports. They live in communities. They wait for houses, serviced sites, title deeds, water, sanitation, electricity, and safe living conditions. For the 2026-27 financial year, we will accelerate

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delivery across the entire human settlements value chain, including the completion of more than 38 000 housing opportunities and over 25 000 serviced sites across provinces and municipalities.

The Department of Human Settlements is also intensifying efforts to unblock blocked housing projects. A blocked project represents more than delayed construction. It represents delayed dignity, trapped public resources, and broken promises to communities. We must therefore move projects from planning to occupation with urgency, discipline, and consequence management where necessary.

Hon members, we remain committed to the upgrading of informal settlements through the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant. This programme is not merely about infrastructure provision. It is about restoring dignity, strengthening social cohesion, and ensuring that poor communities are not excluded from opportunity and development. Title deed restoration remains central to the programme of spatial justice and economic empowerment.

Through the Title Deeds Friday Campaign, the department has handed over more than 81 000 title deeds to beneficiaries

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across the country. A title deed is not simply a document. It is security, ownership, dignity, and generational wealth.

Hon members, the Social Housing Regulatory Authority, SHRA, continues to demonstrate that affordable rental housing is central to spatial justice and inclusive economic growth. During the year under review, SHRA delivered more than 3 000 social housing units and facilitated over 12 000 job opportunities, while expanding access to dignified rental accommodation for working class.

A few weeks ago, in Mitchells Plain, Weltevreden Valley we launched housing units. This occasion was not only a celebration of a completed housing project, it is a demonstration of government in action, working deliberately to fulfil its constitutional mandate. To progressively realise the right to access to adequate housing for all.

Regent villas Extension 2 stands as a clear outcome of the policy direction set out in the White Paper of Human Settlements and the Social Housing Programme which seek to restructure our cities, integrate communities and bring people closer to opportunities. This development affirms that our

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work is not abstract, it tangible, measurable and directly felt in the lives of our people.

This project located in Weltevreden Valley as I said earlier forms part of a broader phase approach to development. Phase one delivered 104 units, phase two 60 units, phase three contributed an additional 110 units to the housing stock of this community.

This steady expansion reflects a deliberate programmatic approach by our government to scale delivery in a sustainable and coordinated manner. The total project investment of over 50 million supported through the consolidated capital grant, National Housing Finance Corporation funding and equity from POVICON demonstrate the strength of our funding model. It reflects how national government and development finance institutions collaborate to leverage resources for maximum impact.

This was especially evident in the story of a young family, both parents just 30 years old, who had recently moved into their home with their one-year-old daughter a moment that truly embodied the impact of this project.

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Similar, National Housing Finance Corporation, NHFC, continues to expand pathways to home ownership for missing middle working South Africans who earn too much to qualify for fully subsidised housing, yet too little to access adequate finance without support. Through first home finance and related programs, thousands of households continue to access affordable opportunities.

Following the George building collapse, we committed through the National Home Builders Registration Council, NHBRC, to implement every recommendation in the report that plan is now 67,5% complete with all interventions.

Transforming the real estate industry remains our priority and it requires both public and private sector commitment. Through the programmes implemented by Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority, PPRA, we have partnered with KZN Economic Development, Tourism and Environment Affairs, Service State Information Technology Agency, Sita, and Smile Property Group. We launched a real estate training program targeting women, youth and persons with disabilities. It is the first of its kind in the province and create structured pathways in the property sector.

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We also running professional designation support programmes to prepare new entrants for the Professional Designation Examination, PDE, level 4 exams while embedding ethics standards and sustainable. on this success, we will replicate the model in the province of Mpumalanga this year.

Hon members, our democratic state continues to honour those who secured its freedom. Housing for qualifying military veterans is not charity. It is recognition, gratitude and the fulfilment of a moral debt. We continue to work with the Department of Military Veterans under our memorandum of agreement, MOA. This year, we reaffirm our commitment to delivering dignified shelter for those who fought for our freedom. As Minister Simelane and Minister Motshekga stressed at the recent KZN handover, this work demands urgency and administrative discipline.

Our veterans deserve more than thanks, they deserve visible aid delivery. The struggle for housing justice has always been deeply political. It is about restoring humanity to those who apartheid, sought to dispossess and marginalise. It is about affirming that the children of the poor deserve safety, dignity, ownership and hope.

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As the late Joe Slovo reminded us that:

It is not enough to remove the shuttles. We must build new structures.

This budget vote is therefore not merely an allocation of resources. It is an investment in dignity, transformation and the future of our people. It is for this reason that we urge hon members to support Budget Vote 33 of Human Settlements, not reject the budget vote and later make demands. It is very much contradictory. It can never be done. I thank you very much

Mr D J WESSELS (Western Cape): Chairperson, hon Minister, Deputy Minister and hon members, the Western Cape welcomes this opportunity to participate in today's Human Settlements Budget Vote debate. This debate takes place at a critical moment for South Africans' housing and infrastructure environment, because the pressure of Human Settlements are no longer isolated pressures. They are converging pressures, population growth, rapid urbanisation, infrastructure backlogs, fiscal constraints, migration into economic centres, informal settlements growth, land invasions, construction inflation, and uneven municipal capabilities. All of these

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pressures are colliding simultaneously, and it is becoming increasingly clear that South Africans' housing challenge can no longer be approached through a fragmented, short-term response alone.

The Western Cape's position is clear. Human Settlements delivery must increasingly become infrastructure-led, system-based, and readiness-driven, because housing delivery cannot be separated from bulk infrastructure, transport systems, water security, sanitation capacity, economic access, and long-term spatial planning. If these systems are disconnected, delivery slows, projects stall, costs escalate, and communities lose confidence in the government. That is why the Western Cape has increasingly focused its reform agenda on integrated infrastructure coordination and long-term pipeline planning.

One of the most important lessons emerging from across the country is that funding alone does not guarantee delivery, readiness matters, planning maturity matters, governance matters and implementation capability matters.

Increasingly, infrastructure funding must align with credible, sequenced, implementation-ready project pipelines. That is why

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the Western Cape continues advancing in a single infrastructure pipeline approach that strengthens coordination from project conception to feasibility, to approvals, financing, procurement, and implementation, because fragmented planning produces fragmented outcomes. The Western Cape proves that this approach works.

In the 2024-25 financial year across the Western Cape, the Department of Infrastructure delivered 6 515 title deeds against a target of 2 900, a massive overachievement driven by advanced efficiencies, data-driven processes, and improved project management. Between 2015 and 2016 and 2024-25, the province has delivered a total of 78 851 title deeds. For the 2026-27 financial year, we aim to transfer nearly 4 500 title deeds, allocating nearly 25 million to this purpose. This is what readiness looks like. This is what delivery capability produces.

The Western Cape also believes that procurement reform must become a national priority. Communities do not experience policy frameworks. They experience whether projects are completed or not. Delays caused by procurement inefficiencies, weak contract management, disputes, fragmented approval systems, and implementation bottlenecks affect service

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delivery outcomes. This is why the Western Cape continues to support procurement modernisation, stronger project preparation, improved reporting systems, real-time monitoring capabilities, and enhanced implementation oversight. Because ultimately, budgets only matter when it becomes delivery.

The Western Cape is delivering on the ground. Five major inner city housing projects are progressing well. The Leeuloop Precinct will deliver 853 housing opportunities, which include 353 social housing units. Founders Garden, 1 476 social housing opportunities, and 1 162 open market opportunities.

The Provincial Pavement Testing Laboratory, PPTL, development will deliver 310 housing opportunities, including 120 social housing opportunities. Helen Bowden, 458 housing opportunities, including 302 social housing opportunities. The Tafelberg site is expected to deliver approximately 440 units, including 220 social housing units. Critically, occupancy is expected within three years following the handover to these developers.

In the 2024-25 financial year alone, the Western Cape delivered 2 188 affordable housing opportunities through the Social Housing Programme and the first home finance subsidy.

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The Western Cape believes that South Africa must begin engaging more seriously with the future structure of investment of infrastructure and housing grants.

One of the greatest contradictions within the current system is while housing demand continues to rise rapidly, Municipal Conditional Grant underspending remains persistently high. At the same time, many high growth secondary cities continue to carry enormous pressure from inward migration, informal settlement expansion, bulk infrastructure constraints, and increasing demand for service sites and housing opportunities. That is why the Western Cape has actively advanced discussions around targeted reform of the Urban Settlements Development Grant, USDG.

The Western Cape believes that there is growing merit in exploring performance-based allocation approaches, while to target pilot windows for high growth secondary cities or limit top-slice models linked directly to delivery capability and infrastructure pipeline readiness, because funding should increasingly follow demonstrated readiness and implementation capability. That is not about weakening accountability. It is about improving the delivery outcomes. It is about ensuring that infrastructure investment translates into service sites,

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accelerated delivery, economic inclusion, and restored public confidence.

The Western Cape further believes that capable municipalities with strong governance and proven delivery records should increasingly be empowered to accelerate infrastructure-led development. At the same time, municipalities facing capacity constraints require stronger intergovernmental support, because not all municipalities possess the same technical capacity, engineering capability, procurement expertise, or project management systems. This means municipal support and coordination mechanism must improve substantially.

The Western Cape is demonstrating what capable municipalities can achieve. The Mossel Bay Desalination Plant, commissioned at R200 million with capacity to produce up to 10 megalitres per day, provides a critical safety net through drought, supplying nearly 45% of the municipality's daily water consumption. This is forward-thinking governance and climate resilience.

The Provincial Housing Rental Tribunal has resolved more than 13 250 complaints since 2020, with nearly doubling from 1 900

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to 3 330 over the past five years. This is accessible justice for tenants and landlords.

The Provincial Department of Infrastructure facilitates over R189 million in direct benefits to small, medium, and micro enterprises through 2 143 infrastructure projects, with 13 supply engagement events connecting 1 166 service providers. This is inclusive economic growth. The province overhauled 488 kilometres of provincial road network in 2024 and 2025, a distance longer than a trip from Cape Town to Knysna.

The Roads4U Mobile App empowers residents to report road damage directly. Thus, this is a citizen-centred infrastructure management tool. More than R48 million has been invested in youth development programmes, providing 3 288 young people with opportunity in the built environment. Thank you very much, Chairperson. [Time expired.]

Ms T MOTARA (Gauteng): House Chairperson, members of the NCOP, the Minister of Human Settlements, the Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, my colleagues, MECs from the various provinces, special delegates, Chief Whip of the NCOP, members of the media, good afternoon. The human settlements sector

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continues to sit at the center of some of the most pressing challenges facing our country today.

Every year, more people arrive in Gauteng in search of opportunity, work, safety and a better future for their families. With that reality comes the growing demand for housing, basic services in communities that are properly planned and connected to economic opportunity. For many of our people, the question of human settlements is still deeply tied to dignity.

It speaks to a young family raising children in a safe environment, an elderly resident finally holding a type of deed in their own name, and communities in informal settlements who should not feel forgotten, while waiting for proper sanitation, safer roads, water, electricity and long-term housing solutions.

More than 30 years into democracy, the spatial inequalities created by apartheid still shape the daily realities of millions of South Africans. Many working-class residents still live far from places of work, economic activity and social services.

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As governments, we therefore cannot treat housing delivery as just the construction of top structures. We must continue using human settlements as a tool for spatial transformation, economic inclusion and social justice. That is why our work as the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements stays focused on building integrated communities where people can live closer to opportunity, public transport schools, health care and economic activity.

The reality facing provinces today also requires stronger co-ordination between national, provincial and local governments. Many of the challenges affecting delivery, including land availability, bulk infrastructure constraints, township establishment processes and municipal approvals cannot be resolved by one sphere of government acting alone. As Gauteng, we therefore continue supporting stronger intergovernmental co-ordination to improve planning, implementation and accountability across the human settlement sector.

Within the current budget framework, the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements has been allocated resources to continue implementing housing programmes, upgrading informal settlements and supporting communities across the province. We have a responsibility not only to account for the resources

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allocated to us, but also to show meaningful progress in improving implementation capacity within the sector.

In Gauteng, the department has continued working to strengthen governance, stabilise project delivery and improve operational performance across key programmes. In the last financial year, the department exceeded its annual housing delivery target by delivering 7 976 housing units against a target of 7 503. The department also exceeded targets relating to work opportunities, construction-related jobs and municipal engineering services.

These improvements do not suggest that all challenges have been resolved. However, they do indicate steady progress in rebuilding institutional capacity, improving financial management and strengthening implementation within the department. Allow me to highlight a few areas where the funding will continue to make a difference.

On our informal settlements, one of our greatest realities confronting our government today is still the growth of informal settlements and the increasing demand for basic services. For many residents, living in informal settlements of which Gauteng accounts for many, the immediate concern is

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not only access to permanent housing, but access to sanitation, roads, drainage systems, electricity and safer living conditions, while longer-term housing solutions are being implemented. In Gauteng, the department continues supporting upgrading interventions, temporary municipal engineering services and sanitation programmes in partnership with municipalities and affected communities themselves.

The continued investment into informal settlement upgrading remains critical if we are serious about improving living conditions, while simultaneously addressing the broader housing backlog facing provinces across the country.

The question of housing is also linked to economic inclusion and ownership. For many families, receiving a title deed represents long overdue recognition, security and the transfer of a meaningful asset to future generations. It allows working-class South Africans to participate more meaningfully in the economy and strengthens long-term household stability.

While government continues facing challenges relating to township establishment processes, municipal approvals and beneficiary verification, the restoration of title deeds

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remains an important area requiring continued collaboration across all spheres of government.

The condition of many hostels and other and older rental housing stock across the country also continues to reflect the deep inequalities that still exist within our urban spaces. As a department, we will continue to revitalise the hostels that we own with maintenance interventions aimed at improving living conditions and restoring dignity to residents who have historically experienced neglect and overcrowding.

These interventions are important not only from an infrastructure perspective but from a social perspective as well, particularly in ensuring that urban renewal programmes contribute towards safer and more dignified communities. The human settlement sector also remains an important driver of economic activity and employment creation. Across provinces, housing and infrastructure projects continue to create opportunities for contractors, artisans, SMMEs and local labour. The department exceeded targets relating to both construction-related jobs and EPWP work opportunities during the previous financial year. At the same time, more work still needs to be done to strengthen participation of township

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businesses, women-owned enterprises and youth within procurement opportunities linked to the sector.

A lot of focus has been made within the department over recent years, which shows the importance of strengthening governance, improving financial accountability and supporting institutional stability within the public sector. Annual performance has continued improving compared to previous years, while expenditure performance has also strengthened significantly. Communities expect government not only to develop plans and policies but to implement effectively, spend responsibly and deliver visible improvements in people's daily lives. That responsibility continues to rest on all of us across every sphere of government.

The challenges facing the human settlement sector remain significant, but so too does the responsibility placed upon government to continue driving spatial transformation and improving the living conditions of our people. As provinces, we must continue working together with national government, municipalities and communities themselves to ensure that human settlements delivery remains responsive to the realities confronting our society today.

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Ultimately, the work before us is about restoring dignity, expanding access to opportunity and ensuring that future generations can inherit communities that are safer, more inclusive and better connected to economic opportunity. Thank you.

Mr B J FARMER: Hon Chairperson, hon Ministers and Deputy Minister, hon members, I greet you in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. This is deeply personal to thousands of South Africans, and particularly the people of the Western Cape, who every winter live with fear that firestorms and collapsing structures will take away the little they have left. This has become clearer in the recent storm disasters that have devastated parts of the Western Cape.

We have seen severe weather systems hitting communities across Cape Town, George, Tsitsikamma, Knysna and surrounding areas, causing widespread flooding, destruction of infrastructure, electricity disruptions and damage to thousands of informal structures. In George and the broader Garden Route, disaster management teams had to remain on high alert, as roads flooded settlements with threatened and vulnerable communities moving to safer ground.

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In Cape Town alone, recent storms affected more than 26 informal settlements and damaged over 10 000 structures, impacting more than 41 000 people. When we speak about structures, let us remember what that really means. It means families are losing everything overnight.

It means municipalities are now spending millions again on temporary relocation, emergency materials, electricity restoration, stormwater repairs, humanitarian relief, blankets, food parcels and plastic sheeting. It means replacing structures again and again because the pace of delivering permanent housing, especially in the Western Cape, can no longer be tolerated.

This is exactly why this Budget Vote matters. Housing is not just a social programme anymore. It has become a disaster management, survival and dignity issue. The reality is that informal settlements are often located in low-lying, flat areas prone to flooding, which are near rivers, unstable land, railway lines and dangerous infrastructure because people simply have nowhere else to go. And every year, disasters expose the same painful truth. Our people cannot continue to endlessly wait on housing, while conditions worsen around them.

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Minister, the PA supports the targets in this Budget Vote, but we say implementation must now become urgent, because people are tired of waiting on promises of houses that will be built, especially around election times. Meanwhile, storms arrive before the houses do.

The housing waiting list must move faster, because when disaster strikes, poor communities suffer the most. Minister, sending back housing budgets by the Western Cape government to National Treasury needs to be seen for what it is. How can such a huge need for housing exist, yet since 2020 to date, close to R1 billion has been sent back by this DA government?

It is not incompetence, nor a system's failure, but a blatant political refusal to give free housing. They allow for social housing projects that deliver rentals to their developer buddies, feed speculation on who funds the election campaigns.

In the 2024-25 financial year, the Western Cape DA government delivered 9 632 total housing opportunities, of which only 3 046 are RDP houses, less than one-third. This Western Cape government's failure to build resilient communities today results in billions being paid tomorrow for disaster recovery,

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rebuilding, emergency relief and infrastructure repairs. The recent storms prove that.

We must stop the politicisation of housing. Housing opportunities must not depend on who you know or whether you wear a blue T-shirt or not. The housing list must be transparent and corruption-free.

The people of South Africa do not want endless promises. They want safe homes, secure ownership and communities where children can sleep safely when winter storms arrive. The PA supports this budget because our people desperately need housing. And when the storms come, it is always the poor who pay the highest price.

*Afrikaans:*

Agb Minister, moenie baiza [huiwer] nie.

*English:*

Salute.

Mr G O MOLAPISI (North West): Hon House Chair, hon Chairperson of the NCOP hon Refilwe Mtsweni, the select committee chair hon Kaunda, the Chief Whip of the NCOP hon Mmoiemang,

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Ministers and Deputy Ministers, hon members, MECs for Human Settlement from across the Republic, all hon members present here, representatives of the South African Local Government Association, Salga, Director-General and senior officials, esteemed guests, ladies and gentlemen, our communities across our beautiful country, good afternoon.

Let me extend our greetings from the people of Bokone Bophirima, as we rise to welcome and support Budget Vote 33 of Human Settlements as delivered by Minister Simelane and Deputy Minister Mahambehhlala. The budget demonstrates an unwavering commitment and alignment with the commitment that was made 71 years ago in the Freedom Charter that there shall be houses, security and comfort for our people, as indicated by MEC Duma. We are continuing to undertake the commitment that was made by our forbearers. The 2026 ... [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Molapisi, your network has failed you. If you can hear me I going to suggest that you turn your video off and try to continue with your speech, please.

Mr G O MOLAPISI (North West): I hope I am better now, Chair?

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you. That sounds much better. Please go ahead, sir.

Mr G O MOLAPISI (North West): In support of the budget, we will provide a frame constructive and progressive view grounded on the lived realities of our people. Allow me to say that no one must stand before this House today and claim that our people do not appreciate the work done by the ANC to restore their dignity, by providing sustainable human settlement since the dawn of democracy. As such, no democratic government can lay claim that its service delivery record compared to that of the ANC because there is none, especially delivery of houses, provision of water and sanitation and electrification of our homes.

Unequivocally, it is only the ANC that declares in its manifesto that they will tackle the high cost of living by maintaining and expanding subsidies, basic services like water, houses for the poor and indigent policies in our municipalities.

The numbers presented by the Minister can be corroborated, and they speak for themselves. In the North West for 2025-26 financial year, the Department of Human Settlements plans to

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complete 3 405 housing units. I'm proud to report that we actually completed 3 487 housing units. We also paid 154 individual subsidies to beneficiaries with a slight increase as well by four as we had planned for 150. We serviced 3 778 sites. We registered 3 181 title deeds. We unblocked 2 678 stalled units.

Be that as it may, our communities decry the delays caused by largely blocked and incomplete projects, budget constraints, and system failures, which addressed in the department's budget speech for the previous financial year. In our last interaction with the community of Ward 20 in Orkney, Matlosana Municipality, over 40 families were recorded on the human settlement system as having received their houses. To the naked eye, this is not true as no houses were ever built or constructed at their yards. We are hard at work, together with the national department, to address such anomalies as they send a wrong message and negate the numbers of delivered houses within our communities.

I have directed the HOD, Ms Kgomotso Mahlobo to conduct a review and look into the system in the province to confirm what has been recorded against what is on the ground. Our people deserve better accountability to this lapse in the

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system. We will get to the bottom of these issues, give feedback and deliver on the commitments that we have made.

