

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 1

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

---

*PROCEEDINGS OF MINIPLenary - GOOD HOPE CHAMBER*

---

Members of the miniplenary session met at Good Hope Chamber at 16:45.

House Chairperson Mr C T Frolick took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Debate on Vote No 4 – Government Communication and Information Systems:

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon House Chairperson, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technology, hon Khusela Sangoni in absentia, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, hon Teliswa Mgweba, Deputy Ministers in the

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 2**

Presidency, hon Kenny Morolong, who has been delegated the Government Communication and Information System, GCIS, responsibility, hon Nonceba Mhlauli, members of the Portfolio Committees on Communications and Digital Technologies and the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, senior management of GCIS, Brand SA and the Media Development and Diversity Agency, MDDA, representatives of the boards of MDDA and Brand SA and hon members, the total budget allocation to the Government Communication And Information System over the 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, period amounts to R2,5 billion, which is a 3,15% decrease compared to the 2025-26 financial year.

This budget is allocated as follows per year. For the financial year 2026-27 is R803,246 million, 2027-28, R837,30 million and 2028-29, R863,45 million. Of the 2026-27 financial year budget, R262,523 million is transfers and subsidies, of which R218,349 million is transferred to the Brande SA, and R41,924 million, is transferred to the MDDA. An operating budget of R535,067 million caters for compensation of employees to the value of R327,517 million to cater for the post establishment of 500 permanent positions and goods and services to the value of R210,550 million.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 3**

I must indicate that the GCIS post establishment is not fully funded due to insufficient allocation for the compensation of employees and the unfunded cost of living adjustment. This is in addition to the budget reductions implemented by the National Treasury over the 2026 MTEF period of R29,56 million. In the goods and services budget, we could only have a paltry allocation of R20 million for communication of national key campaigns. Hon members will certainly be in agreement that R20 million allocation is insufficient to cover the cost of communication across platforms and in all languages, in particular in this important year of local government elections.

The year 2026, is a seminal year. It is hosting significant milestones in the history of South Africa's journey towards freedom and democracy. In this year, South Africa has marked 30 years since the adoption of the democratic Constitution on 8 May 1996 by the first democratic and representative Parliament. The Constitution remain a living expression of our nation's collective commitment to constitutional democracy, human rights, freedoms, and the rule of law. It is important to emphasise that the rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution are accompanied by responsibilities that

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 4**

we as citizens have to each other and to our country. We must all therefore play our part.

The country will also commemorate the 50th anniversary or the Golden Jubilee of the 1976 Soweto youth uprisings that spread across the country and continued into 1977. The opposition to Bantu education and the introduction of Afrikaans as a forced medium of instruction galvanized the masses of young people to render the country ungovernable and apartheid unworkable in the fight for freedom and democracy.

In August 2026, the country will also commemorate 70th anniversary of 9 August 1956 Women's March, wherein 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings protesting the extension of the pass laws to women.

In light of these milestones, the GCIS is co-ordinating not only commemorations of these milestones in South Africa's history, but mobilising South Africans around the milestones of freedom campaign under the theme, Honouring the past, delivering the future, as a whole of society approach. This campaign involves packaged service weeks that mobilises Public Service interventions to and with communities in support of

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 5**

the District Development Model. The campaign focuses on citizens as active participants in their own environments rather than passive recipients of government services.

The Milestones of Freedom campaign also carries with an educational and informational component. For example, many South Africans do not know that white women were part of the 1956 Women's March as they understood the impact of the extension of the pass laws to black women that would have on their own lives. The Milestones of Freedom campaign is co-ordinated both at the national and provincial departments and district municipalities in partnership with community media to ensure widest reach.

The year 2026 is also a year of the local government elections. Ordinarily, GCIS should be running a fully-fledged campaign for voter education and election awareness as part of strengthening our participatory democracy. However, the GCIS was not allocated funds to support the local government elections. Without a fully-fledged local government elections campaign, the GCIS will strive to provide accurate and timely information related to the 2026 local government elections.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 6**

To improve GCIS' ability to execute on its mandate of co-ordinating the government communication system to be coherent and responsive, the GCIS is repositioning itself to serve as a government content hub. This is part of evolving GCIS from being just a co-ordinator of government communication system, but also to serve as a government content hub by becoming a central content authority of government communication. The benefits of GCIS being a government content hub include to strengthens consistency in government messaging, it allows government to frame its messaging, maintains information authority during crisis as a central authority of information source, counters misinformation with verified sources and serve as supplier of verified government information to media houses.