We welcome The hardline taken by the Minister directing that where contractors fail, there must be consequences, where infrastructure constraints exist, coordination must be escalated urgently, where unlawful disruption occur, government must engage communities honestly while ensuring lawlessness does not affect service delivery. We can testify that this is not a paper exercise.

The Department of Human Settlements continue to engage municipalities across the province on the challenges faced in that sector in general, and in particular budget constraints. We have met almost all our municipalities in the province on this issue. We will also be embarking on intensive discussion with the House of Traditional Khoisan leaders in the province. This is what the District Development Model expect from us - we must bring together all spheres of government and stakeholders under one roof for solution-oriented service delivery.

Through the District Development Model, the North West is collaborating with municipalities to address bulk

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infrastructure capacity, water and electricity, which so often delay housing projects. The North West province believes and appreciates the role played by social facilitation in the construction of the project.

To support the national department's strategy to deal with the identified block projects across the country, we are beginning to witness results of our strategy from initiating new projects to fixing existing ones to ensure value for money. We have reported in more than one occasion in this House on this remedial action.

We are utilising the 80% of our provincial human settlement budget to unblock stalled, incomplete housing projects across the province, with only 20% reserved for new developments. This will go a long way to resolve the backlog and deliver on service delivery mandate of our government.

As I conclude, we are all aware that people of our country are tired of the commitments that are made and they are not being undertaken. They have hoped in the ANC to deliver on the commitments. Hon Minister, we appreciate the honesty in this budget and believe fiscal discipline is the way to go. Like us in the province, we must maintain the achievement of the 99%

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expenditure as registered for the 2025-26 financial year. We have no excuse and we commit to achieving 100% expenditure.

The people of the country are not happy with the progress that we are making and would need to move with a faster pace. The province stands ready to work with the national department. We commit to putting the needs of our people above the convenience of contractors. We have listened to the submission during the occasion of Taking Parliament to the People by the National Council of Provinces. We continue to heed to the advice and directive of the esteemed portfolio committee and respect guidance of this August House. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, good day. Listening to hon Molapisi speaking just now, one has to find something profoundly wrong in a country where government departments can spend tens of billions on plans, frameworks, presentations, support provided, and yet ordinary South Africans still sleep in structures unfit for human habitation. Nowhere, hon members, is that failure more visible than at Khuma Temporary Relocation Area, TRA, in Matlosana, which we

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visited recently on Taking Parliament to the People. Hon Sithole, you know that area very well, it's your constituency.

It started in 2014 when the then President Cyril Ramaphosa visited the Khuma hostel and reportedly was dumbfounded by the state of hostel, which was dilapidated and unsuitable for human habitation. He made an executive order which saw the residents move to an alternative site, into asbestos temporary houses without sanitation, electricity and with two water taps for 200 structures. Let that sink in. Twelve years later, what do we have? Families still trapped in temporary accommodation, promises, delays, excuses, endless feasibility studies, endless processes, but still no dignified permanent housing.

This encapsulates the real tragedy of human settlements in South Africa. Under the ANC, government has become exceptionally good at managing failure instead of solving it. When one studies the department's Annual Performance Plan, APP, and budget, one sees the same pattern repeated throughout. The department measures support provided, monitoring reports, assessments conducted and guidelines developed, but the people of Khuma cannot live inside a quarterly assessment, and they cannot raise children in a monitoring report.

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South Africans do not need another presentation. They need houses, and before the Minister blames budget cuts for delivery, consider this. The budget in 1998-99 was close to R4 billion and built 235 635 units. Fast-track to 2024-25, with a budget of R32 billion, the department only built 38 453 houses. Again, before the minister quickly shifts blame, adjusted for inflation, the 1998-99 housing budget would sit at R16 billion. So, Minister, before you start crying about cutting your budget, maybe you do your job with what you have. At this very moment, South Africa faces exploding informal settlements, housing backlogs and urban migration pressures, and this department is retreating from delivery.

The painful reality is this. The ANC-run departments no longer have the institutional capacity, the political discipline or ethical credibility to solve the housing crisis it helped to create. That brings us to the Minister. Minister Simelani stands before this House asking South Africans to trust her department with tens of billions of rands in public funds, while serious allegations regarding her own conduct continue to cast a shadow over her credibility; because the crisis in Human Settlements is not only about budgets, Minister; it's about ethics, leadership, and whether citizens can trust those entrusted with their public money.

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When corruption enters government, the poor always pays first. Every rand diverted through corruption is a service site not built; every corrupt contract is another family trapped in a shack; every politically connected deal is another Khuma hostel resident abandoned in temporary asbestos accommodation for over a decade. It is difficult for this House to speak credibly about restoring dignity through Human Settlements when allegations linked to the Venda Building Society, VBS, Mutual Bank, and even coffee shop payments continue to follow the political leadership of this department.

The residents of Khuma, hon Minister, do not need cappuccinos in Sandton, and political favours; they need houses. The ANC has normalised this decay. While ANC Ministers drive from one scandal to the next in their gifted Chinese cars, the Western Cape continues to demonstrate what capable government actually looks like. In the Western Cape, housing delivery is not perfect. No honest government would claim that. But there's visible movement, planning certainty, infrastructure co-ordination and accountability.

The Western Cape continues to lead on title deed restoration, integrated human settlement planning and informal settlement upgrading, despite severe budget constraints.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Badenhorst, please take your seat. On what are you arising, hon Nonkonyana?

Inkosi M NONKONYANA: Sir, I rise in accordance with rule 69.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Yes.

Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: ... on a point of order, read with 62(2). The hon member is reflecting on the honour of the hon Minister in his speech. Yet Rule 62(2) clearly indicates that you can only do so by proposing a substantive motion for her removal from the office. I submit, therefore, that the hon member is out of order in reflecting on the honour of our Minister, and I ask you, Chair, to rule accordingly.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Nonkonyana, the section of hon Badenhorst's speech that I heard dealt substantively with matters that are in the public domain. If there's anything other than that, that you'd like to draw my attention to that the hon Badenhorst mentioned, perhaps you can do so. But with matters that are in the public domain that have been well ventilated already, I don't believe that a substantive motion is necessary in that regard. Would you like to substantiate your claim further?

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Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: Chair, briefly. The hon Badenhorst is telling this hon House, as well as the people of South Africa, that this House seeks to approve a budget, billions of rands, that are entrusted under the stewardship of the hon Minister who can never be entrusted with that. Therefore, I'm saying, when he says so, he's reflecting on the honour of the Minister, and in so doing, he can only do so by way of substantive motion set out in the rule I've cited.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): No, I can't agree with you on that, hon Nonkonyana. It is a matter for debate. We are here to debate a budget, and I think that your motion or your point of order is therefore overruled. Hon Badenhorst, if I can ask you to continue with your speech, please.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Hon Chair, I think the President agrees with me, because that's why he moved from one department to the next. While other provinces collapse under mismanagement, projects in the Western Cape are more likely to reach implementation because governance and ethical leadership matters. The difference is not geography; the difference is government. The difference is that DA-led administrations understand that dignity cannot wait for cadre employment

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committees, internal ANC faction fights, or politically connected contractors.

That is why Khuma matters. Khuma is not merely a local project failure; it's a symbol of a state that announces interventions with fanfare but lacks the competence to complete them. A government that relocates people into temporary asbestos structures and then quietly leaves them there for 12 years and a government that has mastered the language of compassion while delivering administrative paralysis. Now, Chairperson, the people of South Africa are tired of hearing that government is monitoring, supporting, and assessing itself.

The people of South Africa want outcomes; they want title deeds; they want service sites; they want functioning municipalities; they want safe communities, and above all, they want dignity. The DA believes human settlements must become more than a transfer payment machine with weak oversight and politically compromised leadership. Like the Department of Infrastructure in the Western Cape, it must become a delivery-focused department driven by measurable outcomes, capable municipalities, and infrastructure integration and clean governance.

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The people of Khuma were promised homes. Instead, they received delays, excuses, and another decade of ANC failure. I informed them on our visit that they can fix this on 4 November, and they certainly don't have to believe the ANC anymore. They agreed with me that they will vote DA. I thank you.

Cllr S MABALE-HUMA (Salga): Hon Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Minister and Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, hon Chief Whip of the NCOP, hon members, hon MECs, greetings to you all. Salga welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Human Settlements Budget Vote debate today. Human settlements is a very critical sector in the country, that impacts the lives of our communities directly and has the potential to make a meaningful impact in people's daily lives. The hon Minister is taking the lead in a service delivery project that we all co-own. Human settlement is as much about housing units as it is about whether the units have water, electricity access to efficient mobility, job opportunities, etc.

Regarding intergovernmental relations in human settlements, while the Constitution mandates national and provincial

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government to deliver housing, local government has a key role in that.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Councillor, Can I ask you to pause there and just turn off your video to assist with your signal. Your speech is breaking up ever so slightly. It will be much more impactful if you turn off your video and continue as soon as you are ready. Hon delegates, it looks like we have lost the councillor. The signal indeed gave way fully. I propose that we move on to the next debater and then come back to the councillor if she is able to rejoin with a more stable connection.

*Afrikaans:*

Me T BREEDT: Voorsitter, 'n huis is nie net vier mure en 'n dak nie. Dit is veiligheid. Dit is waardigheid. Dit is hoop. Vir duisende mense in die Vrystaat en regoor Suid-Afrika, bly daardie hoop net nog 'n verkiesingsbelofte.

*English:*

The department speaks about liveable neighbourhoods, integrated planning and spatial transformation. On paper, it sounds impressive. But communities in places like Dark and

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Silver City in the Free State are still waiting for basic dignity.

*Afrikaans:*

Mense leef sonder dat daar basiese infrastruktuur is, sonder voldoende sanitasie, sonder sekerheid oor hul toekoms.

Families word jaar na jaar belowe dat ontwikkeling oppad is, maar al wat hulle sien, is nóg studies, nóg planne, nóg konsultasies. En dit is presies die probleem.

Hierdie begroting praat baie oor support provided [die verskaffing van bystand], monitoring reports [moniteringsverslae], en assessments conducted [assesering gedoen]. Maar Suid-Afrikaners kan nie in verslae woon nie.

*English:*

They need houses. They need serviced sites. They need title deeds. And they need government that can actually deliver.

*Afrikaans:*

Die departement erken self dat daar reusse begrotingsverlagings was – meer as R20 miljard oor die mediumtermyn. Tog moet ons

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vra: Hoe effektief is die geld wat wél beskikbaar is? Ek dink agb Badenshorst het dit ook gesê.

*English:*

Because South Africans are tired of hearing about billions allocated while projects remain incomplete, contractors disappear and corruption flourishes.

*Afrikaans:*

Die VF Plus glo dat menswaardige behuising by verantwoordbare regering begin. Ons beleid stel dit duidelik: openbare geld moet beskerm word; projekte moet betyds voltooi word; gemeenskappe moet inspraak hê; en munisipaliteite moet aanspreeklik gehou word.

Dis ons tyd om dienslewering eerste te stel. Dis ons tyd om korrupsie te stop. Dis ons tyd om weer trots te wees op funksionerende dorpe en stede.

*English:*

One of the most painful realities is that many beneficiaries still do not receive title deeds. A family without ownership remains trapped in uncertainty. A title deed is not just

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paperwork. It is economic participation. It is generational security. It is dignity.

The department speaks about a target of 80 000 title deeds over five years. But at the current pace, many South Africans fear they will still be waiting long after the next election.

*Afrikaans:*

En terwyl gewone mense wag vir huise, sien ons hoe onwettige besettings toeneem, infrastruktuur verval, en swak plaaslike regering gemeenskappe verder in chaos plaas. Die waarheid is eenvoudig: As munisipaliteite nie funksioneer nie, kan behuisingsontwikkeling ook nie funksioneer nie.

*English:*

That is why the FF Plus continues to fight for capable local government, proper financial management and consequences for failure, ...

*Afrikaans:*

... want belastingbetalers en inwoners verdien beter.

*English:*

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Margaret Thatcher once said: "Plan your work for today and every day, then work your plan." South Africans have had enough of plans without implementation.

*Afrikaans:*

Ons mense wil nie nóg leë beloftes hoor nie. Hulle wil resultate sien.

Die VF Plus sal voortgaan om op te staan vir gemeenskappe wat afgeskeep word. Ons sal aanhou vir veilige woonbuurte, behoorlike infrastruktuur en verantwoordelike regering veg.

En soos ons die plaaslike verkiesing nader, is dit ons tyd. Dis ons tyd om swak bestuur weg te stem. Dis ons tyd om dienslewering terug te bring. Dis ons tyd om gemeenskappe eerste te stel. Ek dank u.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon delegates, we are going to go back to Councillor Mabale-Huma who is left with nine minutes. She looks like she has managed to rejoin. We hope your signal holds this time. If I can ask you, Councillor, thank you, we have seen your face. It is probably going to be best if you leave your video connection off, and

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then you can continue with your speech as you prefer. Thank you very much. You may proceed.

Cllr S MABALE-HUMA (Salga): Hon House Chairperson, I will continue where I ended. I was about to talk about the intergovernmental relations in human settlements.

While the Constitution mandates national and provincial government to deliver housing, local government has a key role in that. We appreciate the Minister and the department for leading this collective agenda of ours.

In order to strengthen our collective agenda, we must tighten up intergovernmental relations and corporate governance. The SA Local Government Association, Salga, has developed a local government human settlement support strategy, which relies on the Department of Human Settlements together with others such as Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, National Treasury, private sector, civil society, etc. We propose discussing the details of this in the human settlement Minister and Members of Executive Council, MinMEC.

Allow me to reflect on just a few highlights. On legislative and policy framework, we welcome the gazetting of the new

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White Paper on Human Settlements in 2025. By design, this will require the review of some pieces of legislature in order to give effect to the enhancements in the white paper.

We anticipate the review of the Housing Act and Housing Code and stand ready to facilitate consultation with local government sector and to implement the resultant outcomes. We will appreciate the Minister can make provision for this. A tricky piece of law that we have started working on with the hon Minister is the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, usually referred to as the PIE Act.

We must acknowledge our people's hunger for land due to historical and current reasons. These are well documented and therefore I will not go into them here. We must acknowledge that this progressive piece of law serves to protect the right to shelter, which is entrenched in our Constitution through the Bill of Rights.

In the same token, we must acknowledge how it has been abused by some, particularly those preying on the vulnerabilities of our people. We must review this law acknowledging other constitutional rights, particularly the right to property, as

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well as the right to a safety, healthy environment. All these rights act side by side in Section 24, 25 and 26 of the Constitution.

We remain ready to work with the Ministry and the department to do this review in the most balanced and workable way as possible. As a starting point, we call upon all stakeholders to comment on the Amendment Bill that the hon Minister gazetted in April and for the Minister to be intentional in factoring our comments.

In terms of accreditation of municipalities to deliver housing, my starting point was that local government has a key role to play in Human Settlements and we are keen to take up this responsibility.

After all, when communities demand housing or there are any related challenges, they demand responses from the municipalities. It therefore only makes sense that municipalities are given the powers, the means and support to deliver on this critical mandate. Unfortunately, we are struggling to find one another on this initiative.

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We welcome the decision that MinMEC took in 2023 to strengthen the accreditation of municipalities to deliver housing. The reviewed Human Settlements accreditation framework sought to give effect to this. We also welcome the decision that at least all the secondary cities be accredited, of course, following the necessary due processes.

The support of the hon Minister in this regard will be helpful. In this context, national and provincial accreditation task team were to be resuscitated in provinces where they existed before and established in areas where they were never established in order to oversee the implementation of the accreditation programme in the respective provinces. While these have now been established in most of the provinces, they remain inconsistent and their effectiveness is questionable. We call upon the hon Minister to strengthen oversight on this programme.

It may be useful to refer to the current review of the White Paper Local Government, which is starting to argue that municipalities that have the necessary capacity must be mandated to deliver on functions that are best delivered at the level of local level. We would like to argue that Human Settlements is one such function. In fact, this is in support

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of section 156 of the Constitution of the Republic regarding devolution of appropriate functions. In this regard, we would like to propose that Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs through the capacity assessment conducted by the Municipal Demarcation Board should assist in determining the capacity of specified municipalities in preparation for this to assist them.

In terms of fiscal and financial system, South Africa's intergovernmental fiscal system is celebrated by many locally and globally. This includes the United Nations World Event Forum that the hon Minister recently participated in. We, unfortunately, need to navigate the constrained fiscal environment. This must not ... [Inaudible.] ...

[Interjections.] ... [Inaudible.] ... [Interjections.]. Am I out of order, hon Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): I am sorry, there are some interferences coming through. I am not sure what is happening. It could possibly be one of the translators who have unmuted themselves. If I can just ask the entire team to check that they remain muted. Our apologies for that interruption, if you can continue, please, Councillor.

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Cllr S MABALE-HUMA (Salga): Okay, thank you very much. I was on fiscal and financial system. South Africa's intergovernmental fiscal system is celebrated by many locally and globally. This includes what the Minister has participated for in the United Nations World Event Forum.

We, unfortunately, need to navigate the constrained fiscal environment. This must not roll back the gains we have made thus far, but to perhaps refine efficiencies and maximise the impact of our expenditure to transform the lives of our people and the spaces in which they live. We would like to protect the intentional funding of metropolitan municipalities for their housing programmes, particularly through the Urban Settlement Development Grant and Informal Settlement Upgrading Partnership Grant.

We acknowledge the difficulties in some instances with the implementation of these programmes and by extension the expenditure. The difficulties have been documented, and I will thus not repeat them here. Safe to highlight the need to strengthen collaboration in the planning, delivering and reporting value chain.

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Better coordination will assist, firstly, in targeting the spending accordingly, including spatially. It will also assist in proactively identifying bottlenecks and addressing them timeously, such that the efficiency of delivery is streamlined.

Remember, expenditure is a proxy indicator for delivery. We must just be mindful that while the expenditure must translate into the targeted number of housing units, it must also serve to transform our municipal spaces and related infrastructure. The current infrastructure reforms must maintain this balance. Failure to do so will result in high numbers of units while perpetuating apartheid spatial form where houses are delivered far from places of opportunity.

The unintended consequences of this could be to trap the beneficiaries in poverty and constant dependency on the state. In terms of municipal leadership development and profiling, we acknowledge the leadership of the Minister in representing the country and our sectors locally and internationally. This strengthens our standing in the global community of nations.

We urge the Minister to engage with mayors and municipal leadership more in this regard. As the World Urban Forum

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highlighted, municipalities are at the forefront of managing rapid urbanisation and the associated rapid rise in housing demand in our societies and towns. Mayors are at the coalface of both opportunity and challenges presented by this rapid urbanisation.

One of the areas of work that we would like to strengthen collaboration is how we represent local government sector in various local and global platforms. At the national level, there is a need to strengthen our collaboration with our key stakeholders. We acknowledge the support that the Minister has provided in coordinating various platforms to this effect and thus request that she proactively set aside resources to support the National Urban Forum and Local Government Property Development Forum.

Stakeholders across different spheres of government, civil society, private sector, research agencies and professionals have appreciated the way we, together with the Ministry and the department have engaged them on this platform in persuading inclusive growth and development.

In conclusion, Salga appreciates the good intergovernmental relation with the Department of Human Settlements in

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supporting our municipalities. It is critical we strengthen our collaborating with municipalities to bring tangible change to our communities and improve the funding model for local government in general, as well as housing and associated infrastructure in particular is a prerequisite in this undertaking.

If municipalities properly capacitate and support us in various ways, including financially, capacity, et cetera, we will not succeed in the delivery of this important undertaking. On that note, thank you very much, hon Chairperson. I thank you.

Mr S K MASHILO (Mpumalanga): Chair, am I audible? I can't see myself on the screen. I don't know what is happening, but nonetheless, if you may allow me to speak. House Chairperson, I am grateful to participate in this important debate. To our hon Minister Simelane and indeed our Deputy Minister, my fellow colleagues and indeed hon members in the House, good afternoon.

As Africa Month and a national celebration of workers draw to a close, I want to recognise the powerful spirit of solidarity that has brought us together. I rise today to participate in

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this crucial policy debate on Budget Vote 33 for Human Settlements. As Mpumalanga, we support this budget.

As this House is aware, the National Council of Provinces carries a distinct constitutional obligation. We are here to ensure that the division of revenue, the allocation of conditional grant and the execution of national policies directly translate into a tangible, dignified reality for the people living in our nine respective provinces.

Speaking on behalf of the beautiful, diverse, yet deeply challenged province of Mpumalanga, I am acutely aware of the weight of this responsibility. Over the past 12 months, through extensive oversight and dedicated political education on the mechanics of governance, I have deepened my conviction that housing is not a passive rhetorical ideal; it is an active enforceable mandate.

However, hon Chair, we have noted as a province that housing remains not a steady but a movable instrument. Every day a person is looking for houses, while every day a child is born and is indeed looking for shelter. In 2007, in the ANC conference, we resolved to move from Housing to what we refer

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to as Human Settlements, to an extent where we should put services around where our people reside.