The key pillars of the government content hub model are, firstly, editorial content centre, secondly, the wire service of government information, thirdly, platforms, fourthly, reviewed media engagement approach, and fifthly, national fact-checked capability. The Government Communication and Information System has started to operationalise the editorial content centre, which is being replicated at provincial level. The editorial content centre co-ordinates the other four

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 7**

pillars for informed editorial decision-making the wire service of government information.

During the 2025-26 budget debate, I indicated that GCIS is positioning SA News as a wire service of government information. We are firmly on course to ensure that SA News content is designed not just for publication, but for redistribution. Therefore, the performance measurement of SA News is not based on website traffic, but the number of downstream channels that have used the SA News content or the redistribution rate. The next steps include releasing alerts and statements through SA News.

On the redistribution rate matter, between April 2025 and March 2026, 377 SA News content was reused by downstream channels, comprised 306 national downstream channels reused and 77 international.

Regarding platforms approach, our platforms approach departs from a view that platforms are not just output channels, but they are also feedback loop with every engagement, question and share guided by a deliberate and co-ordinated approach. Commencing in the 2026-27 financial year, GCIS will commence

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 8**

monitoring the weekly reach engagement and shares across all platforms not only for performance data, but also close the GCIS visibility gap. Closing the GCIS visibility gap requires GCIS to have a structured summary and analysis of what citizens are asking and sharing and where government is absent from conversations which are underway. The insights will inform redistribution and content decisions and editorial actions. This advances the work on improved engagement rate aimed at improving interaction between government and citizens, which we piloted in the 2025-26 financial year. From that pilot, it is pleasing to report a substantial growth in the GCIS managed digital platforms, which achieved over 1,4 billion reach in 2025-26.

On the reviewed media engagement approach, the reviewed media engagement approach emphasises both the proactive and reactive elements, which are supported by a strong media monitoring capacity. The media monitoring function identifies narratives needing responses or amplification. On the proactive front, the revised media engagement approach supports the implementation of the departmental, provincial or local government communication plans.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 9**

In the 2026-27 financial year, the GCIS will improve on monitoring the implementation of government communications plans, both at compliance and substantive levels. At the core of the revised media engagement strategy is community media driven by the use of local languages to expand reach and messaging. Deputy Minister Morolong will expand on the approach to community media and the MDDA plans to support them.

In dealing with misinformation, disinformation and malformation problems generally characterised as fake news remains a serious challenge. We have observed the contribution of digital media and artificial intelligence as theatres and tools of disinformation and misinformation. South Africa's situation is exacerbated by the fact that South Africans are rated as the topmost people propagandised in the world in the Independent Press Standards Organisation, IPSO, Perils of Perception Index 2026. According to IPSO's most surveys, South Africans are amongst the most misinformed and disconnected from reality regarding the state of their own nation.

Therefore, the GCIS response to misinformation and disinformation must be deliberate and systematic. Having observed how other countries are addressing these phenomena at

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 10**

a policy level, the national artificial intelligence, AI, policy must compel digital media platforms to, firstly, disclose the AI generated content carried on their platforms or what we call AI content branding. Secondly, prohibit the broadcasting of fake and misleading news about South Africa. In the meantime, when the AI policy is being rewritten and the cybersecurity strategy being finalised, the GCIS will engage with digital platform owners to reach agreement on the two proposed principles.

Furthermore, the GCIS is provisioning for the government fact check capability to proactively debunk deep fakes and technical misinformation. This measure seeks to progress the current stamping of fake news, but collating the stamped fake news images, videos and stories to enable individuals to personally check through creation of a dedicated website supported by a digital platform.

In addition, the GCIS will also provide correct facts against the fake news. The goal is to position GCIS as the anchor of the truth. individuals will also be able to alert GCIS on suspected fake news, which they will also have come across in their daily interactions. The Government Communication and

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 11**

Information System is also developing a quick guide to assist government communicators in effectively countering misinformation, disinformation and malformation.

On behalf of the Deputy Minister Morolong and myself, I wish to thank the Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies for their continued support, insight and constructive engagement, and also the Portfolio Committee on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, who oversee Brand SA for their continued support, insight and robust oversight. We extend our gratitude to the leadership and staff of the GCIS and its entities for their continued commitment to the work of ensuring that South Africans are empowered through information. We thank the GCIS Acting Director-General Nomonde Mnukwa, for effectively holding the fort during the GCIS rebuilding phase. It was not an easy period to get to the place where we can reposition and articulate on clear measures that are being implemented to improve our communication and to boast that government departments, including municipalities and entities are now holding their media briefings at GCIS institutions. The Government Communication and Information System is now anchored as the content co-ordinator of government information system.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 12

We are confident that the Department of Public Service and Administration will soon announce the process of appointing a substantive director-general, DG, for GCIS for Cabinet approval.

*IsiXhosa:*

Ndiyabulela, Mazibula...

*Tshivenda:*

... nga Tshivenda vha ri Ani ri tshileli....

*English:*

... you did your best. You supported us, and we are today a GCIS that is to be reckoned with and the GCIS that can hold shoulders above others because you were ready to carry the work. Thank you very much.

*Xitsonga:*

Ndza khensa.

Ms M J APHIRI: House Chairperson, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, hon members, fellow South Africans, I rise on budget Vote 4 in a year the African National Congress has

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 13**

declared the year of decisive action - a year to fix local government, transform the economy, and continue building a capable, ethical, and developmental state. We do so at a structurally significant moment that puts the value of democracy to the ultimate test.

South Africa will hold local government elections in November 2026, and the organised disinformation infrastructure targeting the country's democratic institutions and its national reputation has never been better resourced or more deliberately co-ordinated. The 2026/27 allocation of R823,2 million is R26,1 million below the 2025/26 baseline. That reduction is explained by the once-off G20 allocation that has now fallen away. However, the mandate has not fallen away.

Local government elections, a national dialogue, a disinformation environment without precedent in the country's democratic history. The money has gone down. The work has gone up. We start this debate from the honest ledger.

Our Constitution requires the state to provide timely, accurate and accessible public information. This duty becomes

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 14**

even more important when co-ordinated disinformation seeks to fill gaps left by government communication.

The African National Congress position rooted in our resolution to tackle cyber threats and disinformation is clear. Silence and retrospective correction are not a communication strategy. The only durable instrument is a government communication system that is credible, fast, and multilingual enough to reach citizens before the algorithm does.

The 2025/30 National Communication Strategy Framework is the institutional response to that imperative. Let us frame this debate with absolute clarity from the onset. Our focus today is a defence of democracy, not a restriction of speech.

The portfolio committee must not assess Brand SA mandate in isolation from the broader disinformation threat. Co-ordinated narratives that distort South Africa's image in international investment markets constitute active attacks on the Brand SA mandate and cost this country in capital flows and diplomatic standing. When organised, disinformation undermines both the credibility of government and the integrity of the nation

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 15**

brand, domestically and in international markets. It actively destabilises our development. The R218,3 million transferred from Government Communication & Information System, GCIS, to Brand SA in 2026/27 is therefore not merely administrative expenditure; it is a defensive expenditure on our democracy and our nation's brand.

Over the medium-term, R308,4 million is allocated to brand marketing and reputation management, which is 43,9% of Brand SA's projected spending. The "buy market" and a "buy message" strategy, which tailors counter narratives by region to address country-specific disinformation campaigns that affect investor confidence, and South Africa's global reported against that function, global reported against competitiveness, must serve as a systematic counter-narrative instrument [Time expired.]

Mr M MANYI: Chairperson, Parliament is confused. They have muddled up these budgets. You have Brand SA here that reports elsewhere. You have got, you know, it is a mess. So, what I am going to do here today, I am not going to talk about Government Communication and Information System, GCIS. I am not going to talk to The Media Development and Diversity

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 16**

Agency, MDDA, because it belongs to another committee. So, I am going to talk to the one element that is here, which is Brand SA. Total mess, which must be sorted out.