Section 26 of our Constitution explicitly guarantees that everyone has a right to have access to adequate housing. Rains and severe thunderstorms heavily impacted areas like Dr Moroka, Mbombela Municipality, Nkomazi, Bushbuck Ridge, Mkhondo and other remaining areas, in that they reversed some of the gains the province had achieved over a period of time. However, I must commend the national department for speedily responding in assessing these areas and responding accordingly.

A home is a very foundation for human dignity, socioeconomic stability and family scrutiny. Yet, we deliberate on this budget allocation today. It remains the challenge that the resources given to us as provinces remain insufficient. Of course, we are mindful of the challenges that the country is facing, which we are competing with. We must acknowledge that the Department of Higher Education, through the NSFAS, is equally looking for these resources, while the Department of Health is also looking out for human life, etc. Hence, our people are looking for human settlements.

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It is for these reasons that, as a province, we have equally relooked the matter thoroughly. Instead of concentrating only in building top structures, we have equally moved in making servicing sites. We have serviced almost 4 000 sites in the previous financial year. That enables us to progress well.

Over a period of time, the people confirmed that they are not necessarily looking for the top structure as a house; they are looking for settlements that include a site or land. That is what is critical for our people. It is for those reasons that they have seen our people occupy where we have service sites over a period of time. Today, they have built beautiful double-storey houses. This suggests that we must continuously service sites if indeed we want to address these movable targets of housing.

Let us look directly at the numbers and the mechanisms of delivery. Over 90% of this department's total budget that the Minister presented goes to provinces, in so far as the Human Settlement Development Grant, which HSDG, and the Urban Settlement Development Grant, USDG. This gives us an opportunity as a province to work closely with our municipalities to address this problem.

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In an area like Steve Tshwete, where we have mining towns, the mines have built what we refer to as skomplas, townships, which they have left today as they are no longer active in the area. These towns remain areas that require services, and municipalities can no longer provide services because our people are unemployed in those areas and cannot afford them.

As the Human Settlements Department in the province, we have since decided to relocate the people of Lesedi and Naledi to an area that is better serviced, which is Rondebosch in Mpumalanga, where there is electricity, there is sewer, there is bulk water, and indeed there are a better roads in the area. We are grateful that these people have since agreed to move to this area where it is good.

Indeed, there are incomplete houses that some of the contractors have not completed. We have since terminated some of them, and currently, we are doing extremely good to recover the lost grants that we have disbursed. We have put the mud houses away in areas like Mkhondo, Pixley ka Seme, as well as Thembisile Hani Municipalities.

During the floods, we realised that the majority of our people have plenty of mud houses. That poses another challenge to

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this department. It is easy for those who have had an opportunity in the past, who have enjoyed and will always believe things can happen easily. From where we sit as a province, Minister, we are grateful with what you have given to us and will continuously address the challenges we face.

As a province, we are confronted by the asbestos areas. At the moment, we have eradicated asbestos in Dipaleseng, Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr J S Moroka, and indeed we are currently doing Victor Khanye, Thaba Chweu and other areas. In the next financial year, we will focus on bigger areas like Mbombela, Emalahleni and indeed Govan Mbeki. They remain big areas.

In so far as the amenities are concerned, our people require these social amenities. I must indicate that we have now completed beautiful social amenities, like community hall and kindergarten in Thembisile, in Nkomazi, Ntunta, as well as Mariam Mokgakane in Bushbuck Ridge. We are currently to open other amenities around Lekwa in Standerton. This is what we are doing.

Of course, we do have a number of the CRU because not everybody in town requires houses. Some require a place to stay since we have done abolishment of the so-called hostel

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because we could not repeat what the apartheid system had created. At the moment, we have now installed a new CRU in areas like Malelane, in Mbombela, Emalahleni, as well as Steve Tshwete municipalities, where there are areas in so far as the mining town is concerned.

We firmly believe that our people require these places, and we are certain. Currently, we are dealing with disasters that were caused during the flooding areas. Correctly, as the Ministers has alluded, we believe that as a province, with your assistance, we shall overcome some of these challenges that have indeed confronted us.

Insofar as the unblocked and abandoned projects, we have indeed scrutinised them, and we are at an advanced stage as a province of Mpumalanga to attend to all these areas. The Minister of Human Settlements recently confirmed that the President has instructed the department to address abandoned projects. As a province, we cannot fail the Minister who is on the course to do that. This marks a crucial shift in our approach, one that strengthens accountability and guarantees that fiscal resources are utilised responsibly and effectively.

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We firmly believe that the oversight of the NCOP must remain constant. Such vigilance will ensure that we serve our people better, restoring dignity and delivering on the promise of houses for all the people of South Africa - not only the few but all the people of South Africa. We must look closely at our provincial footprint, track down every single abandoned project and institute strict consequence management for nonperforming contractors. We have since done that and there are results coming from this particular integration.

By integrating government planning across all three districts, we have unlocked 255 catalytic projects valued at R131 billion. This is evidence that the District Development Model continues to yield measurable success. As we speak, our project around Nkosi City is underway, a project in Hospital View in Bushbuckridge ... [Time expired.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon MEC, on that note of Nkosi City, time had expired. We really appreciate your input.

Mr M M PETER: Chair, I don't know whether I am audible.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): You are audible and visible.

Mr M M PETER: Thank you, Chair.

*IsiXhosa:*

Sihlalo weNdlu, amalungu ale Ndlu nabemi boMzantsi Afrika jikelele, ndithi mandikhahlele. Mphathiswa omhle weli sebe, ndithi mandikunkqangise kweli qonga namhlanje ngoMasipala oMbaxa iNelson Mandela Bay. Kubonakala ukuba eli sebe lakho lijikisa imali yokwakha izindlu, minyaka le, eqikelelwa kwizigidi ngezigidi. Ingaba uyalwazi kusina na olo daba? Ingaba sikhona kusini na isizathu esibangela ukuba abantu bangakhelwa izindlu kulo masipala?

Kwintetha yakho osandula kuyidakanca awukhange uyikhankanye imeko yoMasipala oMbaxa iNelson Mandela Bay. Lo masipala, usisigqubu samatyotyombe. Nyaka nonyaka, la matyotyombe ayanda ngokwenani kuba akukho zindlu zakhiwayo. Mphathiswa, umbuzo umile ubuza ukuba leliphi eli tyala baligwetywayo ngokungokhelwa izindlu? Mphathiswa, olu hlahlomali lwakho luveza imibuzo emininzi. Ingaba lukhona kusini na utshintsho oluya kwenziwa lolu hlahlomali? Ingaba iimpilo zabantu ziya

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kutshintsha kusini na xa kujika imali engaka yezindlu minyaka le, ningakwazi ukwakhela abantu bayo?

*English:*

Housing problems are endless in this country because those who have received houses are struggling to get title deeds. According to the Human Settlements Minister, more than 1,2 million households remain without registered title deeds.

*IsiXhosa:*

Ithetha ukuthini loo nto? Ithi isebe lakho linomcelimngeni esingasokuze sikwazi ukuwulungisa namhlanje kodwa ethubeni kuya kulunga. I-UDM ithi asikwazi ukumela ngaphesheya sithi asiluxhasi olu hlahlomali kuba xa senza kanjalo sithi kumalungu ethu nabemi beli lizwe mabangaxhamli kwiinkonzo noxa nje thina sixhamla kurhulumente. Ngoko ke sithi ngamxhelomnye, uhlahlomali siya luxhasa ngokungathandabuziyo. Mphathiswa, akuncedi ukugxekana esidlangalaleni ngento ebesinokuyilungiselela ekhusini. Abantu bayaphela belindele iinkonzo kurhulumente sibe silibele kuphikisana apha. Ngaloo mazwi, ndiyehla kweli qonga ngelithi, siyaluxhasa olu hlahlomali. Enkosi, Sihlalo weNdlu.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, hon Peter. The speaker number 20 was supposed to be the MEC Mokoena of the Free State, but he had to catch the flight because he had to leave. So, the next speaker on the podium is going to be hon Britz from the Eastern Cape. Over to you, sir!

Mr J H P BRITZ: Hon House Chair, hon Minister, hon members. Fellow South Africans, have you also realised and noticed how the ANC make political promises and how those promises increase, now, ahead of the elections?

Controversies have a nasty tendency of following people, regardless of where they attempt to hide. But fortunately for some today, we are not here to discuss personal controversies, but South Africans are still waiting for proper housing after 30 years of democracy.

Excuses, promises and failures are now fast catching up to the budget, just like logic and common sense chased the hon Nzimande and the MKP; but they were also faster.

I'm reminded of an Eskom-Vitrovia controversy, with the department's annual report revealing contingent liabilities, legal claims exceeding R1,9 billion involving disputed housing

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contracts, property ownership disputes, procurement challenges and constitutional damages claims.

Reminded of a Venda Building Society, VBS, Mutual Bank investigation, parliamentary oversight processes, annual reports, Auditor-General's findings and media scrutiny revealed several serious concerns, which include underspending and delays in housing delivery, persistent informal settlement backlogs, weak municipal implementation capacity, disputes and delays in providing basic services amid tenure security, and allegations of fraud within entities and weak oversight systems.

Yes, hon Kaunda, all these happened under the watch of your so-called mighty movement who neglected the poorest of the poor for the past 30 years.

But, hon House Chair, I'm going to interrupt myself and I'm going to pause here. I want to hand over a few awards today.

Now, the first award goes to the hon Farmer of the PA for knocking out logic and common sense by blaming the recent floods and disasters on the DA.

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The second award, House Chair, goes to the hon Kaunda for setting a new convention. Committee Chairs now do not have to present their committee reports anymore, they can replace it with political speeches and rhetoric.

And my third award today goes to MEC Molapisi, who forgot that this hon House accepted and adopted a scathing report on the North West province, only yesterday, and he forgot that this House visited that province only two weeks ago. We saw for ourselves, hon Molapisi.

A severe housing backlog, rapid urbanisation, rising informal settlements, increasing pressure on metros and insufficient affordable housing supply contribute to this continuing housing crisis.

Minister, if 80% of South Africans have formal housing, that still leaves around about 12,5 million people without homes. Government's reports acknowledge that current delivery rates are not keeping up with the demand for housing, and these reports contradict what you and ANC speakers wish South Africans to believe today.

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The DA does not only criticise, but we propose solutions. What is required is a firm foundation to transfer ownership of unused public assets such as vacant state-owned agricultural land to citizens who foster public-private partnerships to overcome the historic legacy of apartheid spatial planning.

The DA considers government policy on human settlements to be an opportunity to make citizenship more inclusive to those who are currently left behind. They are left behind throughout South Africa, and not as a tool to canvass voters ...

[Interjections.]

Mr F J BADENHORST: Point of order, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Badenhorst, on what rule are you rising?

Mr F J BADENHORST: I'm rising on Rule 68, if it please you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Will you quote it?

Mr F J BADENHORST: You don't have a rule in front of you?

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Quote it!

Mr F J BADENHORST: No delegate may interrupt another delegate while speaking, Chair. And there's insistent interruption by ... I believe ... the Deputy Minister or somewhere in that area, but it's interrupting this delegate while he is speaking. Can you please rule on that, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Thank you, hon Badenhorst. Actually, what happens here is that when you raise the temperatures in the House, the people are bound to respond in kind. So, what is happening, in the House people are allowed to heckle. So, it has not yet reached the stage where I can see that it's disrupting ... [Interjections.]

Mr F J BADENHORST: The door ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Over to you, hon Britz!

Mr J H P BRITZ: This is an opportunity to make citizenship more inclusive and not to use it as a tool to canvass voters with more empty promises.

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Hon Mabebo, progressive realisation of additional shelter ...  
[Interjections.] ... as provided for in the Constitution,  
hinges ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hold your horses a little bit.

On what rule are you rising, hon Kaunda?

Mr T M KAUNDA: Hon Chairperson, I rise on Rule 68C. If the member is willing to take my difficult question?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Britz, are you ready to take a difficult question?

Mr J H P BRITZ: Chair, I didn't bring my crayons to draw pictures. Can I continue, please?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): He's not going to take your question.

Over to you!

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Mr J H P BRITZ: Adequate shelter hinges on achieving higher levels of economic growth to increase fiscal space, decrease unemployment and reduce the household indebtedness, which currently constrains housing options.

Hon Minister, what we need now is action and not more promises. What is needed now is more houses and less homelessness. What is needed now is more hope and less hopelessness.

Hon Minister, you have a budget of R27 billion to help those in need. Now, show South Africans the political will to do so. Spend the budget where it will change lives, not where it will disappear into another controversy. There are no more excuses. There is no more time. I thank you.

Ms K R MOLOKOMME: I knew you were going to comment about the colour of my jacket, but it's fine.

Chair, thank you for the opportunity. Let me greet the hon Minister and the Deputy Minister ... [Interjections.] ... yes. I think, Chair, we need to take other members to an emotional intelligence workshop, because, obviously, it seems as if we are too emotional while we need to address issues that affect

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our people and our citizens. We need to take this issue of housing very seriously because some of us are from rural villages. We know how it is not to have decent housing and other services. [Interjections.]

Hon Chair, we gather here today to reflect on the journey since the momentous year of 1994, a pivotal time when the nation began to chart a new course towards equality and opportunity for all.

It is essential to acknowledge the deep-seated injustices that have long plagued our society for too long. And our people, particularly blacks ... I'm saying this, hon Chair, because the 31 years of democracy that we are speaking about, as the ANC-led government we are using it to make sure that our people have decent houses. And if you can compare the strides where this government has worked and compare it with the neighbouring countries, you'll see that the ANC government has done a lot. So, we need to appreciate that. [Interjections.]

Hon Badenhorst, you are speaking about the Khuma informal settlement where we did a site visit in the North West, of which we have seen the issues that affect that community.

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But I need to emphasise this point also, hon Chair, that one of the issues that made the community of Khuma to stay there for too long is because of the disputes lodged by AfriForum, because they have a tendency of not wanting our people to reside closer to towns. So, now, we are unable to build due to the delay caused AfriForum's disputes.

So, we need to address ... people mustn't come here and claim as if they care about our people down there, while they are the ones who are delaying service delivery in those communities. [Interjections.]

In Dunoon, also, Minister, we had visited that area where there's a vacant land that is supposed to be used to build houses for the people of Dunoon. And we did not even get who that land belongs to, whether it is the provincial or the municipality itself. Now, those people don't have houses because of that delay ... because of that delay ... I'm a bit distracted and ... Chair, can you ...

*Sepedi:*

... nnete ya tlhaba ...

*English:*

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... hon Members. Because when you do good, Minister, that is why they'll bring some issues that are not even supposed to be here that you addressed. And I can say to you and your team and Deputy Minister, to continue doing good, continue working hard for the communities because the annual performance plan, APP, that you have presented to the committee, you did really address the issues that members are always raising in the select committee. And also, we appreciate the good job that you are doing.

And the APP, it states that you are going to address backlogs issues. I know that even in Lephalale, we had the integrated housing project that was stagnant for about eight years. Now, we are happy to report that houses were built and people are now staying in decent houses in Lephalale. The only part where is left is the Community Residential Units, CRUs, and is about 90% to be completed. We believe that in no time, people of Lephalale, they'll move to those CRU houses.

Hon Chair, the Matlosana integrated project we visited during our committee's oversight visit and there are some several issues that communities raised there. And one of the issues is that we met one disabled person who did not have a house, and when we went there for the second time, we were told that the

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matter has been raised with the department and this person living with disability is going to get his house. And we are urging the department to give priority to people living with disability, children house-headed families and the elderly, so that they get what is due to them.

And also, the contractor, we were told that the contractor had left site last year, October, but we are happy to report that the contractor is back on site, and we believe that he's going to continue with the good job that he's now starting to do. And we will urge the department to also monitor the progress, so that this unfinished project can be dealt with.

The issue of Spatial Planning and Land-Use Management, Spluma, Chair, we know that the traditional leaders always complain about Spluma that is not well-presented to them. And this is to address issues of land and ...

*Sepedi:*

... ....le gore magoši a rena ge a segela batho ditene kua magaeng ba se ke ba ba bea mo go emago meetse, moo ge dipula di ena ba ikhwetšago ba le ka bodibeng bja meets.

*English:*

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So, we are saying this Spluma spatial planning, let's make it a point that ...

*Sepedi:*

... mebasepala ya rena e ya e gatelela...

*English:*

... when they meet with our chiefs so that when disasters strike...

*Sepedi:*

...di se ke tša re humana re le mo kgakanegong...

*English:*

...of relocating people to the safest places.

Deputy Minister and Minister, we really appreciate the budget. We know that there are some budget cuts that you have indicated, but we strongly believe that you'll prioritise those projects that need to be finished in various provinces.

I was listening to the MECs when they were giving their speeches and also the progress that they are making in their various provinces, like in Limpopo.

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The MEC of Limpopo has indicated that they are doing well in terms of giving decent houses to the people of Limpopo and we are urging and we know that they do this because of the support of the national department. So, apart from getting support from you, they were not going to achieve the milestone that they have achieved now, even the target that the MEC has indicated today in this platform.

To the hon members from the EFF and MKP, I know that you are expecting the Minister and the team to give you the response and accountability on the issues that you are raising, but the question is how are they going to do that if you reject the budget? Because you can't reject the budget and expect Ministers to come here and give you a response and account. How do they account to you while you don't want to give them money? So, one of you indicated that we are with you.

People of South Africa, we are with you. How can you be with people while ...

*Sepedi:*

... ...le sa nyake go ba fa tšhelete. Batho ga ba nyake gore le tle le dule le bona, ba nyaka ...

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*English:*

... service delivery. They want houses, they want electricity, they want water, clean water, in fact. But if you say I'm with you, what do you want to do with me while you can't provide services? We need plans that will be able to address issues that our people are faced with. And the ANC, Government of National Unity, GNU-led government is willing to do that ...

[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: GNU-led, well done. GNU-led ...

Ms K R MOLOKOMME: ... is willing to do that, the ANC GNU-led government ... [Interjections.] ... and it's going to be so destructive while we are saying we are in government and we come and criticise this ... you can't point fingers to others while you yourself are not doing well.

Oh, lastly, I don't want to forget this, Minister. Last time when you were here you indicated that the Western Cape's money was taken back. The question is why, even if it's two years or one year, the matter of the fact is that that money belongs to the people? You need to build houses for the people. So, you can't come here and claim that you care about our people while you don't want to avail land, while you don't want to use

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money that is supposed to build houses for them, and you let it go back to Treasury. We can't do that. We can't do that.

So, we mustn't come here and grandstand. We are talking about the lives of people, blacks in particular, those who need us to take decisions and decisive decisions to provide services for them. Thank you very much, Chair.

The MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT: Hon House Chairperson, when systems and critical thinking fail to resolve complex matters the debates gets personal. Hon Badenhorst, you went to the police station, grandstanding with SABC to open a case against me. I thought you would come back to this House today, a year down the line, and tell how far are you with your investigation? It is you actually that I am addressing you today and not arrested as you thought there is a case against me.

*IsiXhosa:*

Yiza nayo ...

*English:*

... I will respond to it. But let me contextualise how we went down in service delivery in the Western Cape. In 2017/18

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financial year, they were building at least a minimum of 20 000 houses per financial year. Today they are at 7 000. That was 2024 and it has got no relationship with money. Last year they returned no less than R200 million back to the fiscus. They challenged it after assessment they lost even at National Treasury.

I cannot help you even when the royal education of at your age did not teach you a difference between an outcome and an output at a strategic level. An output is a tangible and outcome is the value of what you get. Free education even when you are white you cannot comprehend that? I cannot see it.

In Bishop Lavis Court we gave a 95-year-old a title deed, here in the Western Cape.

*IsiXhosa:*

Wena ubulinde ntoni ungamniki?

*English:*

Hout Bay has secured land and we allocated you money. You did not build until today. That land is a vegetable garden. On the Silverton Emergency Housing, we gave you R84 million and you did not use it, and it quickly ballooned to R243 million.

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Instead of investing it yourself and release the forensic report, DA, you said National Treasury must do it. Go to the police station as you remembered about the cappuccino.

In 2013, we allocated money for the Masonwabe Informal Settlement in Gugulethu. Until today, they are in a Transitional Residential Area, Tra. That is the Great Western Cape for you. Blikkiesdorp in Delft has been in the Tra since 2007. Blessings from the Western Cape government. Serious allegations. What are those? Blessings. You remember Khuma. Yes, Khuma in the Northwest and Free State. When we went with the NCOP there, you did not even have the courage to show up. You did not attend. You were not there.

*IsiXhosa:*

Ubusoyika ntoni?

*English:*

Let us get closer to Du Noon. Hon Molokome, we allocated six ERFs into the province, for them to unblock Du Noon, allocate transitional residential units and get the land to build formal structures for those people. Provincial government under the budget that is ... no, no, no, national government allocate to DA which did not spend. The land is still barren

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even today. The people are still cramped in Du Noon and they are killed by fires every now and then. Maybe that is what you want. You want them to die and choked by fires when you have the money.