Chairperson, today we rise as the government in waiting, not to defend fantasy, but to confront the painful truth: you cannot market a burning house as a luxury estate. The Umkhonto weSizwe Party rejects the illusion that glossy campaigns, hashtags, and expensive branding exercises can conceal the lived reality of millions of South Africans. Brand South Africa wants to present itself as an image of prosperity while our people are trapped in unemployment, crime, collapsing infrastructure, and hopelessness. The tragedy is not simply that Brand South Africa is failing; the tragedy is that the government believes perception management can substitute for governance itself.

The report exposes a deeply disturbing contradiction. The entity receives more than 97% of its funding from the taxpayer, yet it cannot clearly demonstrate measurable returns on investment. Parliament itself admits that Brand SA struggles to prove whether its campaigns actually increase investment, tourism, or global confidence. In simple terms,

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 17**

hundreds of millions are spent, but nobody can convincingly show what the people of South Africa receive in return. This is unacceptable, Minister.

Worse still, half of the entire budget, 48%, is consumed by administration. Bureaucracy eats more than the actual branding and reputation work. This is the classic signature of a bloated state. Administrators multiply while delivery shrinks, and R107 million goes into administration. Only R99 million goes into actual branding and reputation management. So, the bureaucracy markets itself better than it markets the country. That is not nation-building. That is institutional self-preservation.

The report itself admits that Brand SA is activity-driven rather than impact-driven. They measure campaigns, meetings, and reports, not results. They celebrate outputs instead of outcomes. South Africa cannot eat presentations. Investors do not invest in PowerPoints. Tories do not arrive because of slogans. They come when a country works. And here lies a fundamental crisis confronting Brand SA. First, the greatest enemy of South Africa's image is not foreign media, it is the

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 18**

failure of governance under this so-called genuine administration.

No branding campaign can hide load reduction and infrastructure decay, violent crime, and collapsing public trust in policing, and almost 98 percent youth unemployment, corruption scandals, ports that cannot function efficiently, and municipal collapse across vast parts of the country. You cannot rebrand dysfunction. You must fix dysfunction.

This report correctly acknowledges that South Africa has declined in major global rankings. However, instead of directly addressing the root causes, Brand SA seems stuck in damage control, attempting to explain the decline rather than reverse it. Parliament now warns that our Information and Communications Technology, ICT, systems are fragmented and outdated, while global competitors use advanced analytics and innovative digital tools. Even in the arena of modern communication, South Africa is falling far behind.

The MK Party clearly says that a nation's brand is not manufactured in boardrooms, it is built through material conditions. A strong brand requires jobs. It requires safety.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 19**

It requires industrial growth, functional rail and ports, energy security, ethical leadership, - not Phala Phala - state capacity, economic justice. That is how you build credibility.

Countries like China, Singapore, and Rwanda did not market themselves into success. They govern themselves into success. Brand SA currently operates like a public relations shield for state failure. It spends public money trying to soften the image of decline instead of confronting decline itself.

Even more concerning is that Brand SA speaks constantly about constitutional values, social cohesion, and national pride, while millions of black South Africans remain economically excluded from the wealth of their own country.

How do you promote national pride when young graduates sit at home unemployed while the economy remains structurally concentrated in a few hands? How do you market dignity to people who experience indignity daily? The MK Party believes the real South African brand must be anchored in economic liberation, industrialisation, land justice, and state-led development, not corporate marketing language disconnected from the masses. Therefore, we submit that Parliament must

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 20**

intensify oversight over Brand SA in at least four critical areas. Firstly, measurable return on investment. Every campaign must demonstrate tangible economic outcomes, investment inflows, tourism growth, export growth, and improve competitiveness.

Secondly, administrative downsizing, the entity cannot justify consuming half of its budget on internal administration while claiming resource constraints. Thirdly, the digital modernisation. South Africa cannot compete globally using outdated systems while the world operates on the age of artificial intelligence, AI, advanced analytics, and information warfare. Fourthly, alignment with real development outcomes. Branding must follow transformation, not substitute transformation.

The world does not judge South Africa by advertisements. The world judges South Africa by whether our trains move, whether investors are safe, whether corruption is punished, whether lights stay on, and whether ordinary people have hope. The greatest branding campaign South Africa could ever launch is a functioning state, not this dysfunction that we see here. They cannot even get the portfolio committees assembled properly.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 21**

It is a complete mess. There is only thing left for South Africa. One thing left for South Africa is that we call on all South Africans to stop everything and vote MK Party. Thank you.

Ms S SINGH: Hon House Chairperson, the Media Development and Diversity Agency, MDDA, exists because community media matters. In many rural and underserved communities, community radio and local media are often the only accessible source of information. They tell communities when water systems fail. They expose corruption and service delivery failures. They share information about crime hotspots, missing persons, community safety initiatives and emergency alerts. They promote local businesses, local opportunities and local voices. They preserve indigenous languages and strengthen democratic participation at the grassroots level. If properly supported, community media can become a powerful engine for local accountability, community safety, economic participation and social cohesion. But instead of building that potential, this ANC Minister is allowing the institution responsible for supporting community media to descend into instability, governance failures, and executive paralysis.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 22**

During our oversight visit to the MDDA, the committee encountered deeply troubling allegations of instability within the board and a toxic working environment inside the entity. This was not speculation. This came directly from engagements with the board and the employees themselves. Most seriously, the board chairperson confirmed that he had written to the Minister requesting the removal of a board member because of alleged serious misconduct and that no response had been received.

I subsequently submitted a parliamentary question to establish the facts. The Minister's own reply confirmed that the request for removal was submitted on 30 August 2024. And what were the allegations? According to the Minister's own response, the allegations included intimidating and threatening behaviour, racially discriminatory remarks, misogynistic conduct, breaches of governance standards and violations of the MDDA code of conduct. These are not minor administrative disagreements. These are extremely serious allegations involving the governance of a public entity.

Yet despite this, the Minister only referred the matter to the Office of the Speaker on 3 October 2025, over a year later.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 23**

That is not oversight. That is not leadership. That is executive failure. This is exactly why South Africans are losing confidence in ANC-led governance. Problems are ignored until they become crises. Warnings are delayed. Accountability is postponed and institutions are left to deteriorate while Ministers hide behind process and procedure.

Let us be very clear, governance failures in entities like the MDDA do not stay inside boardrooms. When boards become unstable institutions stop functioning properly. Decision-making slows down. Staff morale collapses. Public trust erodes and the organisations that ultimately suffer are the struggling community media organisations that depend on MDDA support to survive.

House Chairperson, the annual performance plan, APP, itself also reflects a worrying lack of ambition and measurable impact. The MDDA plans to support only 20 community media projects to digitalise, only 22 grant disbursements are planned but where are the meaningful impact measurements? How many supported organisations become financially sustainable? How many survive beyond grant funding? How many create jobs? How many increase audience reach? And how many strengthen

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 24**

local democracy and community safety? How many help communities share urgent information about crime, gender-based violence, missing children, and local threats? And most importantly, how many successfully transition into viable digital platforms? South Africans are tired of APPs filled with workshops, dialogues, stakeholder engagements, and reports, while measurable impact remains weak. This ministry has become obsessed with process instead of outcomes.

The same criticism applies to the Government Communication and Information System. Government communication under the ANC Minister increasingly lacks credibility because South Africans experience a growing gap between official messaging and reality. You cannot communicate away collapsing municipalities. You cannot spin away unemployment and slogan your way out of infrastructure failure, poverty and rising crime. Government communication means very little when communities experience daily failure on the ground.

Community media could play a transformative role in South Africa. It could strengthen local accountability, combat misinformation and support local economic development. It could help communities respond more effectively to crime and

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 25**

safety threats. It could strengthen indigenous languages and community identity and it could reconnect citizens with democratic participation at the local level. But none of this will happen while governance instability is ignored and Ministers fail to act decisively when serious concerns are raised.

The DA supports media diversity. We support community media and we support ensuring that rural and disadvantaged communities have access to credible and accessible information. But we will not remain silent while ANC Ministers preside over dysfunction, delay accountability, and weaken institutions through inaction. This committee must demand consequence management, governance stability and measurable outcomes, not endless excuses. Because community media matters and the communities it serves matter. South Africans deserve institutions that function, not institutions trapped in permanent crisis under ANC-led governance. I think some members need to fix their own house in order first. I thank you.