The plans and the framework for hostels ... Remember, I am just talking about the surrounding here. I have not gone to Khayamandi. I have not gone to Sommerset West. I have not gone anywhere else. Free State and from there, they have got an increase from the budget that the Department of Human Settlements gave them after they are dealing with their business plan better than what you are doing. In fact, the money we gave to Free State, we took it from you. We took it from you. We did not give Free State alone. We also gave KwaZulu-Natal from that R250 million. We gave Limpopo R10 million for additional and superb work.

Now let me remind you what Almicar Cabral told us. He said, "tell no lies", "claim no easy victories" you are bad you are failures you need national to assist you just like we assisted Free State so that you can get additional money. We are assisting Northwest so they can get additional money but I know we will still take it from the beautiful province of the Western Cape. Thank you very much.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon delegates we are still in session. It was highly appreciated and you did respond to the people. So, hon delegates, we have come to an end of the Budget Vote 33, Human Settlements. I would like to thank the Minister, the Deputy Minister and the MECs and Special Delegates who participated in this debate.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

(Policy debate)

Vote No 16 - Basic Education:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chairperson, the NCOP, chairpersons of the select committee, Deputy Minister, hon premiers, MECs, hon members, fellow South Africans ...

*Tshivenda:*

Ndi masiari.

*IsiZulu:*

Sanibonani.

*English:*

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Let me begin by telling the House the tale of two 10-year-olds. This might remind us all about why we do the work that we do. Too often we become consumed by political noise and lose sight of the children whose futures depend on the decisions that we make in this House. The first child is Lindiwe. She attended an early child development, ECD, centre with structured learning, qualified practitioners, and proper nutrition. She was exposed to books from an early age, and by age 10, she reads with understanding, solves mathematics problems confidently, and her future is bright. The second child, Nelson, is just as bright, just as deserving, but Nelson did not attend an ECD centre. He first encounters a book when he enters Grade 1. By age 10, he cannot yet read for meaning but is expected to write the same assessments as Lindiwe. The curriculum moves forward. Nelson is left behind. I want to assure you that over 90% of the children in this country are more Nelsons than they are Lindiwes. And this is the education injustice of our time.

The question then before this House today is whether the implementation of this Budget Vote helps more children like Nelson receive the strong foundations that children like Lindy will already have. Because stronger foundations are the difference between a child who participates in the future and

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a child who is locked out of it. That is why I rise to table Budget Vote 16 under the theme: Stronger Foundations for Stronger Futures. The test for this Budget Vote is whether the choices we make today build a public education system that gives every child, not only the fortunate few, foundations they need to thrive. But this House knows better than most that strong foundations are not built in Pretoria alone. They are built in the Eastern Cape villages where children still walk kilometers to school. They are built in Gauteng classrooms where overcrowding is real. They are built in Limpopo schools where sanitation still needs urgent attention. They are built in the Northern Cape where distance makes delivery harder and more expensive. They are built in KwaZulu-Natal where financial pressure is hitting education hardest. They are built in every province through the decisions, disciplines and the delivery of provincial education departments. Because education delivery happens in provinces, this House carries a profound constitutional responsibility. The NCOP is a chamber of accountability for provincial delivery.

The budget will be judged on one test, whether provinces deliver textbooks on time, pay schools their norms and standard allocations on time, fill critical vacancies,

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maintain infrastructure and give every learner a fair chance to learn. South Africa's education injustice begins long before matric. A child who enters school without early learning opportunities starts already behind and remains behind. That is why the administration is focused intensely on strengthening the foundations of learning. I am happy to report that over the past year we exceeded our target of registering 10 000 ECD centres. We have registered 13 300 ECD centres.

Early Childhood Development registrations have grown by 200% since 2021 and more than 1,2 million children now have access to ECD programmes. This matters because strong foundations in the early years improve literacy and numeracy and school readiness and long-term educational outcomes. The success of ECD expansion depends heavily on provincial implementation and capacity. Provinces must make sure that registration systems work and they work efficiently, that subsidies reach on time to centres, and that practitioners receive proper support. The same applies to the implementation of compulsory Grade R.

Compulsory Grade R remains one of the most important reforms in democratic South Africa. But reform does come with a financial tag; it comes at a cost. Reform without financial

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planning creates instability. The implementation pressure on provinces is real. Expanding Grade R and supporting and appointing the necessary teachers will cost about R10 billion over the medium term. And this has not been yet fully funded.

We have therefore redirected R800 million from the ECD grant to support compulsory Grade R. This is not ideal, but doing nothing would have been worse. That is why we are continuing to engage National Treasury on sustainable funding solutions for compulsory Grade R while working closely with provinces to ensure responsible implementation. One of the gravest risks facing education today is the deteriorating financial position of several provincial education departments.

In 2024, we initiated a financial analysis into provincial education finances, and the findings I shared with this very House at this very podium were deeply concerning. The analysis projected that three provincial departments would face severe financial distress over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. Today, that financial distress is very visible in provinces like KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Northern Cape, and other provinces that are now starting to follow suit. Now, when provincial finances collapse, the consequences are immediate, and they are devastating. Schools do not receive their norms

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and standards allocations, teacher posts remain vacant, infrastructure projects stall, learner transport payments are delayed, textbooks arrive late, and classrooms become overcrowded. It is ultimately the learner who pays the price for financial instability.

Why is this important for the members in this House? This is why financial recovery in provincial education departments must now become a national priority for us all, the members in this House and including us in the Department of Basic Education. It is for this reason also that I am establishing a multidisciplinary technical support team to help provinces restore budget discipline, strengthen expenditure controls, improve financial modelling, and protect school resourcing. Technical support alone will not solve this challenge. What is required now is stronger financial discipline, improved governance, credible budgets, and relentless oversight. This is where the role of the NCOP is absolutely critical, hon members. This House must intensify its oversight, not after failure, but before failure. Oversight must be proactive, continuous, and focused on delivery. The NCOP must help ensure that education budgets from provinces are spent on classrooms, teachers, learning materials, and infrastructure, and not lost

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through poor planning, irregular expenditure, and weak governance.

This House must also continue monitoring whether provincial departments are paying schools on time. Norms and standard allocations are not optional. They keep schools open, resourced, and functional. When a school is paid late, teaching and learning suffer. Hon members, the financial recovery of provinces is inseparable from improving learning outcomes. This is why the department will continue strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy across the system. This year, 10 000 foundation phase teachers will receive targeted literacy and numeracy training.

We are strengthening structured learning support, improving reading benchmarks, and expanding support for African language literacy programmes. We are also reducing the unnecessary administrative burden on teachers so that educators can spend more time teaching and less time completing excessive paperwork. This is important because teachers have been telling us this thing. They have been saying that the administrative burden is taking them away from work in the classrooms. We have listened, we have acted, and we are going to be issuing directives to provinces to really try and

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declutter the reporting mechanisms that teachers are meant to be filling in and eradicating any duplication in unnecessary forms.

In addition to freeing teachers to concentrate on core business, of teaching and learning, we have refocused Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme increasingly to prioritise foundation phase education, because the earliest years of schooling remain the greatest lever of improving long-term outcomes. If we fail in the foundation phase, we struggle to recover later. This administration also believes that education quality must be measured honestly. For too long, the conversation has been reduced to a quality of a metric, to a single pass percentage. And for too long, the national conversation has only focused on that national pass percentage. Yes, we must applaud the matric class of 2025 for achieving an 88% pass rate - the highest in South Africa's history. We must also deepen how we assess matric quality.

Going forward, provincial performance will be ranked through a broader basket of indicators that is focused on quality and not only just the pass rate. This quality basket will include bachelor passes, distinctions, learner retention, participation and performance in gateway subjects such as

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mathematics, physical science and accounting. This approach will allow provinces to benchmark performance more meaningfully and identify areas that require attention. But also, it will allow us to have an honest reflection about the state of our education in our country, without only having a narrow focus on just a national matric pass rate.

The NCOP has an important role to play here as well. The House must help drive a culture of evidence-based accountability in provincial education systems. The question should not only be whether or not learners have passed, but whether provinces are improving literacy and numeracy, and whether or not they are retaining learners, and whether or not subject participation and performance is up to par.

Infrastructure and school safety remain urgent priorities across provinces. We have now eradicated 99,9% of all pit toilets that were identified in the Sanitation Appropriate for Education, Safe, initiative, with final mop-up operations underway. I am pleased to announce that the final project that is outstanding, that is standing between me and announcing 100% today, is under construction already. But we know that appropriate sanitation and classroom infrastructure pressures remain significant. That is why the Budget Vote allocates

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R16 billion towards infrastructure in the Education Infrastructure Grant. These investments are intended to support sanitation, overcrowding reduction, school safety, and rural infrastructure development. However, infrastructure delivery remains uneven across provinces.

Some provinces have demonstrated stronger project management capacity than others. This House must therefore continue scrutinising provincial infrastructure performance closely so that we can show that this R16 billion allocation to provinces is allocated funds translate into completed projects on the ground. Under expenditure is absolutely unacceptable when children still need classrooms, sanitation, and safe schools.

We will count on this House to make sure that provinces are spending the allocated budgets and the allocated grants, because this is absolutely critical for the dignity of learners and the separation of learners of those who have and those who have not. Corruption and weak governance also remain among the greatest threats to education delivery. When procurement systems fail, children suffer. That is why we are strengthening oversight and accountability across the sector.

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Where concerns arise regarding procurement processes, they must be investigated thoroughly and transparently. Public confidence in education systems depends on the integrity of our processes. Serious concerns have been raised about the foundation phase national catalogue process and having considered the advice that I received from National Treasury, the department will launch an independent forensic investigation into this process. This must be taken urgently by a reputable, independent law firm with the required expertise and capacity.

Oversight and delivery are not opposites. In fact, effective oversight protects delivery, hon members. Budget Vote 16 allocates R38,2 billion in 2026-27, including a substantial amount towards conditional grants, such as school nutrition, which will get a lion's share of that R11 billion, infrastructure will get R16 billion, early childhood development will be getting about R4 billion for mathematics, science, technology, and inclusive education and learner wellness. But budgets alone do not educate children, delivery does. A budget means nothing if a learner, a budget means nothing to a learner if a textbook does not arrive, or the classroom is overcrowded, or a school cannot function because funding has not reached it. That is why provincial governance

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matters, and that is why stronger provincial financial management matters, and that is why the role of this House matters when it comes to provincial education departments.

The NCOP stands at the centre of co-operative governance. It is uniquely positioned to ensure that national priorities are translated into provincial delivery. History will not judge us by how many plans we announced; it will judge us whether or not provincial education systems become more stable, become more accountable, and are more capable of delivering quality education to every single child. It will judge us by whether or not schools worked better, teachers were supported better, learners learned better, and provinces governed better. And so, our task is clear. Restore financial stability in our provinces, strengthen our oversight in the provinces, and support delivery, and ensure that every province commits to building strong foundations that will result in strong futures for each and every one of our children. As I said, this is the education injustice of our time. And so, we have to make sure that we approach this with the requisite urgency that it deserves. I thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much, hon Minister. I take this opportunity to also

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welcome the hon Minister and Deputy Minister. You are always welcome in the NCOP and we thank you for your presentation. We now move on to the first contributor to this debate, and I call upon the hon Feni, who is the chairperson of the Select Committee on Education, Science and Creative Industries for 15 minutes. Hon Feni, you have 15 minutes.

Mr M FENI: Hon Chairperson, let me take this opportunity to greet our hon Minister, a Ministry led by ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... ngumkhaya wam ...

*English:*

... hon Gwarube, together with the Deputy Minister, ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... umama uRegina Mhaule.

*English:*

Also, let me extend my greetings to all the MECs in different provinces, led by hon Gade from the province of the Eastern Cape, ...

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*IsiXhosa:*

... ikhaya leengqwele. Singazilibelanga iinkosi zethu kuba kaloku thina singabantu bazo. Sithi iinkosi mazithambe izicaka zivumile.

*English:*

Distinguished guests and patriots on different platforms of social media, I greet you all.

As we gather here today, we must be mindful of the transformative trajectory that we have traversed as a nation since the dawn of democracy breakthrough in 1994. We can't forget where we are coming from. We won't have a strong foundation, as our theme today is clearly talking about building a strong foundation, especially the transformation of our education system.

As it is better reflected on by one of our African scholars, Prof Mahmoud Mamdani, when he is quoted as saying, "The prerequisite to cohabitation, reconciliation and a common political future is to give up the monopoly of power." This is an insightful reminder that we can't continue with the inequalities and education system for a privilege few as it was in the past.

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So, let us rather open doors of learning to all learners and build a system that serves the nation, rather than a privileged white tiny minority. This is one of the Freedom Charter pronouncements that the doors of learning shall be open. So, this theme is informed exactly by that. It reminds us that education is the most powerful instrument we have to traverse, from a society of historical exclusion to one of shared opportunity and inclusive citizenship.

The ANC-led government has always placed education at the centre of its transformative agenda and nation building. As a result of that, it has expanded access to schooling, put in place school safety measures, introduced enough-free schools, implemented the National Schools Nutrition Programme, scholar transport and improved school infrastructure in many communities.

This is particularly informed by the commitments contained in the ANC 2024 manifesto, emphasising on placing at its centre the priority of investing in the people through education and skills development as a cornerstone of national economic development. It is encapsulated in NDP 2030 as a policy guideline that is guiding us on the direction that we shall take as government, particularly on childhood development,

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ECDC, as a foundation upon which all future learning culminates in basic education. It remains the most powerful lever for transforming our society and building an inclusive growing economy.

*IsiXhosa:*

Sithi phila ngonaphakade mbutho omkhulu wesizwe, nqwelo emasondosondo ye-ANC.

*English:*

I am not going to do what my previous speakers did from this side of my hand by trying to run away from the realities that are facing our people, only to make some false claims. I think, hon Minister, you are correctly on the right track. One of the philosophers has warned us of claiming easy victories and telling lies.

We have just found that there are people who are prepared to do that when they get these public platforms, making a particular society a better society than the others, forgetting that the society which we are building is a just and equitable society. That is the ANC-led government.

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For instance, in this financial year, we are committing a total budget of over R35 billion, with an increase of over 8% from last year, of which the ECDC Conditional Grant increases to over R1,7 billion, with over 230 million allocated to an ECDC nutrition pilot and R62 million set aside for ECD infrastructure as highlighted above.

*IsiXhosa:*

Sihlalo ohloniphekileyo, umbutho wesizwe awudlali, uqalisa ukuba goba besebatsha.

*English:*

That is why there is a huge chunk concentrated on them, to ensure that every child enters Grade R to learn in all aspects, such as meaningful reading and calculation at the earliest age. On the question of teacher training development and capacity program, an amount of 1,8 billion is committed for its support on mentorship and leadership through the Fundza Lushaka Bursary Scheme that will be funding over 9 000 students for specific priority subjects in foundational phase education. The recruitment will focus on candidates who will be prepared to teach in rural and highly needy areas.

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I am reminded by my hon Minister when she made an articulation on the tale of two tenables if I properly captured it. Unlike my hon Minister, I won't look very far. I will also agree with her. However, where I am, which is the Western Cape, it would be remiss of me not to address this situation. It is a self-proclaimed model of efficiency and performance yet still reveals significant economic and social inequalities through its dual education system.

On the other hand, there are white-only mainly resourced schools which are very expensive and inaccessible to the poor and the working-class child, with claimed strong administrative capacity and better access to learning and materials for the few, whilst the opposite in Khayelitsha, Bonteheuwel and Kwa Langa.

The continued inequality in these poor communities is still the order of the day, with learners still facing poverty, lack of transport and serious resource gaps. This leaves the majority of learners outside of the basic quality education that the ANC-led government envisages for all learners in our country.

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We embarked on an oversight visit to various provinces. One of the most fundamental challenges that cuts across our education system is the state of school infrastructure. We will never lie in front of our communities. In Gauteng alone, an additional 5 500 classrooms are needed to accommodate the growing learner population. The Eastern Cape still needs to eradicate 496 mud schools.

Also, in Limpopo Province, during our oversight, mobile classrooms have been provided to schools, but they lacked sufficient air conditioning to keep the classrooms well ventilated. These challenges pose a serious threat to quality teaching and learning. We therefore appreciate the budget allocation of R16 billion for the Education Infrastructure Grant, which will help alleviate the growing infrastructure backlog.

However, this sector needs much more funding for infrastructure, given the increasing frequency of national disasters, such as flooding in provinces, with the most recent in Limpopo. Furthermore, some provinces were declared disaster zone, which needs additional funding as a priority to ensure that these are urgently attended.

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In the Eastern Cape, the Education Department informed the committee that it didn't receive an additional budget allocation to conduct emergency repairs following the previous disaster declaration in the province, during which several schools suffered infrastructure damage. They therefore had to reprioritise funding within their own budget to repair damaged schools. This matter of disaster allocations needs to be re-examined, hon Minister.

One of the frustrating areas within the Basic Education sector is the unreliability of scholar transport. When we visit schools, we are often told that one of the most contributing factors to the high absenteeism is the lack of consistency in scholar transport in collecting learners and transporting them to schools.

To make matters worse, there are also growing reports of unroadworthy vehicles being used to transport learners whenever we engage with these schools. Perhaps it would be ideal for the Department of Education to consider maintaining its own fleet of buses and appointing drivers to manage this scholar transport system rather than relying on the Department of Transport.

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The Department of Transport in the Limpopo Province is currently establishing its model. This is a good example that provinces must learn and follow, especially the Western Cape, the self-acclaimed province. It has begun purchasing its own fleet of buses to transport learners. This is a good model that must be followed by one of the ANC-led provinces.

We continue to be confronted by an increasing number of learners in schools, yet there is no corresponding increase in educator posts. When we visit some schools, we are informed that the school is operating under an organogram of the 90s. The number of learners at school has almost doubled since then. This results in schools having to appoint more educators than the SGBs can pay.

This is not practical in poor communities. The majority of parents and SGB members are unemployed, and majority have no funds to pay for additional teachers. The current budget indicates a plan to appoint at least 1 000 teachers who were Fundza Lushaka Bursary Scheme holders. The number of appointed educators does not align with 29 000 bursaries to be issued over the medium-term, meaning we are training some bursary holders to walk into unemployment. Yet our school continues to face severe teacher shortages.

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We therefore call for a budget that will increase the retention of qualified teachers and teacher assistants to improve our learner-to-teacher ratio and end the scourge of overcrowding in our schools. This is the budget, hon Minister, as presented, which we support as the ANC. We are fully behind you, hon Minister; you can proceed.

However, we cannot close our eyes, as we have already alluded, on the challenges that are confronting the nation. Therefore, we want to build a strong foundation, unlike those who are going to come here and make noise, claiming easy victories, talking about things that they do not know. They do not even know Khayelitsha, and how Khayelitsha looks like. They were happy when we had a Taking Parliament To The People programme. They were so excited to see Khayelitsha. They are ready to waste an amount of R200 million to hide themselves behind a boundary wall. They are showing that they care less about the plight of those who continue to ... [Time expired.] Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon Minister, hon members, and fellow South Africans, good day.

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The scars of cadre deployment remain a deep and ugly blemish on our government departments. Corruption has been so deeply entrenched that, even with new leadership, there remains an underlying propensity for self-enrichment by well-placed and powerful bureaucrats. For this reason, we welcome the announcement by the Minister of an independent investigation into the textbook procurement disaster that recently came to light. It is a stark reminder that oversight remains essential.

Yet, despite encouraging efforts towards progress and reform under Minister Gwarube, we are reminded once again that this cancer of corruption has not yet been defeated. Corruption in the Department of Basic Education is never just about money. It is about children sitting in overcrowded classrooms. It is about learners without access to facilities and resources that could accelerate learning. It is about exhausted teachers carrying impossible burdens. It is about the learner who arrives at school hungry. It is about the child in a rural village who still has no access to quality early childhood development, ECD. Every one of these failures widens the gap between privilege and poverty.

As Montesquieu warned:

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It is not the young people that degenerate; they are not spoiled till those of mature age are already sunk into corruption.

Basic education remains one of the most powerful weapons against poverty, inequality, and unemployment. If we fail our schools, we fail our future. The DA supports investment in education because education remains the great equaliser. However, supporting education does not mean issuing blank cheques to a system entrenched in infrastructure backlogs, corruption, weak accountability, and unequal outcomes in so many departments.

Early childhood development must remain at the centre of this budget. Research continues to show that the earliest years shape future learning success. ECD and Grade R is not simply another programme; it is the foundation upon which every child's future opportunity is built. We welcome efforts to expand ECD access, improve practitioner training, and strengthen registration access.

At the same time, we must recognise and commend progress in the matric outcomes in several provinces. More emphasis is being placed on mother-tongue education, teacher development,

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and curriculum strengthening. During our oversight visits, we increasingly saw schools prioritising safety, addressing bullying, improving nutrition, and raising infrastructure concerns. There are signs of hope, but progress means little if corruption continues stealing opportunities from learners.