Mr C V SHONGWE: Hon House Chairperson, on a point of order: I wanted to ask if it is parliamentary that the Government of

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 26**

National Unity, GNU, on that side is not clapping for the GNU on this side? Is it parliamentary? Where is the unity?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Well, hon member, do not raise frivolous points of order, really. Really. Let us be serious. Please continue, hon member.

Ms S GCILISHE: Hon House Chairperson, the EFF has reviewed the budget vote report from the Government Communication and Information System. On the surface, the Government Communication and Information System is requesting R803 million to co-ordinate government communication and empower citizens. However, we must ask a question of what this empowerment actually entails. Is it to mislead citizens, to leave them defenceless against systematic misinformation or to remain silent while xenophobic violence is plotted openly?

It is important to emphasise that the GCIS has not fulfilled its fundamental constitutional obligation to deliver timeously accurate and accessible information that safeguards life, promotes social cohesion and upholds democracy. Unfounded narratives of white genocide in South Africa have been exploited by both domestic and international reactionary

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 27

elements. These falsehoods have been amplified by lobby groups, far-right politicians in the USA and Europe and even Donald Trump used these misleading claims to criticise South Africa's land expropriation policies.

*IsiXhosa:*

Laliphi eli sebe ngoku kwenzeka ezi zinto? Lalingekho. Kwakungekho zimpendulo zikhawulezileyo nazinzame zosasazo ukunika iimpendulo nokucacisela uluntu ngeelwimi zabo.

*English:*

While the Government Communication and Information System claims to intend to counter misinformation, populist anti-immigrant rhetoric asserting that foreigners are taking jobs and overburdening the healthcare has circulated unchecked on social media, on community radio and even some mainstream outlets. The Government Communication and Information System lacks a dedicated, well-resourced real-time misinformation unit. Its digital response hub remains merely a concept rather than an operational defence.

Although the department allocates R38 million for medium-term research, there is no evidence of any behavioural changes or

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 28

targeted counter-campaigns in the township and informal settlements. This is where these false narratives thrive.

*IsiXhosa:*

Abantu baseSoweto, eDiepsloot naseAlexandra bajikele amaAfrika asuka eZimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique naseSomalia ...

*English:*

... without the protection of the Government Communication and Information System, GCIS, which merely produces reports.

Hon Chairperson, in the last two years we have seen organised marches, mass meetings and social media campaigns pushing for expulsion of foreign nationals, some of which escalated into violence and loss of life. Despite available intelligence and early warnings, the GCIS did not initiate a proactive communication campaign in all 11 official languages through available channels. Instead, it waited for a Cabinet meeting to sit while lives were at stake.

Let us consider a recent troubling instance kuGompo misinformation agents created an entirely false narrative, claiming that a Nigerian king was being installed in South

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 29

Africa. This fabricated story suggested that an event would allow Nigerian nationals to take control of local businesses, land and traditional authority. Within days, community rallied, threats were made and businesses owned by foreign nationals became targets. South Africa and Nigerians found themselves pitted against each other, resulting in chaos not caused by any actual event but a strategic viral live.

*IsiXhosa:*

Laliphi eli sebe? Lalithule cwaka.

*English:*

There was no prompt factchecking, no press briefing, no engagement with no community radio, no door-to-door, no outreach and no statement to ease the situation. Nothing at all.

*IsiXhosa:*

Eli sebe laqhubeleka njengesiqhelo lilindele ukuba kuhlale intlanganiso yeKhabhinethi.

*English:*

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 30

Meanwhile, the threats emerged, businesses shut down and significant divisions were formed within communities. The Government Communication and Information System does not perceive disinformation as a crisis. They regard it as a mere inconvenience. This situation is not an isolated incident.

*IsiXhosa:*

Eli sebe loyisiwe ukuzalisekisa uxanduva lalo lokuxhasa inyaniso nokukhuthaza imvisiswano eluntwini.