The concerns raised in so many press articles remain our concerns. It is about trust. When money meant for children disappears through corruption, government is not the victim. The learner is. Our future is. Our nation, in the end, is. That is why it is clear that every infrastructure grant must be tracked. Every conditional grant must be monitored. Every procurement process must withstand scrutiny.

The select committee has already prioritised oversight over ECD implementation, unsafe schools, pit latrines, nutrition, disability inclusion, and infrastructure spending. Now action must follow commitment. Education cannot remain a promise of the future. We need classrooms that are exciting and inspiring, not overcrowded, and teachers who are supported and empowered. Early childhood development must, in the end, reach every child. Budgets must reach our learners, not the corrupt.

Basic education and quality early childhood development are

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not a costly expense down the drain. It is South Africa's greatest investment. I thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much, hon Adriaanse. We now go to the hon MEC for education, sport, arts and culture, and recreation from Gauteng, the hon Maile, for 10 minutes.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: (Mr P Govender): We now go to the hon MEC for Education, Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation from Gauteng, the hon Maile, for ten minutes. Hon Maile?

Ms J S MANANISO: Hon Chairperson, I think the front desk was informed that hon Maile has withdrawn from participating in today's debate. I'm not sure why it's not updated. Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: (Mr P Govender): All right, thank you very much. So, hon Maile is not participating. We'll move on to the hon Fienies for 12 minutes.

Ms D W FIENIES: Hon Deputy Chair ... [Interjections].

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*Afrikaans:*

Ek wil nie net saamstem nie, hon [agb] Badenhorst. Jy moet dit aan die Minister oordra. Dra dit aan haar oor. Ek stem glad nie saam met die 99% van die bucket eradication system [emmer uitwissingstelsel] nie.

Hon [Agb] Jeanne, hon [agb] Du Plessis en al die ander select committee members [gekoose komitee lede], ons was daar. Daar word gesê dat daar buildings [geboue] met toilets [toilette] is. Maar daar is geen potte, geen niks nie. Die kinders kan dit nie gebruik nie. Die kinders relieve [verlig] hulself langs die toilette. So in daardie geval moet ons dit net aan die Minister oordra.

Dan die ander een. Die Minister het 'n klomp goed gepraat. Hon [Agb] Badenhorst, vertaal net vir die Minister na die tyd asseblief. Sy het baie gepraat van wat ons mandate [mandaat] as die NCOP [NRVP] is of met die provinces [provinsies] te praat. Dit is reg. Maar as daar goeie dinge is, Deputy Chairperson [Adjunkvoorsitter], dan vat sy dit vir haar, maar indien dit slegte dinge is, dan moet dit na die provinsies toe gaan want die provinsies is onder die ANC ...

[Tussenwerpsels.]

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*English:*

I stand before you today as a proud member of the African National Congress, a movement that has consistently prioritised education as an apex priority of social transformation and national development ... [Interjections.] ... I do, because you have just the Minister of the DA.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: (Mr P Govender): Hon Fienies, I will advise you not to address members in the House but address the Chair.

Ms D W FIENIES: Sorry, Deputy Chairperson, then the hon Badenhorst must shut up, next to me.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Please continue.

Ms D W FIENIES: The ANC understands that education is not merely about classrooms and examinations, like the Minister has said, but about restoring dignity, advancing equality and unlocking human potential. Education remains one of the most powerful instruments for overcoming poverty, inequality and unemployment in our democratic society.

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The understanding resonates with the words of the founding father of our democracy, Nelson Mandela, who reminded us that education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that a daughter of a person can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine, that the child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.

Indeed, the historic Freedom Charter boldly declared the doors of learning and culture should be open to all. Today, our responsibility is not only to keep those doors open, but to ensure that every learner who walks through them receives quality teaching, adequate support and equal opportunities to succeed.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, the struggle for equitable access to quality basic education cannot be separated from the lived realities of poverty confronting millions of South African families. One of the most important interventions implemented by our democratic government is the National School Nutrition Programme, NSNP. This programme was established with the ANC-led government. This programme has become far more than a

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feeding scheme. It is a tool for educational justice, learning retention, improved concentration and academic achievement.

The educational theorist, Abraham Maslow, argued through his hierarchy of needs that human beings cannot effectively pursue higher levels of development when their basic physiological needs are unmet. A hungry child cannot focus on mathematics, literacy or science while suffering from hunger and malnutrition. The increased allocation towards the NSNP, therefore, demonstrates a government that understands the direct relationship between nutrition and educational outcomes. Today, this programme provides meals for over 9 million learners in more than 20 000 schools across our country, particularly in non-fee schools where many learners depend on these meals as their primary source of nutrition for the day.

In provinces such as the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal, the programme has become a lifeline for rural and working-class communities, where poverty levels remain high. Through this intervention, learner absenteeism is reduced, classroom participation improves and the dignity of poor children is protected. It is through programmes such as these that we continue to confront the painful legacy of apartheid

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inequality, which deliberately denied black children the equal opportunities to learn and strive.

Fellow South Africans, at the centre of every successful education system stands a committed and capable teacher. However, despite the progress we have made, teacher shortages continue to undermine quality teaching and learner support, especially in rural and township schools. Many schools remain understaffed, overburdened and unable to provide adequate subject support to learners.

The renowned Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, once stated,

Education does not transform the world. Education changes people. People transform the world.

If we are serious about transforming our society, then we must invest decisively in those who educate our children. We, the ANC, call for accelerated teacher recruitment, placement and retention. Thousands of qualified young graduates remain unemployed, while classrooms remain overcrowded and educators continue carrying unsustainable workloads. This contradiction cannot continue. The absorption of young educators into the system will not only improve curriculum delivery but will also

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inject innovation, technological adaptability and renewed energy in our schools.

Particular attention must be given to rural and township schools, where shortages are severe. In provinces such as the Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and parts of the Eastern Cape, learners continue to experience shortages in mathematics, science and technical subject educators. Rural educators often work under difficult conditions with inadequate support and limited incentives. Strengthening rural allowances, improving accommodation support and ensuring better professional development opportunities are essential if we are to retain educators in underserved communities.

As the ANC, we support ongoing teacher training programmes that equip educators with the skills required for modern curriculum delivery, digital learning integration and inclusive education practices.

Hon Deputy Chair, no learner can achieve their full potential in an unsafe and undignified learning environment. Across our country, there remain schools affected by incomplete infrastructure projects, unsafe sanitation facilities, overcrowded classrooms and deteriorating buildings. Such

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conditions undermine both teaching and learning, and reproduce the inequality of the past.

The ANC, therefore, calls for intensified oversight on school infrastructure delivery. Contractors who abandon projects, delay construction or deliver poor quality infrastructure must be held accountable. Public funds allocated for education infrastructure must reach their intended purpose without corruption, inefficiency or waste.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, if we are to improve educational outcomes in the long term, we must strengthen foundational learning outcomes like the Minister has said, particularly for literacy and numeracy in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. We, therefore, support stronger monitoring and implementation systems to improve foundational learning. Reading programmes, learning support materials, regular assessments and teacher coaching initiatives must be strengthened to ensure that every learner acquires the basic skills necessary for future success.

Hon Deputy Chair, the ANC-led government remains firmly committed to transforming basic education into a system that is equitable, inclusive and capable of producing socially

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conscious and economically productive citizens. The ANC remains unwavering in its commitment to ensuring that the promise of the Freedom Charter becomes a lived reality for every child in our nation. Thank you, Deputy Chair.

Mr F D GADE (Eastern Cape): Chairperson, the Minister, Deputy Minister, hon members in the NCOP, and the entire people who might be invited in social platforms and also participating differently on other platforms, good evening to you. Allow me to also greet the House of Traditional Leaders across the provinces through the contribution that they make from time to time in ensuring that the foundations for learning in our institutions of learning are indeed preserved. Allow also me to greet the religious faith organisations that also contribute in ensuring that indeed they hold the fort for the development trajectory of the humankind that we are in the country.

Our strategic assignment is on our ability to strengthen foundational learning, expand early childhood development, modernise curriculum delivery, build safe schools in safe communities, and also build inclusive schooling system across the country. That will make us at least realise key strategic area policy formations. The National Development Plan 2030

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constitutes a campus for us all to ensure that we realise the Medium-Term Development Plan, the Basic Education Sector Plan, and lastly, the Sustainable Development Goals, SDG, 4.

We rise with that precisely because in the recent Basic Education lekgotla, our hon Minister said that foundational literacy and numeracy is not just an educational priority, it is a campus for national development - and we support that. It then tells you about the significance on how we should realise the universal access in early childhood, the professionalisation of the early childhood development, ECD, sector through the appointment of educators, the digitalisation of the transformation and content in the early childhood development, the accountable data-driven governance in the entire system. and lastly, the mother tongue bilingual education as a fundamental policy for the country to realise the liberation of Africans in our own land.

We are again nodding on the assertion that the Minister has actually alluded to, which we are bringing into this House as well for further discussions, going forward. The Minister said that the root of our learning crisis lies in the weak early learning foundations from birth to nine years. By extension, it means there is a need for a serious intervention on the

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early childhood development, which as a province we have positioned ourselves as following. One, we have realised the importance of training 1 778 Grade R practitioners as part of professionalising the early childhood development sector.

We have realised also that 1 101 centres must be pushed to compliance in terms of the policy so that we are within the framework that has been designed in basic education in the country. We have again realised the significance of registering 347 new early childhood development centres in the province as part of contributing to the call that has been made by the Department of Basic Education. I am therefore saying again that the interventions directly support the call that has been made by Basic Education and also by the Minister and the Deputy Minister. In terms of curriculum modernisation and the three-streamed model - in terms of shaping up the future of the country in general and also in particular in the province, we have identified 71 technical vocational schools so that we can deal with the issue of the skills revolution that is currently needed in Basic Education and also in Higher Education and also post-school sector.

We have identified and massively resourced 18 agricultural schools in the province in order to ensure that the

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diversification of the curriculum that we are talking about has meaning and substance. We are again rolling out 14 digital technological schools currently in the province as part of rolling out the ICT infrastructure through the e-learning solutions that are needed for us to be able to realise the international standards that have been set at a global village. We are again embarking on the maritime studies through one of the key strategic areas of focus of the provincial government in the context of oceans economy.

We have established maritime studies in 12 schools in the province so that we can again realise the significance of building a schooling system that talks to the crisis that we have in terms of skills rich of nation. We have prepared ourselves in the past two years in establishing an innovation school which is operational, currently in Port Alfred which again must be able to turn things around in the context of the African child who has not been privileged enough to be part of the innovation faculty in the country for quite a number of years. I am therefore saying that these are efforts that begin to say we are a system on the rise; we are a system that is getting matured, and we are a system that must respond to the cries of the people of the province.

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We have been able again to ensure that we respond to the crisis that the Minister has lifted up. We are busy discussing it with pain because we have a court order on scholar transport. We have presented options into the legislature in order to circumvent our reliability on Department of Transport as enabler for us to be able to access institutions of learning through the scholar transport. We are busy working on that methodology and mechanisms that can at least respond into the immediate crisis of 163 000 learners in the province that are needy, but we can only transport 97 000 out of the 163 000. That demonstrate a need and a commitment in ensuring that at least we are able to make sure that we turn things around.

One of the key areas which we cannot forget to mention here is the Safe Schools Programme. Given the high levels of criminality in some of the province's hotspot areas, this programme is not optional. As a result, we were compelled to ensure that 430 schools were upgraded, maintained, and equipped with safety ... [Time expired]. Thank you so much, hon Chair, and hon members.

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Mr M MAMPURU: Hon Deputy Chair of the NCOP, the commander-in-chief, CIC, of the Economic Emancipation Movement, officials, commissars, ground forces ... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Mampuru, can you put your video on for a few minutes?

Mr M MAMPURU: Let me try, Chair, because it gives a problem here. Let me just go straight to the camera, okay?

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Yes, for a few seconds so that we can see you. Hon colleagues, this is why we ask people to test their system before. They're always guided by the ITC that you need to check your system at least 30 minutes before. Hon Mampuru, we'll give you some time to sort your gadget out while we move on to the next presenter, and that is the MEC for Education in Limpopo, hon Lerule-Ramakhanya, for 10 minutes. Hon MEC.

Ms M M LERULE-RAMAKHANYA (Limpopo): Greetings to yourself, and the hon Minister of our Department of Basic Education, the hon Deputy Minister, the other colleagues, MECs that are part of the debate, the members and permanent delegates of the NCOP, hon members, on the social media, ladies and gentlemen ...

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*Tshivenda:*

Ndi madekwana:

*English:*

The National Council of Provinces serves as the link between national, provincial and local government, and it helps us to reinforce our commitment to accountability and service delivery. Limpopo has taken 2026 as a year of transformation and development, but today I rise to speak about the Limpopo as we prepare the implementation of the national framework as presented by the hon Minister. I rise to speak about our progress and the budget that is the investment in our children's future in the history of our province.

Let me begin with what one icon has said. Ahmed Kathrada taught us that neglecting a child is to neglect our own humanity, and that public service demands ethical discipline without exception. He lived modestly, served selflessly, and insisted that the children must always come first, and that is what we believe in. A budget is not a column of numbers; a budget is a moral document. It reveals what we truly value. Today, we put our service delivery where it is highly impactful, and in that, we value our children, and that our budget transforms the value into classrooms; into the meals

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that we serve in our schools; into the textbooks that we give to our learners, and also into the dignity, and our budget present an opportunity for the future of our children.

For the 26-27 financial year, the Limpopo Department of Education has received an increase of 5,5% in its budget, and this increase is a commitment to Basic Education and the ANC-led government programmes with its determination to deliver services. The largest share of 75% goes to compensation of employees as educators are our primary resource. We have added new permanent educator posts. FThis reduced provincial unemployment while strengthening the classroom.

This is a direct response to the National Development Plan, NDP, 2030, target of a capable professional teaching force and as they call for ethical governance that serves people experiencing poverty. That is our target. The Minister reminded us that the vast majority of the South African children do not start school without quality Early Childhood Development, ECD. Here is our budget answer. We have made Early Childhood Development, ECD, one of the largest areas of growth in this fiscal year.

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Through ECD conditional grant of 1,6% and additional priority funding of 1,7%, we are delivering storybooks, mathematics kits, manuals and play equipment to ECD centres across every district in Limpopo, reaching young learners from the most remote villages to the largest town, both the old new registered centres and the old existing ECD centres. This is how we achieve the SDG 4,2 universal access to quality Early Childhood Development, ECD, and how we honour the ANC resolution on expanding the ECD.

We are also piloting on ECD nutrition programme in two of our districts, in Vhembe and in Mopani, because a child cannot develop their mind if their body is malnourished. Article 24 of the UN Convention guarantees the right to health and nutrition, and this budget delivers that right for our children. The Minister was honest in that implementing compulsory Grade R, including salary alignment for practitioners, requires substantial national funding that has not yet been fully allocated.

The National School Nutrition Programme, NSNP, received one of the largest conditional grants allocation in our budget, which is 4,2. This funding serves learners every school day in every primary and secondary, and in all our special schools. It

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employs a dedicated workforce of food handlers, and this year we have extended the breakfast programmes to all our secondary schools in Limpopo. We are embarking on a revival of school food gardens for sustainable production because dignity is not just about receiving a meal, but about growing one.

The Minister reported that the pit toilet from the 2018 Sanitation Appropriate for Education, SAFE, initiative, has been visually eliminated nationwide. In Limpopo, we have completed pit toilet replacement projects across the province with only a handful remaining, and those will be finished in no time. On our Education Infrastructure Grant, EIG, in funding the completion of storm-damaged schools, the construction of local state-owned ECD centres and the final eradication sanitation backlog. It is also addressing overcrowding and also rural infrastructure defects. It is a moral issue if, when we look at the NDP 2030, then it is clear that quality teaching is the single greatest lever for system improvement.

Our budget provides for the annual training of teachers in mathematics and language methodology, in digital skills in coding and robotics, in inclusive education and technical and vocational subjects. The sanitary dignity project is a

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flagship received a dedicated funding that reaches a girl child in every district in Limpopo. We also agree that we must measure quality, not only pass rates. We, therefore, support the national quality basket, overall pass percentage, bachelor pass attainment, distinction and getaway subject and learner retention.

This budget line directly implements the UN Human Rights Resolution for eliminating discrimination against women and a girl child in education, and it also answers a call for active ethical leadership. We cannot claim to be ethical while allowing a girl child to miss school. We are a vast province. Our learners in the province depends on the scholar transport and funding for all the routes in our province, have been made available. Funding for programmes like inclusive education, school safety, library safety, library services, school sports, learning recovery and intervention strategy for Grade 8 to 10 has also been allocated the budget.

Here in Limpopo, we deliver our provincial budget. It is not an expense, but an investment in a capable, ethical and developmental state. The 5,5% growth and the 75% of investment is to educate us, but we say 100% investment to the young mind. As Ahmed Kathrada said, the children are the future. Let

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this budget be a weapon and let the children be the future. Strong foundation, build strong futures and we support the debate today. Thank you, hon House Chair.

Mr M K MAMPURU: Chair, let me take this opportunity and firstly greet the commander-in-chief of the economic emancipation movement, the officials, the commissars, ground forces, and the forgotten masses of our people. I say to them ...

*Sepedi:*

... thobela.

*English:*

But furthermore, let me take this platform and send revolutionary greetings to our people in farms, in villages, in townships, in informal settlement, and in the most remote corners of our country, places where many, to them a tight road leading to a school, it's something children only see on television. We greet these people of this country whose children wake up before sunrise and travel in what we can only call a mobile coffin, to and from school because corrupt Government of National Unity, GNU, officials accepted bribes and looked the other way while gambling with the lives of a

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black child. We greet the young girls who are forced to miss school every month because they cannot afford sanitary towel in a country overflowing with wealth. We greet all young black children who still walk barefooted to school in a so-called democratic South Africa. We greet mothers - women who carry their children on their back through rivers and dangerous terrain so that their children can have access to education because this government have abandoned rural communities in poverty and isolation. We greet all hardworking and committed teachers who continue to wake up every morning to shape the future of this country, despite working in unbearable and inhumane conditions. We greet mothers who prepare meals for our children daily under difficult conditions, and uncles who stand guard at schools to protect both learners, teachers, and staff, while GNU and some officials within the same GNU politicians, loot and continue to loot the little resources allocated to the department. We greet the school governing bodies who continue trying against all odds to keep schools functioning while government officials loot the budget meant for education. We greet the underpaid caretakers, the first to arrive at school in the wee hours of the morning and the last to leave the school, yet treated like they are invincible. We greet all education activists who on daily basis fight for quality education even when their lives are being threatened.

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We are saying on behalf of all these people, as the EFF, we reject this budget. We reject this budget because it does not speak to the daily suffering of the poor. It does not resolve the crisis facing our children. It does not restore the dignity of education. This budget is an empty statistic of media headlines and lies. Many schools, in particular, those found in rural provinces like Eastern Cape and Limpopo, are still struggling with inadequate infrastructure, poor sanitation, and lack of basic necessities.

The Eastern Cape alone faces a R72 billion infrastructure backlog as the extreme weather damages over 285 schools and drainage resources. Additionally, 836 schools still contain hazardous asbestos roofing, which requires R3,7 billion to be safely replaced. The crisis in Limpopo is no different. The provincial department there boasts about its pit toilet eradication matrix, but the reality on the ground is that sanitation catastrophe still continues. Look at the rural sites like Dzivhani Primary School near Thohoyandou. A dangerous pit toilet was demolished years ago. Yet nearly 300 learners have been left stranded, and they are now forced to queue daily for an overcrowded, poorly maintained chemical toilet, while promised brick sanitation blocks have never arrived.

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In Free State and also in North West, rural under-resourcing has created large gaps in subject content delivery for a technical field, facing a reliance on extreme weekend lessons to keep Grade 12 learners on track. In Mpumalanga, schools continue to experience vandalism. Across all provinces, wide gaps remain between the opulent urban areas and the rural for under-resourced public schools, leading to unequal educational opportunities and for poor literacy and numeracy outcomes. For years, our teachers have been drowning in paperwork, as this department was turning them into data capturers instead of educators. Today, they are promised to drastically reduce reporting tools. We will not applaud this department for promising to fix a crisis of its own making.

The EFF also rejects this budget of the department that has done little to combat gangsterism, physical bullying, and gender-based violence in school environments, creating a culture of fear among learners that severely impaired their ability to learn. Our teachers do not need more empty directives issued to provinces. Provinces that historically ignored national mandates need smaller classrooms. They need safety from violence. They need the eradication of overcrowding.

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It is deeply concerning that learners and staff safety appear to have been neglected by this department, especially in light of tragic incidents such as the one in Vanderbijlpark. In Gauteng ... [Inaudible.] ... officials from both the ANC and the DA have allowed bribery and kickbacks to take centre stage, effectively gambling again with the lives of our children. Learners in various provinces in South Africa live in reality of studying in classrooms that have broken windows, leaking roofs, falling ceilings, cracked walls, damaged doors, and unhygienic toilets.

Many schools do not have secure fencing to protect learners and teachers or school property. Yet the Minister comes here with a long speech and a PowerPoint presentation pretending as if everything is fine, only attending to these issues during election time. There are schools that have been neglected such as Bosele School which caters for learners with special needs. The school has not been renovated, still looks the same way as it was 30 to 40 years ago. This demonstrates that the Government of National Unity is only inclusive by its own policies and not by implementation as children living in disability continue to learn in such degrading conditions. The ANC has become a burial society of broken promises together with its friends in the GNU, the DA. It is nothing but a

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racist organisation protecting the white privileges and white comfort while black children suffer. We have the issue of temporary buildings ... [Inaudible.] ... compared to being a permanent structure. The difficulty of temporary building or open classrooms is similar to the issue that arises in human settlement. Many of our schools with temporary classrooms are no longer a safety hazard, especially in Charlotte Maxeke in Ward 12 in Tembisa and also in Phomolong Secondary School where students and instructors are in danger, especially during winter. Chairperson ...

*Sepedi:*

... moya wa go tonya kua Sekolong se se Phagamego sa Phomolong o tsena ka mafasetere, tlhakeng, ka fase le gohlegohle ...

*English:*

... because this infrastructure has dilapidated and our pupils or our learners no longer know where to turn, especially now that it is winter. Moving on, the EFF cannot be quiet about the inconsistency of the nutrition programme from different provinces and calls for a uniform and a standardised menu to feed the learners. The quality, timing and consistency is important, and the department should control this program

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so as to avoid food arriving late in schools as this could negatively affect the learners' participation in class. Children who lack textbooks and those who are hungry are both victims of the state failure.

A government that is unable to provide books and food for learners is failing to improve the living conditions of our children. This failure needs to be addressed as a matter of emergency in education. The EFF therefore rejects this budget as it does not speak to the daily suffering of the poor. We demand a total basic education system where accountability is also promised but rarely enforced. As such, Chairperson, as the EFF, we reject this budget. I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you very much, hon Mampuru. Hon Mampuru, your network repeatedly failed you during that delivery, but we did receive the majority of your inputs. I suggest that you use your budget allocated by Parliament to increase your bandwidth and your Wi-Fi supplier. Having said that, hon delegates, let's move on. We will now receive the next input on the debate from the MK party, represented this time by the hon Mhlongo, who has eight minutes.

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Ms L P MHLONGO: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister and Deputy Minister, hon members and our people in South Africa, the MK Party rises today to participate in the Policy Debate on Budget Vote No 16 - Basic Education for the 2026-27 financial year. Hon Chairperson, Basic Education is not just another department. It is the foundation of the country's future. It determines whether a child escapes poverty or remains trapped in it.

It determines whether South Africa produces engineers, doctors, scientists, teachers, and artisans, or whether we continue producing unemployment, inequality, and hopelessness. The National Development Plan promised that by 2030 South Africa would have quality education, safe infrastructure, skilled teachers, improved literacy, and equal educational opportunity regardless of where a child is born.

*IsiZulu:*

Kodwa manje sineminyaka emine vo esele ukuze sifike ku-2030, futhi izigidi zezingane zisabhajiwe ezikoleni ezinamakilasi adilikayo. Izindlu zangasese zingumgodi, ukuminyana emakilasini, ingqalasizinda eyonakele, futhi azinawo amanzi, amanzi awabonwa.

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*English:*

This is the reality of Basic Education under the ANC government, now under the GNU. Government is asking to approve R38,2 billion budgets for the Basic Education this year, increasing to R42,5 billion over the medium term. However, South Africans are no longer impressed by the large numbers in budget speeches.

*IsiZulu:*

Bafuna into ephathekayo, bafuna imiphumela, ngoba ngemuva kweminyaka eminingi yokwabiwa kwezimali, izingane ezikoleni zisaminyene. Izingane ezikoleni zisengaphansi kwengcindezi. Izingane namanje ezikoleni zizikhulula ngemuva kwezindonga.

*English:*

The department says over R50,4 billion is allocated towards infrastructure over the MTEF period. Yet, the Auditor-General, AG, found incomplete infrastructure projects, weak oversight, delayed delivery, and project reports are completed while learners suffer under unacceptable conditions.

*IsiZulu:*

UMcwaningi-Mabhuku Jikelele uphinde wathola izikole zino-ceiling abadilikayo, indle engasebenzi nezindlu zangasese

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ezikhiywayo ngenxa yokuthi awekho amanzi. Abafundi futhi basazikhulula ngemuva kwamabhilidi. Kanti iphi le mali?

*English:*

Because it is not reaching the sitting child in a broken class in rural KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. We are told that R33,9 billion is allocated to the National School Nutrition Programme over the medium term.

*IsiZulu:*

Kuhle lokho, ingane vele akufanele ihambe iye esikoleni ilambile.

*English:*

But why should there be over 10 million learners who depend on feeding schemes? That is not a success story. It is evidence that there is a worsening of poverty under the ANC and the GNU. Even there, AG found poor hygiene standards, inadequate food portions, delayed payments, and failure in meal delivery. We are also told R18,6 is allocated to early childhood development. Yet 80% of grade 5 learners still cannot read.

*IsiZulu:*

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Izingane eziwu-80% eziseBangeni le-5 azikwazi ukufunda,  
izibalo ziyakukhombisa lokho ...

*English:*

... and yet, these children are our foundation.

*IsiZulu:*

Amanga amakhulu ukuthi zonke izingane zalelizwe zithola  
amathuba okufunda alinganayo. Asiye e-Sandton nase Constantia  
...

*English:*

... learners' study in robotic labs, libraries, Wi-Fi,  
science centres and qualified teachers.

*IsiZulu:*

Kodwa eLusikisiki nase-Mount Fletcher, eMopane, ...

*English:*

... rural KwaZulu-Natal children still learn in overcrowded  
classrooms.

*IsiZulu:*

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Izindlu zangasese zemigodi, amanzi wona awabonwa. Asiye laphaya eNhlakazi High School, eBhulwa, ...

*English:*

Learners have spent 10 years in prefabricated classrooms after a fire destroyed the school, no science lab, no library.

*IsiZulu:*

Asiye eSiphahleni Primary school, eJozini. Othisha yibona abaphoqelegele ukuthi baphathela izingane amanzi. Zonke lezikole zingaphansi kweVoti Lesabiwomali eli-16. Kodwa akuzona zonke ezikwazi ukuthola imfundo ephelele. Lokhu kukhombisa ukuthi namanje izingane zethu zisaphila ngaphansi kwencindezelo yobandlululo ngoba...

*English:*

... still, they are not treated the same.

*IsiZulu:*

Sihlalo ohloniphekile, unyaka nonyaka kuleliPhalamende uzwa incazelo efanayo, ingqalasizinda entengayo, izikhala zemisebenzi ezingavaliwe, ukubambezeleka kokuthengwa kwezimpahla ...

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*English:*

... but the same failures continue. The AG identified a weak procurement system, poor planning, and weak oversight. The GNU promised clean governance and accountability. But the reality remains exactly the same.

*IsiZulu:*

Isijezo asikho, izingane azinawo amanzi esikoleni. Isijezo asikho, amabhilidi ayahohloka. Asiye laphaya eVulindlela eMdantsana ...

*English:*

It once trained learners in electrical work, motor mechanics, woodwork, and technical schools. They gave working-class children access to jobs and opportunities.

*IsiZulu:*

Siphi leso sikole namhlanje? Izakhiwo cishe azisekho, amathuba awekho. Niphuca izingane ukusimama.

*English:*

Now even on textbooks the procurement faces the controversy of a report around R1,6 billion foundation phase textbook tender involving a company with no proper publishing history and yet

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we say foundation phase is an issue. We need to look after the foundation phase.

Hon Chairperson, when education fails, unemployment grows. When education fails, poverty becomes permanent. When education fails, inequality deepens. The ANC failed to dismantle educational inequality over 30 years ago. The GNU is now managing the same crisis with different slogans but the same outcomes.

This budget does not confront the crisis in Basic Education. It manages decline instead of transforming the system. And for that reason, the MK Party cannot support this budget, that continues to appropriate billions while millions of poor children remain trapped in dysfunctional schools without dignity, safety and equal opportunities

*IsiZulu:*

Asikwazi ukweseka iVoti Lesabelomali lapho izingane zethu futhi zisaphila ngaphansi kwengcindezi, lapho nisabahlubula khona isithunzi sabo.

*English:*

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We cannot support a government that speaks about the future while failing the very same generation that's supposed to build this future. Thank you, Chairperson.

Dr M J MABOYA (Free State): Hon Chair, let me convey my greetings to the hon Minister of Basic Education, hon Deputy Minister of Basic Education, hon MECs, hon chairpersons and members of select committees, hon members of the National Council of Provinces, representatives of the SA Local Government Association, Salga, distinguished guests and fellow South Africans. Hon Chair, it is with a deep sense of accountability, revolutionary humility and untiring commitment to the people of South Africa that I stand before the hon House to debate the Budget Vote of the Department of Basic Education, DBE.

Today, as we debate this budget, we do so at a defining historical moment in the life of our democracy. This year marks 30 years since the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 70 years since the historic Women's March of 1956 and 50 years since the 1976 Soweto Youth Uprising. These are not mere ceremonial anniversaries, they are reminders of a historic struggle for dignity, equality and liberation. The youth of 1976 did not confront apartheid

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merely for access to classrooms; they fought for an education that liberates, empowers and affirms human potential.

This is exactly what this budget, as presented by the Minister of Basic Education, stands for. It is for this reason that education must remain the single greatest instrument through which we confront poverty, unemployment and inequality, and through which we build an inclusive and prosperous South Africa.

Hon Chair, this budget confirms what research consistently demonstrates: that investment in early childhood learning yields the highest social and economic returns over the life course of a child. In the Free State, significant progress continues to be made towards universal access to structured early learning opportunities. In 2025, the department successfully registered 189 new Early Childhood Development, ECD, centres through the Bana Pele Mass Registration Drive, bringing the provincial total to 1 642 registered centres that accommodate 97 540 children, according to our Education Management Information System, Emis.

Hon members and hon Chair, we must, however, equally confront reality. Statistics SA reminds us that many children remain

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outside structured learning environments during the most formative period of cognitive and emotional development. For this reason, the province has committed to increasing the number of learners accessing Early Learning Programmes to more than 103 500 during the current financial year, while increasing the number of registered centres to 1 720.

We recognise deeply that access without quality is insufficient. That is why during the previous financial year, over 1 000 ECD practitioners were trained on the National Curriculum Framework. In the current year, an additional 1 500 practitioners will be trained, while 200 practitioners will be upskilled to NQF Level 4 qualifications. We will intensify awareness campaigns to educate over 2 000 parents, caregivers, women, youth and communities on the importance of early learning. Through the National Parenting Skills Programme, we will reach approximately 2 000 parents and caregivers. Through these interventions, we are building a society that understands that education begins not in Grade 1, but from birth.

Hon Chair, the world is currently faced with a deep learning crisis. The World Bank has repeatedly warned that foundational learning, that is basic literacy, numeracy and transferable

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skills, constitutes the very foundation upon which all future education depends. If a child cannot read for meaning by the age of 10, that child is statistically more likely to struggle throughout schooling and beyond. Therefore, foundational learning cannot be treated as a peripheral issue. It is the single most important predictor of future academic success.

Hon Chair, following the enactment of the Basic Education Laws Amendment, BELA, Act, the department strengthened its institutional capacity by successfully training and inducting Grade R practitioners. We intensified our efforts to strengthen Grade R through the provision of additional classrooms, learning materials, classroom furniture and the expansion of structured early learning opportunities across the province. This will be coupled with a target of 400 practitioners who will upgrade their qualifications through the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority, ETDP-Seta. Our strategic partnership with FLOAT, through Operation Tharollo, will be implementing five-year R105 million interventions across 458 Quintile 1-3 schools integrating structured pedagogy, learner materials, lesson plans and quarterly teacher development to improve early literacy and numeracy skills in Grades R and 1.

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Through the Early Grade Reading Assessment, the department assessed all Grade 1-7 learners in reading proficiency. We did this for terms one and two, and we continue to assess our learners in reading proficiency. We are issuing reports on that effect. The evidence increasingly demonstrates impact. By the end of the previous academic year, 9 761 Grade 3 Sesotho learners met national reading benchmarks while more than 5 185 learners exceeded provincial standards.

Hon Chair, the true test of a democratic education system lies in how it treats the most vulnerable learners. As the Minister has rightfully indicated, we need to make sure that every learner is given a fair chance to succeed. For this reason, we, as the Free State, continue to improve access to inclusive education through measurable interventions. During the previous financial year, a total of 2 058 teachers and 185 officials were trained on the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy to strengthen early identification and support for learners experiencing barriers to learning. This intervention has resulted in a total of 6 044 and 108 Grade 12 learners being granted accommodation and concessions, respectively, in the 2025 National Senior Certificate, NSC, examinations.

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The Free State equally continues to expand Schools of Skills to ensure learners with moderate intellectual disabilities are equipped with meaningful occupational competencies. Seven underused and unused schools in underserved areas are being repurposed into Schools of Skills. These institutions offer technical occupational curricula in areas such as agricultural studies, technical subjects, hairdressing, personal care and ancillary health care, etc.

This is not charity, hon Chair, it is empowerment through skills dignity and economic participation. Furthermore, approximately 1 030 learners across seven special schools benefited from learner transport support, ensuring that disability or geography does not become a barrier to educational access.

Hon Chair, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 4IR, demands that learners must not become passive consumers of global innovation, but creators, coders, artisans, scientists, technicians and entrepreneurs. Paulo Freire, in his seminal work titled, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, profoundly challenged what he called the "banking model" of education, which embodies the idea that leaders or teachers merely deposit

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education into passive recipients. This is what we are trying to avoid.

To make sure that we contribute immensely towards the vision of the 4IR, the department distributed 29 920 tablets to 247 Quintile 1-3 schools, significantly advancing digital access and curriculum delivery. Sixty primary schools received mobile science laboratories to stimulate analytical thinking and scientific enquiry. Coding and Robotics kits were distributed to 60 primary schools in 2025, bringing the total number of primary schools with Coding and Robotics kits to 240 to date, across the province. This has enabled 466 learners to participate in the Provincial Coding and Robotics Competition.

Hon Chair, we are pleased to announce that Sentinel Primary School in Qwaqwa represented South Africa at the World Robot Olympiad in Singapore, competing against 101 countries and secured an impressive 15th position, demonstrating growing digital competence among township and rural learners ... [Time expired.]. Thank you.

Ms N S Du PLESSIS: Hon House Chair, Minister, Deputy Minister, MECs, members of the Council and fellow South Africans, I will start talking about the children and I will not do any

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political cheap shots that have happened throughout today's debate. In South Africa, there's a study that shows approximately 83% of South African children under the age of five years have been exposed to violence. This includes community violence, domestic violence and direct community victimization. This means that approximately four million young lives are potentially traumatised even before entering primary school.

The negative impact on the cognitive abilities of developing minds exposed to violence has been well documented. The UBS Optimus Study conducted by the UBS Optimus Foundation published in 2016 found that an estimated 42% of South African children, over five years had experienced some form of maltreatment or abuse in their formative years. This is a symptom of a broken society that perpetuates a cycle of violence. However, it is possible to create enabling spaces that address the impact of this trauma. However, sadly, these spaces are often our schools.

It points to the added responsibility that most of our schools need to become an enabling environment that protects the future of our country from negative socioeconomic influences. And this is one of the many reasons why when we are planning

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and discussing the needs of basic education, a strategic, brave and compassionate approach is essential. As it is about more than education for most of our young South Africans.

There are many internal challenges over time. One is a long history of too many uncaring teachers who are paedophiles and impregnate young girls without consequence. Between 2021 and 2025 teachers were found guilty of sexual misconduct. This led to last year's Parliament inquiry into statutory rape. And it revealed it was widespread and historic. It also revealed the urgent need to close the gaps in vetting teachers who have sexual misdemeanours in their history.

Additionally, years of inconsistent curriculum implementation have created generations who have not been prepared for the workplace or for tertiary education. No doubt, a direct contributing factor to the current high youth unemployment rate in South Africa. We have also seen the devastation of inadequate learner transport leading to tragic deaths, as well as perpetuating the subconscious message that our children do not matter, they matter. And the current increase, of course, of schooling, with dwindling personnel and dwindling state budgets has further impacted on the crisis faced by the squint essential mechanism for redress.

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It is a shame that a culture of excellent management, accountability measures and consequence management was not always fostered immediately post liberation or before. As the Department of Basic Education would then have been able to implement with more ease resilient solutions to the internal and external challenges faced by the education sector. However, years of theft, neglect and callous minimisation of the impact of fraud on the future of our children have created a poison chalice.

But despite these challenges and the challenges posed by a handful of corrupt officials and provinces who actively work against all progress in accountability, the department has shown progress over the past year. It is therefore with considerable pride that we note the Minister has reimaged the annual performance plans and budget to focus on the achievable and urgent goals of further professionalising the Early Childhood Development Centre, ECDC, sector by amongst others, working with the nonprofit organisation, NPOs, that have vested interests in educating future generations well and according to international benchmarks.

These partnerships focus on bolstering accountability in ECD Centres to ensure that every ECD Centre is up to international

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standards and 100% focused on the development of children to read for meaning and understanding, numeracy and to foster solution-driven thinking as the lifelong skill.

We commend the Minister for addressing the infrastructure crisis that has created overpopulation in so many schools, one of which is Fred Norman in my constituency. It was built for 900 learners. They are over 2000 students enrolled and I have had yet another complaint about bullying. When we focus our budget on spending properly, efficiently, responsibly and we partner with public-private partnerships we have shown great results both in the Western Cape but also in the rest of the country. Expanding and building schools on time within budget shows the children of South Africa that they matter and that work can be done efficiently.

Furthermore, school feeding schemes and learner transport remain a priority and strategic budgeting partnerships and increase accountability are encouraged at provincial level. Quick implementation and educator development has moved from being a tick box exercise to being outcomes-based interventions that are monitored.

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There is an old expression. The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second-best time is now. And based on empirical data, the department under Minister Gwarube has planted trees that will redress the injustices of the past by creating an enabling environment that not only educates our children for future success but creates safe spaces for healing and growth that addresses the adverse impact of lived trauma on cognitive ability so that future generations can live life free of the deprivations of the past. I thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, greetings to our Minister of Basic Education, Ms. Siviwe Gwarube. Greetings to our Chairperson, the chairperson of the select committee and all members of the select committee present today here. Greetings to all the members of the National Council of Provinces and the guests that are still here.

House Chair, the true essence of freedom in any nation is reflected in its priority and fiscal commitment that government accords to education in pursuit of value for money, long-term advancement of society, and subsequently, its sustainability. I must place it on record that we believe that the fiscal allocation that has been pronounced by Minister Siviwe Gwarube of R38,2 billion from the National Treasury for

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the year 2026-27 fiscal framework will significantly expand access to educational resources and opportunities.

It will be remiss of me not to outline before this House that the allocation gives practical expression to priorities of the Seventh Administration.

So, despite existing challenges, the democratic reforms introduced since 1994 have remained people-centered and focused on restoring the dignity of the people and working class majority. Our government continues to advance progressive, pro-poor policies aimed at improving access to quality education for all learners through the interventions such as the National School Nutrition Programme introduced under the leadership of our first President, democratic President, hon Mandela, the no-fee school policy, the provision of learner and teacher support materials, the scholar transport.

The government continues to confront poverty, inequality, and the legacy of apartheid, which ensures that millions of children, particularly from the rural and disadvantaged communities, are able to learn in dignity and realise their full potential.

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In order for teaching and learning to be effective, care and support is paramount. The Department of Basic Education continues to strengthen programmes that promote social cohesion, nation building, and constitutional values in schools across the republic.

Through sports, arts, music, debate, heritage, and civic education programmes, learners from different racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds continue to be united around a common South African identity. Programmes such as the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Programme, the National School Moot Court Competition, Heritage Education Initiatives, the Girls and Boys Education Movement, school sports activities, and the ABC Motsepe SA School Choral Eisteddfod have continued to empower learners while promoting unity in diversity, reconciliation, and social transformation. The department also intensified interventions aimed at confronting racism, bullying, discrimination, xenophobia, gender-based violence, and other social challenges affecting schools.

These programmes continue to promote tolerance, equality, diversity, and respect for human rights in line with the Constitution and the Freedom Charter. At the same time, the government continued investing in safer and more inclusive

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schooling environments through school safety programmes, anti-gender-based violence initiatives, and infrastructure improvement that restore dignity and create conducive conditions for effective teaching and learning.

During the 2024-25 financial year, the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education raised a critical matter regarding the need to strengthen learner support mechanisms to ensure that learners are adequately guided in identifying and pursuing appropriate career paths aligned to their abilities, interests, and future aspiration.

In response to the concerns and recommendations raised by the committee, the department acted decisively by hosting its inaugural Inter-Departmental Career Choices and Community Services Outreach Programme that was done in the outmost rural area of Mpumalanga. The sector has identified that subject stream mismatches are often detected at a later stage, particularly in Grade 11, when learners have limited opportunities to reconsider or redirect their subject choices. This challenge continues to undermine the learner progression post-school opportunities and ultimately contributes to the growing challenge of youth unemployment.

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Allow me to thank His Excellency, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, for his pronouncement in 2019 to migrate early childhood development from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education in order for the cycle of education to be complete. In response, the basic education sector has elevated early childhood development as a national priority, as Minister has indicated, recognising that the trajectory of a child's life is largely determined long before their entry into Grade 1. In addition, the National Treasury has allocated over R4 billion with an increase of 14,2% from the 2025-26 financial year to expand access on early childhood development programmes across the country.

This will ensure the strengthening of the Foundation Phase for quality learning, care, and development in the early years of the child's life. We therefore welcome the allocation of the R272,2 million towards HIV and Aids programmes aimed at strengthening the prevention of HIV and TB in South Africa. This represents the increase of 3,9% from the previous financial year.

Moreover, gender-based violence and femicide remains a national crisis that continues to threaten the safety,

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dignity, development of women and children in our society. In the basic education sector, school-related gender-based violence remains a serious concern. This scourge manifests through bullying, sexual abuse, harassment, and corporal punishment.

The sector's approved budget of R272,219 per profits for the 2026-27 financial year for HIV and Aids, specifically for related awareness. The expansion and strengthening of school safety programmes remain dependent on the priorities outlined within the 2026-27 fiscal framework. The safety of both learners and teachers remains paramount in ensuring that our schools become conducive environment for effective teaching and learning.

Without safe schools, meaningful curriculum delivery and academic progress cannot be realised. Challenges such as school vandalism, gangsterism, bullying, substance abuse, and violence within communities continue to threaten the stability of our schooling environment. These criminal activities not only undermine teaching and learning; however, they seek to rob young people of their future and potential. This includes the establishment and strengthening of school safety committees, improved reporting and rapid response system, as

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well as the continued implementation of the Adopt-a-Corp initiative under the partnership between the Department of Basic Education and the SA Police Service.

Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme remains central to the core mandate of basic education, particularly strengthening curriculum policy, support and monitoring through the development of quality and specialised educators whose contribution continue to advance our education system. The programme remains instrumental in responding to the shortage of specialised and high-caliber education within the sector.

In 2025-26 fiscal framework, the sector awarded over 10 000 bursaries across various phases from Foundation Phase, as our Minister has indicated this, I am just emphasising, from Foundation Phase to Further Education and Training, FET, in critical areas of specialisation, such as home language, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. In addition, to support the expansion of mother tongue-based bilingual education, the Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme now prioritise the funding of the students who specialise in African languages. The 2025-26 financial year, more than 3 000 students in the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase benefited from the Bursary Support Programme. These interventions have

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supported the training of educators in critical subjects and indigenous African languages, including isiNdebele, isiXhosa, with over 900 students funded, Xitsonga and Siswati and many others.

As part of effort to expand human resource capacity and improve teacher retention within the schools, the department has targeted the recruitment and support of more than 7 000 students during the 2026-27 financial year in advancing the implementation of the National Mathematic Improvement Plan. The sector continues to pursue strategic curriculum reforms aimed at strengthening the teaching and learning of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, STEM, subjects through the mother tongue-based bilingual education approach. The sector remains committed to strengthening teacher development as a critical pillar in ensuring that educators are equipped to deliver quality and advanced learning in our schools.

In this regard, the National Treasurer has allocated over R1,5 billion towards teacher education, human resources and institutional development. There is a slight decrease, of course, of 19,40% in the allocation. Furthermore, teacher development programmes seek to ensure that educators are

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adequately skilled, supported and motivated to respond to the evolving demands of the education sector.

I am pleased to announce that the sector has trained over 23 000 educators on e-learning through special focus on numeracy, mathematics, science and digital skills in all the nine provisional education departments from Quintile 1 to Quintile 4 schools which include the three-stream model educators, vocational and occupational subject and the focus was on Limpopo, Free State and Gauteng provisional education departments.

For 2026-27 financial year, our target as a sector of teachers trained will improve due to installation of high broadband in teacher centers by Vodacom as part of strengthening and expanding the implementation of Sign language. The SA Sign language provided the capacity building workshop training in 2025-26 financial year to over 90 educators, 43 deaf teachers, assistant and to the six provisional SA Sign language coordinators which was held on 7 to 9 January 2026.

The sector also continues to assess the impact of these interventions through an accountability framework that tracks learner progress from Grade 1 through to metric with the

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objectives of ensuring improved educational outcomes and sustained quality performance.

We thank the person in the driving seat, the Minister of Basic Education because she has never deviated from the programmes and she is strengthening the sector. I want to thank the chairperson of the select committee for keeping us on tools, for monitoring the work and seeing where the department cannot see. So, with that, we say continue to hold us accountable. Thank you so much.

Ms B M VAN MINNEN (Western Cape): I'm just trying to get my video to... there we go! House Chair, thank you very much for allowing me to be online as I have a chest infection. So, the Minister of Basic Education recently stood before Parliament and said to the teachers of South Africa, "we have heard you". The DA in the Western Cape welcomes these words. It is a step in the right direction and a different step to the previous Ministers in this department. The Minister announced that the National Education and Training Council, NETC, has submitted proposals to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and that the department will issue directives to provinces to drastically reduce reporting tools.

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The Western Cape says, do it now! Every hour returned to teaching is an hour returned to a child, and an hour returned to their future. We will hold the department accountable because our learners' academic success depends upon it. The class of 2025 achieved a pass rate of 88% nationally, the highest in our country's history. This suggests that the current Minister is doing something right. But let us be specific about where that success is driven. The Western Cape achieved a record-breaking pass of 88.2%, our highest since the introduction of the National Senior Certificate, NSC. But more importantly, the highest throughput rate in the country, is 71,7%, meaning Western Cape learners have the best chance in South Africa to stay in school and succeed.

The highest mathematics pass rate nationally, 73,7%, because we prioritise gateway subjects, not just pass rates. Nearly half of all candidates, 49,2%, qualified for bachelor's degree study. The top Learner with Special Education Needs, LSEN, learner, in the country, Takunda Muchuweni, and the top matric candidate in South Africa, Abigail Kok, are products of the Western Cape Education Department, WCED, and the Metro East Education District, which includes all of Khayelitsha, is now the second highest ranked district. This marks the fifth consecutive year that South Africa's top matriculant comes

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from the Western Cape. That is not luck; that is DA governance.

The Minister has now announced that the department will rank provincial performance through an inclusive basket of indicators, including bachelor passes, distinctions, and gateway subject participation. The DA welcomes this. Publish the basket immediately! Let South Africans see which provinces are truly educating, and which are merely pushing learners through the system. Chairperson, you cannot fix a broken Grade 12 system; you must fix Grade 1, and the current Minister understands that. Therefore, nationally, the Department of Basic Education has announced that 10 000 foundation phase teachers will receive targeted literacy and numeracy training.

The National Reading Literacy Strategy and Plan will be refreshed. In the Western Cape, the WCED systematic results show a strong recovery in foundation phase learning, with Grade 3 outcomes improving significantly in recent years. Language increased from 36,9% in 2021 to 45,4% in 2024; reading for meaning from 41,9% to 52,8%, and mathematics from 44,3% to 55,9%. These gains reflect the impact of targeted system-wide interventions and provide clear evidence that

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focused support in the early grades is driving measurable improvements in learner performance.

We also welcome the national screen time guidelines for children, aged two to six, but guidelines are worthless without enforcement. The DA will monitor this closely. We know our schools are overcrowded, and the best way to address this is to employ more teachers. Therefore, the Western Cape Education Department budget for 2026-27 allocates R799 million for 701 new educator posts. This is a direct response to immigration. Our province is a destination of choice because we deliver quality services, but that popularity pressures on classrooms. These new posts will improve teacher-learner ratios, allowing for individualised attention and better outcomes.

Nationally, the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme will award 29 900 bursaries over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, at a cost of R44,1 million. The DA supports this. More young people will be encouraged to become educators because funding is available to them. Nationally, R50,4 billion over MTEF is allocated to school infrastructure. In the Western Cape, we are not waiting. Over the MTEF, our total infrastructure investment reaches R6,437 billion, including R330 million for

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maintenance and refurbishment of aging infrastructure. Thirty new schools and 1 450 new classrooms delivered since the Rapid School Build programme began in 2022-23. More schools are under construction, equivalent to 344 additional classrooms, creating space for more than 12 000 additional learners.

The average cost of a new school is approximately R125 million. That represents an investment of more than R1,6 billion in new school infrastructure in just a few years - please excuse my dog barking in the background. However, a learner cannot learn if they're afraid for their life. That is why the DA-led Western Cape government, in partnership with the DA-led City of Cape Town, continually expands the School Resource Officer, SRO, programme. Currently, 82 SROs are deployed across 41 schools in high-risk communities, such as Bishop Lavis, Samora Machel, Atlantis, West Bank, and Khayelitsha. Three additional schools will benefit from the programme from July 2026.

The total cost for the 2026 school year is R36,3 million. This is an investment the DA believes is necessary to protect learners, educators, and infrastructure from violence, gangsterism, bullying and substance abuse. During a recent oversight visit to a primary school in Sir Lowry's Pass, the

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DA Western Cape spokesman on education witnessed the devastating impact of vandalism. Notwithstanding that, during the March school holidays alone, vandalism amounted to nearly R400 000. While the SA Police Service, SAPS, remains the primary party responsible for combating crime, the DA-led Western Cape Government steps in where SAPS falls short.

The SRO programme is an additional layer of protection. These officers build trust, mentorship and support within schools affected by violence. Every province should have this.

Furthermore, a child cannot learn on an empty stomach.

Nationally, the Department of Basic Education has allocated R11 billion for the National School Nutrition Programme, NSNP, in 2026-27 alone, with R33,9 billion over three years. The DA supports this fully, but we ask, is every province spending this money effectively? In the Western Cape, we are. We track every meal. Here, the DA-led Western Cape Education department has allocated R1,77 billion over the MTEF to keep the school nutrition program running properly. An additional 219 million is set aside specifically to counter food inflation.

In the 2025 academic year alone, the Western Cape Education department reached 1 055 schools, 540 406 learners. For this financial year, the province has allocated nearly R571 million

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to keep those numbers rising. We note that the Early Childhood Development, ECD, registration has grown by 200% between 2021 and 2026, with 1,2 million now accessing registered ECD programmes, which is progress. The Children's Amendment Bill has been approved by Cabinet. The DA supports this Bill, but only if it genuinely unlocks a child-centred system, no another layer of bureaucratic control. We also note that R18,6 billion over the MTEF is allocated to ECD grant, and we will watch to ensure that that money reaches our communities.

Let me conclude with a simple truth. The DA-led Western Cape government has built an education system that leads the country in mathematics, has put the highest throughput rate, produced the top metric candidate in South Africa for five consecutive years, invests R6,4 billion in infrastructure, puts 82 law enforcement officers in high-risk schools, feeds 540 000 vulnerable learners daily, and adds 701 new teachers this year alone. This is not an accident; this is DA governance in action. In the Western Cape, the doors of learning and culture are indeed open to all. I thank you.

Mr B J FARMER: Chairperson, I have counted the number of times the previous speaker mentioned her political party in her speech. I stopped at 73. Talk about campaigning. Hon

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Chairperson, hon members, I greet you in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. The PA supports this Budget Vote, because no responsible party can oppose funding meant for children, teachers, classrooms, school nutrition, early childhood development, and the future of our nation. However, our support comes with a firm message. This budget must be felt in every classroom.

Hon Minister, why do you in this day and age allow a system in the Western Cape where former model-C schools in the white areas carry as little as 14 children per class, while in our poorer areas teachers must do classes in excess of 40 learners?

Hon Minister, the story you told of Nelson that struggled from the disadvantaged for a position might be a reality. However, I know of a Nelson that became the President of this country. The R38,225 billion of your 2026-27 budget must translate into reading, writing, numeracy, safe schools, qualified teachers, working toilets, proper classrooms, and children who are prepared for the world.

Seeing that my clock is not running, I will just continue. We must be honest. South Africa does not only have an education

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funding problem. We have an implementation problem. We have children who reach Grade 4 but still cannot read with meaning. We have schools where teachers are overwhelmed, classrooms are overcrowded, and learners sit in unsafe environments. A budget on paper means nothing to a child sitting in a classroom with no textbooks, no proper desk, no safe toilet, and no teacher support. The PA says every rand must follow the learner.

The department's own plans speak about early childhood development, ECD, nutrition, ICT, teacher training, and infrastructure. These are important priorities, but implementation must be practical. Early childhood development can no longer be treated as a side issue. We must strengthen Grade R, support ECD centres, and make sure that children in poor communities receive the same foundation as children in wealthy suburbs. A learner in a class with more than 40 learners can surely not get the same quality of education as a kid in a class of only 14 learners.

We also support the National School Nutrition Programme. For many children, the meal at school is not an extra benefit; it is the only proper meal of the day. No child must be hungry in a classroom while suppliers and officials benefit from broken tenders. If food is not delivered, somebody must answer. If

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quality is poor, somebody must answer. If corruption is found, somebody must go.

We must also speak about teachers. We must make sure that young teachers are placed where they are needed, especially in mathematics, science, technology in the foundation phase and rural schools. We cannot allow schools to sit with vacancies, and we definitely cannot expect quality education when teachers are unsupported, under pressure and forced to work in overcrowded classrooms without proper resources. The PA believes in discipline, accountability and support. Teachers must be protected and supported.

School infrastructure must be treated as urgent. A child cannot learn properly in a school that is falling apart. We must fix schools faster. Infrastructure money must not be lost in endless planning, consultant reports, inflated tenders and abandoned projects. It must be turned into classrooms, toilets, libraries, laboratories, fencing and safe playgrounds.

The PA also believes schools must prepare learners for real life. We need learners exposed to trade, coding, agriculture, entrepreneurship, digital skills and practical work readiness.

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The PA supports Budget Vote 16 because our children deserve investment. But we will hold this department accountable for delivery because when basic education fails, the whole country pays the price. But when basic education works, families rise, communities grow and the nation becomes stronger. The PA supports this Budget Vote, but we support it with the expectation that this money must reach the child in the classroom. Salute!

Ms T BREEDT: House Chairperson, ...

*Afrikaans:*

... Nelson Mandela het gesê: ...

*English:*

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

*Afrikaans:*

Maar in Suid-Afrika voel dit soms asof die regering daardie wapen stomp gemaak het. Want hoe bou ons 'n suksesvolle toekoms as ons kinders steeds slagoffers van korrupsie, wanadministrasie en politieke inmenging is?

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*English:*

The Department's APP speaks about improved learning outcomes, literacy, numeracy and expanded access to education. These are important goals. However, South Africans are asking a simple question: Where is the accountability?

*Afrikaans:*

Ons kan nie oor kwaliteit onderwys praat, terwyl handboek-tenders onder 'n wolk van vrae hang nie. Ons kan nie oor integriteit praat, terwyl matriekeindeksamenvraestelle uitlek nie. En ons kan nie oor 'n capable state [bekwame staat] praat, terwyl skole steeds sonder basiese hulpbronne funksioneer nie.

*English:*

The reality is that many learners are still trapped in failing systems. In rural communities and small towns, learners struggle with overcrowded classrooms, unsafe infrastructure, teacher shortages and inadequate learning materials. And despite billions being allocated to education, too many children are still being failed by the system.

*Afrikaans:*

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Die VF Plus glo dat onderwys die grondslag van 'n suksesvolle samelewing is. Goeie onderwys vereis egter dissipline, verantwoordbaarheid, moedertaalonderrig, bevoegde onderwysers, en 'n regering wat geld verstandig bestuur.

*English:*

The department places strong emphasis on Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education. The FF Plus has always supported the principle that children learn best in their mother tongue, because language is not a barrier to education. Language is the bridge to understanding.

*Afrikaans:*

Maar moedertaalonderrig beteken niks as skole nie handboeke ontvang nie. Dit beteken niks, as onderwysers oorlaai word en administrasie belangriker raak as werklike onderrig nie.

*English:*

One statistic should concern every member in this House: South Africa continues to face severe literacy challenges in the foundation phase. If children cannot read for meaning early on, they fall behind in every subject thereafter.

*Afrikaans:*

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Dis waarom die VF Plus glo dat die fokus weer na die basiese beginsels moet terugkeer: lees, skryf, rekene, dissipline en kwaliteit onderrig, en nie ideologiese eksperimente of politieke inmenging nie.

*English:*

The APP highlights support for infrastructure and school safety. Yet, many learners still attend schools with broken toilets, unsafe classrooms and inadequate facilities. How can we expect excellence from learners when the state cannot even guarantee their dignity?

*Afrikaans:*

En dan is daar die kwessie van veiligheid.

*English:*

Teachers are increasingly intimidated. Learners are exposed to violence, drugs and gangsterism. Parents lose confidence in the system.

*Afrikaans:*

'n Skool moet 'n plek van hoop wees, nie vrees nie.

*English:*

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The FF Plus will continue fighting for quality education, strong discipline in schools, proper financial oversight, the protection of mother tongue education, and an education system that equips children for real economic opportunities.

*Afrikaans:*

Dis ons tyd om onderwys weer eerste te stel. Dis ons tyd om korrupsie uit die stelsel te verwyder. Dis ons tyd om kinders se toekoms belangriker as politieke agendas te maak.

*English:*

And as South Africans prepare for the upcoming local government elections, communities must remember that good governance starts locally. When municipalities collapse, schools suffer. When corruption spreads, children pay the price. The future of this country depends on whether we are willing to demand accountability.

*Afrikaans:*

Die VF Plus sal aanhou veg vir die onderwysstelsel om te werk, vir onderwysers wat ondersteuning kry, en vir kinders wat 'n regverdige kans op sukses verdien. Dis ons tyd. Ek dank u.

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Ms L L MASINA (Mpumalanga): Hon Chair of the House, let me take this opportunity and humbly greet yourself, the hon Minister of Basic Education, the Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Dr Regina Mhaule, hon members of the National Council of Provinces, my colleagues members of MECs from our sister provinces and all our distinguished guests. We from the place of the rising sun rise with humility and a deep sense of responsibility to participate in this debate in support of the budget presented by the Minister of Basic Education.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon MEC Masina, I'm sorry to interrupt you. There appears to be a problem with your camera. We cannot see you. We see the building that we are sitting in here, but we don't see you on the screen. If I can ask you to just adjust your camera and your settings to ensure that we are able to see that it's you indeed speaking. And later you can continue with your speech please mam.

Ms L L MASINA (Mpumalanga): Oh, I know I don't know what's happening because my camera is on.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): It is on, but your background settings seem to be overtaking the entire screen.

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Ms L L MASINA (Mpumalanga): What can I do now? Now I'm all by myself here at home.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Messina, if you are not able to rectify it, can I ask you to please continue.

Ms L L MASINA (Mpumalanga): As I have indicated, we do so encouraged by the trajectory ushered in by our democratic dispensation and cutting the constitutional imperative, whose preamble calls upon us to improve the quality of life and unlock full potential of every citizen. We fully align with the Minister's vision that early development must be the cornerstone of a transformed and inclusive education system.

We are working around the clock to accelerate the expansion of Grade R and to intensify efforts to register and support early childhood development, ECD, centres through Bana Pele campaign. Furthermore, we are resolute in strengthening practitioner capacity by investing in the training and development of ECD practitioners, thereby elevating the standard and quality of early learning provision across the province. Through these deliberate and progressive actions, we commit building a solid early childhood development trajectory that is inclusive and of high quality.

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It is for this reason that we proudly celebrate the 30 years of our progressive Constitution, a living document that continues to guide our collective efforts to build a just, equitable and inclusive society.

In Mpumalanga, we serve more than 1,1 million learners who every school day are guaranteed access to quality education delivered by dedicated cohort of over 31 609 qualified teachers. Notably, more than 87% of our schools are no fee-paying institutions, ensuring that access to education is not determined by the socioeconomy of our children. These learners receive nutritious meals daily without fail. And more recently, as a province we have expanded this support through the introduction of a breakfast programme as part of the pilot initiative to further enhance learner readiness and performance.

Through the provincial Ubuhlebusile e-Learning programme, over 60 000 Grade 12 learners in Quantile 1 to Quintile 3 have already been provided with tablets. This is complemented by the establishment of eight provincial smart schools where learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12 utilise digital devices as part of their learning resources. We are further heartened that just this week, we commenced with the roll-out of

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additional 80 000 tablets to Grade 10 learners in Quintile 1 to Quintile 3. These learners will retain these gadgets for the next three years while they'll be doing their Grade 10, Grade 11 and Grade 12, deepening their digital inclusion and enhancing the quality of learning outcomes.

In addition, 67 000 learners who would otherwise travel long distance often exceeding five kilometres, are provided with reliable scholar transport daily ensuring consistent access to schooling. These deliberate and targeted interventions have yielded tangible results. Mpumalanga recorded an impressive national senior certificate pass rate of 86,55%, recording 1,5% improvement in the class of 2025. This stands as practical evidence that our constitutional vision is not merely an aspirational but actively transforming lives and advancing development.

We therefore support this budget as it advances our deliberate and focused agenda to intensify the implementation of a learner-centred education system, one that responds to the needs of our people.

This budget will enable us to further improve conditions of services for our educators, accelerate the delivery of school

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infrastructure, strengthen curriculum implementation and expand enrichment programmes planned for this financial year.

We also support this budget with a clear understanding that the challenges that remain. Mpumalanga continues to face significant backlog in school infrastructure, some of which have been exacerbated by the recent storm damages. These realities demand sustained investment and co-ordinated action.

The Seventh administration is guided by the ANC 2024 manifesto which envisioned a multitiered skill-driven education transformation. This includes strengthening early childhood development and improving foundational competencies in literacy and numeracy. Indeed, the ANC has made significant and progressive stride in expanding access to quality basic education, particularly for the African child from working class and the poor communities.

To this end, the department in collaboration with the sister departments such as the Department of Agriculture, the Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, the Correctional Services and a range of stakeholders are mounting an intensified program called Randza Xikolo Xa Wena campaign, which means love your school, where we are mobilising

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communities to be the first line of defence and protection of our schools. We are grateful to report here that the communities of Mpumalanga are embracing this campaign in more ways than one. This has already helped us create conditions that are favourable for learning and teaching.

Our province is targeting a pass rate of 91% this year. We are very much optimistic of that by the support and the heightened implementation of the 2026 Learner Performance Improvement Plan. We are truly at work, we are intentional and we are making school to work for our communities. We are supporting the budget.

What is required now is a shared commitment grounded in the understanding that our socioeconomic development is inextricably linked to the quality basic education that we provide. The moment is urgent, the course is just. The struggle continues and education remains our sharpest spear. Therefore, Chairperson, I thank you very much for this opportunity.

*IsiXhosa:*

Mnu. M M PETER: Sihlalo weNdlu, umlisela nomthinjana wezwekazi leAfrika, amalungu ale Ndlu, kubathunywa abasigxina nakuwe

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Mphathiswa, ndiyabhotisa. Ikamva lesizwe lingenelwe nguhili endlwini. Eli Sebe lezeMfundo esiSiseko lizibona lilixhoba leziyobisi ezingena ngaphakathi ezikolweni. Luphi ke ngoku ukhuseleko lootisthala ezikolweni? Luphi ke ngoku ukhuseleko lwabantwana ezikolweni? Luphi ke ngoku ukhuseleko lwezikolo jikelele koorhunta? Ootitshala basebenza benoloyiko, abanye babulawelwa ezikolweni abanye bayahlaselwa. Abantwana benza nantoni na abafuna ukuyenza kuba ootitshala abasenawo amalungelo ngenxa yamalungelo abantwana.

Mphathiswa wam omhle, ingaba lwayaphi na ukhuseleko lweemveku kuquka nezikolo zethu? Umhla nezolo, izikolo ziyaqhekezwa. Imicelimngeni etshisa ibunzi zizithuthi zabantwana besikolo. Xa kufuneka abanikazi bezithuthi behlawuliwe, iba yintsumantsumane. Ude ulungiswe nini lo mcimbi wezithuthi zabantwana? Ingaba isebe lakho likhe lawenza uphando ukukhangela ukuba bangaphi ootitshala abangamaxhoba okuhlawuliswa imali yokhuselo ngoonqevu? (extortion)

Izikolo zethu zizigqubu zokuthengiswa kweziyobisi. Ingaba ukhe walenza kusini na olo phando? Sihlalo weNdlu, kwaba bantwana badinga imisebenzi benezidanga, isebe liyabasebenzisa ukuncedisa ezikolweni. Imali esisibonelelo abayinikwa leli

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sebe noko ingathi bayaxhatshazwa. AmaR3000 noko ayomali leyo enokunikwa abantu abanezidanga.

Makhe ndigqithele koogxa bam abasoloko bechasa uhlahlomali. Ingaba bayiqlwalasele indima yokuchasa uhlahlomali ukuba lunento ethi, ootitshala mabangayi ezikolweni, abantwana mabangafundi okanye abantwana mabangatyi ezikolweni. Bebekhe bawujonga lo mcimbi wokuba ngeli xesha bebesithi ootitshala mabangahlawulwa kodwa bona bayahlawulwa? Bathi uhlahlomali malungapasiswa kodwa bona bahleli kwizindlu zikarhulumente ngohlahlomali lukarhulumente. Kutheni bengayali le mali nezinto abazixhamlayo kurhulumente xa befuna ukugatya olu hlahlomali?

Ingaba bebekhe bayiqlwalasela kusini na le nto ithi thina maLungu ePalamente siyamkela rhoqo ngenyanga kwaye sihlala kwizindlu zikarhulumente kodwa uhlahlomali oluza ngakuni asilufuni. Bebeyiqlwalesele le ngozi bayihlebelala isizwe ukuba ibabeka phi na? Ndiyaafuna ukulumkisa oogxa bethu ukuba bayiqlwalasele le nto yokwala uhlahlomali ukuba luye ebantwini. Bona ngelo xesha basiwa ngeebhasi emisebenzini yabo bekwahlala kwizindlu zikarhulumente befumana imivuzo yabo kananjalo. Ndiyaafuna bayijonge kakuhle le nyewe.

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Xa ndiyiququmbela, luphi na ukhuseleko xa ungena emasangweni ezikolo? Amasango ezikolo eziliqela awile, akubonakali oonogada ababambe ucwangco. Siyacela Mphathiswa omhle ukuba sijonge izikolo zethu. Kaloku ayincedisi into yokuba sijonge kakhulu izikolo zabucala (model C schools) nezikolo zasezidolophini kuphela. Kuyafuneka ukuba sizikhathalele izikolo zethu ezisezilokishini nasezilalini kuba imeko yazo imaxongo. Sihlalo weNdlu, ngaloo mazwi mandithi, enkosi.

Mr O J MOKAE: Chairperson, Minister, Deputy Minister, hon members, fellow South Africans, good evening, basic education is the backbone of the developmental trajectory of our country. It lies at the core of building our nation and shaping the future of our country. When it is weakened, our future is severely impacted. When it is purely managed and administered, then we have no future and the next generation is put on the back foot.

It is thus important that we build and sustain a resilient basic education sector, one that is adaptable, but importantly, that positively shapes the future of our country and responds to its developmental agenda. With more than thirteen million learners in the system, we cannot afford to gamble with the future of this country. For far too long,

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under the ANC-led government, this sector was led by incompetent and poor leadership.

For far too long, we observed with much dismay and shame as the future of our country was compromised. How can we forget the Limpopo textbook debacle of 2012? How can we forget the failing and crumbling infrastructure costing the dear lives of our children? May their souls continue to rest in peace.

All these signs pointed to something deeply and horribly going wrong with serious gaps evident in the sector. While strides were made in several respects, sadly, these were overshadowed by eyes of learners under trees. Classrooms are overcrowded and teachers overburdened. They were overshadowed by poor educational outcomes, limited quality education, unsafe learning environments and inadequate governance, hon Fienies.

We know for the longest time under the ANC-led government Our country's educational outcomes were poor, evidenced by dismal performances on international benchmark tests in literacy and numeracy, especially in the foundation phase, hon Feni. These poor outcomes were attributed to implementation challenges, inadequate teaching quality, and teacher shortages, amongst

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others. We know too well that when the foundation phase is weak, success throughout the system is slim.

Quality teaching and learning in the foundation phase is the truest recipe for the success of our children in the rest of their schooling career and beyond. Therefore, the advent of the seventh administration and subsequent formation of the Government of National Unity including a vibrant and visionary new Minister in the sector, was a breath of fresh air to see renewed efforts and urgent attention focused on this critical sector.

The department has now prioritised the improvement of foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes which is important for our children to flourish. Additionally, we note and welcome the department allocating sustained funding for the early childhood development programme, ECD. I think a lot of colleagues and the hon Minister spoke at length on this.

The ECD ensures the universal availability and adequate quality of and equitable access to inclusive learning opportunities for children from birth to school going age through curriculum development and the delivery, funding,

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regulation, registration, quality monitoring, improvement, and evaluation of ECD programmes.

The allocation of R18,6 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, which includes an additional R12,8 billion to subsidise the provision of these services and other infrastructure support to ECD providers, indicate bold commitments to address challenges that have long plagued the sector.

The additional allocation by the department allows for an increase in the subsidy from R17 to R24 per child per day to enable an estimated 300 000 more children to access subsidised ECD services. Funding and resourcing the ECD programme further indicate the renewed efforts to address the needs of the most vulnerable in our country and for that we commend Minister Siviwe Gwarube. In this respect, a strong partnership and adequate monitoring of spending in the provinces is of utmost importance. And the NCOP bears that responsibility.

I would like to highlight the successes in provincial education outcomes, including those from Madrid. Hon Mhlongo is absent. Silikamva High School in Imizamo Yethu achieved a 100% pass rate for the 2025 matriculants, marking the first

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time in the school's history. The school also recorded a bachelor pass rate of 76%. This is a quintile three, no-fee school.

Unfortunately, some members in this House do not share this vision. The rejection of this budget by the uMkhonto weSizwe Party and the Economic Freedom Fighters clearly demonstrates their lack of commitment. It cannot be acceptable that, when more than 13 million children need us most, we abandon them. Rejecting this budget is rejecting the future of our children and our country. History will judge you harshly. Shame on you. Thank you.

*Setswana:*

Ke a leboga.

*Afrikaans:*

Baie dankie.

Mr M F MOKWELE: House Chair, hon Minister, Deputy Minister, hon members, fellow South Africans, before I present my debate, I just want to steal my two minutes. It won't be long because what I'm going to clarify is something that has also weighed the House. I want to clarify, hon Adriaanse, I heard

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my learned friend in my committee saying something about corruption. You know, hon members, in the ANC-led government we are not grandstanding about corruption, but we deal with corruption, irrespective of who is affected. I think all of you are witness to what I'm saying. We don't come here and grandstand. Our President will always deal with corruption, irrespective ... [Interjections.] ... Hon members, in fact I don't want to touch on the EFF and MK because they've waited almost 22 minutes combined, telling the government what to do, but yet they reject the budget. So I don't even understand why the voters continue voting for them. [Interjections.]

House Chair, it is a privilege to rise in this Chamber during our budget debate to speak on the transformation of basic education. As Nelson Mandela reminded us, and as other speakers have been indicating that: "Education is a powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". And President Ramaphosa further declared during the state of the nation address this year that our focus now is establishing a firm foundation for learning in the early years of child life. By making Grade R compulsory, we are getting all children off on a good start.

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Today, we are not going to grandstand, but we are going to ensure that the resources we allocate sharpen the weapon through innovation, inclusion and system strengthening so that it serves every learner and ultimately prosperity of our nation. Our basic education sector was previously used by the former regime to oppress the black masses through the implementation of the substandard education also referred to as Bantu education system.

Here I'm going to teach hon Mokae because I know you have been saying that you don't even know them because you were not even there when this agenda started. They ensured that they were not skilled enough like their white counterpart in order to be competitive in the economy of the country. This psychological work prompted the ANC-led government, hon Mokae, to put this transformation of education at the forefront of the democratic dispensation. Today we are proud to note that the largest expenditure item in the fiscal is education and culture, which allow inclusive education, innovation, and sustainable learner outcome.

South Africa continues to grapple with high level of youth unemployment, with rates on upward to 60% among young people between the ages of 15 and 25. One of the areas that

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contribute to high unemployment is skills mismatch, where some of the education curricula are not responsive to the skills demanded by the economy. This problem does not start at the institution of higher learning, hon Fienies, but its roots lie in the basic education sector.

It is important to note that university doors should not be the only option for school leavers to further their education. The training of young people comprises through local, academic, technical, vocational and occupational streams to enable them to play a meaningful role in the economy. It is for this reason that we encourage the department to scale up with the three-stream model to enhance multiple pathways that will direct learners into different training areas across the technical, vocational and occupational streams for career paths that are responsive to the skills demand of the economy.

The select committee had the privilege of conducting an oversight visit in the North West province, where we visited Keurhof secondary school, a special school where learners' study predominantly practical subjects. It was amazing to see schools where learners attended lessons in various training workshops, such as carpentry, motor mechanics, painting, welding, and hospitality. We saw learners assembling office

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furniture, fixing cars, welding, painting, sewing and cooking while still in school. Hon Minister, as members of the select committee we even enjoyed lunch in the same school. There were no service providers that had been brought in there because of this model.

If we strengthen this model, it will mean that learners will be job ready before they finish their schooling, even those who do not wish to get to Grade 12. This method of education has shown significant success in the countries such as Germany and Singapore, whose large industrial and manufacturing capabilities are backed by the skilled workforce for their technical and vocational education system rather than academic stream.

Minister, I want to applaud you. Even when we were busy debating there, outside there, I saw your department exhibiting this model to show that indeed you see where we want to go. However, we are very concerned to learn that whilst learners were gaining these important industry-ready skills, their school completion certificate were still not recognized by Umalusi and even the South African Qualification Authority. This is worrisome to us as members of the committee because this hinders these talented learners' abilities to

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seek employment opportunities or even to start their own business upon completing their schooling. We therefore call on the department to urgently address this accreditation of this practical subjects and certificate with the relevant bodies to enable these learners to gain meaningful employment upon completion.

We live in the era of digital transformation and artificial intelligence, and our country need to be responsive to this new digital era. One of the areas we often overemphasize is the modernization of our teaching and learning method and through expansion of ICT. Gone are those days where library could only be used in a physical form.

During our recent oversight visit in Limpopo province, the committee visited Mohlakaneng combined school; a Quintile 1 school. This school has no internet access, nor does it have sufficient access to ICT infrastructure. Yet, this school, hon Minister and hon MEC of Limpopo, received the pass rate mark of 89% and was recognized as one of the top performing schools in the district. One can only imagine what this school could have achieved if it had access to stable internet. The committee has since called on the department to urgently provide the school with the necessary ICT infrastructure, but

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not only that school, but it must also roll out to all rural school and the no-fee paying school. Every decision we make needs to be well researched and informed by available time.

One of the shortcomings, Minister, we continue to observe the education sector's lack of co-ordination amongst national, provincial, and district level administration. For instance - I heard somebody also mentioned this - the national department has at some point, Minister, through your good self, been on record stating that unsafe pit latrines have been eradicated. Chair of the committee can attest to this; upon visiting schools we found that some pit latrines have not been eradicated in areas where pit latrines were located.

Another example is the challenge of not being able to adequately track learners' dropout to determine what happened to them after they leave school. Therefore, we call for improved data management system within the basic education sector that will enhance co-ordination among the national department, provinces and districts, and among different province educational department. A strong data management will not only improve performance reporting and monitoring, but also strengthen data-driven solution, decision making, and resource allocation. For the education sector to be effective,

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all spheres of the sector need to speak to one another to enable a better co-ordination of scarce resources.

In closing, we call on the administration to use scarce resources prudently and to address the resolution from our oversight visit urgently. We normally say that when we visit a province, we are not doing just a tour. We want to make sure that provinces implement our recommendations. We also call for the continued implementation of the Basic Education Laws Amendment, Bela, Act. Minister, here we are not even ... the chair is always emphasizing that the Bela Act must be implemented without any excuses, which will strengthen access to quality education and redress the injustices of the past. The committee will continue to conduct its oversight work in the education sector, working with all stakeholders, including civil society and communities to ensure that our learners' needs are met.

With these words, I finally close my debate by drawing aspiration from a longstanding President of the ANC, Oliver Reginald Tambo, who was also a mathematics and science teacher. He said:

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The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future.

I thank you.

*Setswana:*

Ke a leboga.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chairperson, let me thank the members of this House who have constructively contributed to this debate. But most people who use the quote from the Cape Verdean engineer Amilcar Cabral start at "tell no lies" and they skip to "claim no victories". They are skipping the part about "exposing lies whenever they are told". So, allow me to expose some lies during this debate. For the first time in 2025, all 75 school districts have achieved a pass rate of 80% and above. So, the notion that somehow the education system is slanted towards those who are more fortunate than those who are living in rural districts is misplaced. In fact, if you look at the top performing, top 10 performing districts across the country, districts like Umkhanyakude, districts like Umlazi and districts like the Metro East, that encompasses Khayelitsha, are those that are performing well. And so, it is

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important that we do not discourage those learners by telling lies about what they are able to do. We are able to demonstrate that talent does not reside in particular places in the country and that when talent is seen and is supported, particularly in township and rural communities, in no-fee schools, excellence has become a pattern.

Over 66% of bachelor passes obtained by candidates from no-fee schools and no-fee schools are achieving pass rates between 80% and 100%. And so that is really, really, really important.

And so, it may mean that this may be the first graduate of a home. It may mean that this is the first teacher, lawyer, engineer, scientist in that family. It may mean that that child will be the person who will break the cycle of poverty.

Hon Mampuru's input was simply vacuous. No solutions but the kind of input to expect from those who are not in the arena. Roosevelt was correct in saying that it is not the critic who counts not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles. What matters are the people in the arena who work hard to make our country a better place to afford every single one of our 13,7 million learners in our country a better future. so, I will not waste my time responding to his vacuous inputs.

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Hon Mhlongo raises very relevant challenges that are facing our education system. This is not a system without its challenges. Both the Deputy Minister and I have highlighted what those challenges are. I suppose my difficulty with what the hon member has said is that it is said with deep hypocrisy. The leadership of hon Mhlongo's party presided over a period in South Africa where public coffers were systematically hollowed out.

*IsiXhosa:*

Abantu babephuma eSaxonworld bephethe imali ngeengxowa ezimnyama.

*English:*

Money which could have gone to investing in this very department. So, I suppose I have a great deal of difficulty listening to the hon member when I know that it is layered with hypocrisy.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Minister, If I can ask you to take your seat for a moment, please. And what are you rising on hon Nzimande? Can you then you tell me what you are rising on, please Mr Nzimande?

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*IsiZulu:*

Mnu E NZIMANDE: Awutshele le "mgonyi" ithule. Tshela le "mgonyi" ithule ye-DA, ngifuna ukukhuluma. Sihlalo, ephuzwini lokukhalima okuphambukayo: Ngisukuma ngoMthetho weNqubo u-61

*English:*

Hon House Chairperson, on a point of order: I am rising on Rule 61, all right? It is when this Minister is deliberately making a statement which she knows that it is false.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Sorry, which rule did you say you are rising on?

Mr E NZIMANDE: The statement she is raising is false.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Which rule did you say you are rising on?

Mr E NZIMANDE: 61(b), the statement that she is attributing to the President of MKP.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): I think we all agree that is a point of debate.

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*IsiZulu:*

Mnu E NZIMANDE: Ayeke ukungiphaphela. Ngithi ngizama ukukhuluma, awungivikeli. Ngicela uvimbe lesi sidawudawu se-DA.

*English:*

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): You completed your point. Thank you, hon member. It is not a point of order. It is a point of debate. Minister, I do invite you to continue with your response.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon member, we are entitled to our own opinions but we are certainly not entitled to our own facts. If you pick up the Zondo Commission you will know exactly what I am talking about. When I am talking about bags of cash being carried out of Saxonworld. So, I am not going to debate what is factual with him.

Hon Breedt, no organisation is without fault or immune to corruption. The real test and the real difference in leadership is whether or not you are prepared to act. So, for that reason, nobody can fault me for not acting or probing the textbook matter. We have done so. We have engaged with Treasury and we have announced that we have got an independent

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law firm that is going to be doing a forensic report. So, I think it would be unfair to attribute this somehow to a long list of failures on the Department of Basic Education when, in fact, there has been action.

Hon Peter ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... ndiyavumelana nawe, ubundlobongela ezikolweni mabuphele. Yiyo loo nto ... [That is why]

*English:*

... hon Du Plessis, we are working with the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to ensure that they update the National Register for Sex Offenders and the National Child Protection Register. In fact, we have already dismissed teachers who have appeared on some of these lists and some of these registers because we want to say this without equivocation. There is no place for sexual predators in our school.

And lastly, hon Mokwele is absolutely right. We will ensure that by the end of this financial year, that the General Education Certificate, GEC, certification issue is resolved.

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Schools of Skills must offer learners an opportunity to be able to go into the world of work. If we are going to tackle the very stubborn problem of unemployment in South Africa, then we too must do our bit. Thank you very much, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon members, I would like to thank the Minister and the Deputy Minister, all permanent delegates, the MECs, all special delegates and the SA Local Government Association, Salga, representatives who have availed themselves for today's very long sitting and I appreciate the discipline that has been shown by all members present.

Debate concluded.

The Council adjourned at 20:50