*English:*

We cannot rely on them to serve the needs of our people. Chairperson, the EFF will not remain passive while a well-funded department fails to safeguard the unity of African people. Disinformation is more than an annoyance. It is weaponised. Xenophobia is not a mere viewpoint. It is a crime against humanity. The Government Communication and Information System has shown itself repeatedly to be both unwilling and incapable of addressing either issue. We reject this budget as a disrespect to the memory of those who lost their lives in xenophobic attacks which could have been mitigated with honest, urgent, and bold communication. Lastly, Chairperson, we call on all young people to go out and register to vote for

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 31**

the EFF so that we can attain economic freedom in our lifetime.

Mr A K NGOBESE: Hon House Chairperson, greetings to all members. Let me quickly go in. The IFP welcomes the budget for recognising that a capable and responsive society depends on communication that informs, empowers and includes every citizen. We cannot build an inclusive democracy while large sections of our society remain excluded from access to information and platforms of engagement.

We welcome efforts to modernise communication networks, strengthen digital platforms and improve co-ordination across all spheres. Expanding digital tools and multilingual messaging, including editorial content hub, is vital to ensuring that information reaches both urban hubs and rural heartlands.

Messaging must meet citizens where they are, using formats and languages that are practical, accessible and inclusive of South African diverse communities. Community media must be elevated. Local radio and print remain the most credible vehicles of bringing information to the grassroots. At the

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 32**

same time, as communication shifts into digital spaces, we face the dual challenge of combating misinformation and embracing technology advancement, emerging counter false narratives, enhance access to information and safeguard citizens' rights. This is especially critical as we approach the November 4 local government elections where a rapid response to disinformation will be essential. Yet our support is tempered by concerns.

Capacity constraint, uneven communication reach and the stubborn digital divide continue to isolate rural and under resourced communities. Delays in appointing a permanent director general risk leadership instability, while resources limitation dilute the effectiveness of messaging.

Public communication must move beyond visibility and empty praise. Resources must be deployed efficiently, transparently and with measurable public value. Stronger oversight, tighter co-ordination, and absolute accountability are required. Every rand spent must provide practical information that enables citizens to engage meaningfully with democracy and access services. Remedial buying policy must be finalised to ensure this spending directed to the SABC and community media.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 33**

To bridge gaps, investments must be directed towards community media, digital accessibility must be expanded, and rural communication strengthened. Strategies should deliberately prioritise inclusivity, translate vital information into multiple official languages, and reaches vulnerable groups, including youth, women, persons with disabilities and those cut off from the digital grid.

Ultimately, the IFP supports measures that entrench professionalism and ethics standards. Communication campaigns must be co-ordinated, measurable and responsive to the real needs of our people. Public communication must strengthen accountability, restore confidence in the institution and foster active citizenship. Effective communication must fortify democratic participation and heal the relationship between the leaders and the people they serve. The IFP supports this budget. I thank you.

Mr E HENDRICKS: Disclaimer: We support this budget. Hon House Chairperson and hon members, I rise today to debate Vote 4 - Government Communication and Information System, GCIS, a Vote that goes to the heart of whether governments speak to the people or merely about them.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 34**

Government Communication and Information System is responsible for ensuring that every community in this country has access to clear, accurate and timely information about government programmes, rights and services. It is the institution that must bridge the gap between policy and the lived realities of our people. However, the truth is that for decades, communication from government has not reached the communities who need it most.

The coloured communities of the Cape Flats, the West Coast, the Northern Cape, and the rural and peri-urban poor across South Africa have been systematically underinformed, under consulted, and underrepresented in government communication channels. This is not an opinion, this is a pattern reflected in multiple oversight reports, community feedback sessions, and the persistent digital divide that affects marginalised communities.

The GCIS has a constitutional responsibility to ensure inclusive communication, yet many communities still do not receive information in languages they understand, to platforms they can access, or in formats that reflects their lived

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 35

experience. The PA cannot accept a communication system that leaves entire communities behind.

*Afrikaans:*

Ons mense sê dit lankal. Hoe kan jy 'n government [regering] hê wat claim [aanspraak maak daarop] dat hulle vir jou werk, maar jy hoor nooit van hulle nie? Mense op die Kaapse Vlakte, op die platteland kry nie die information [informasie] wat hulle nodig het om hulle families te beskerm, of om vir opportunities [geleenthede] apply [aansoek te doen] of om korrupsie te report [raporteer] nie.

GCIS moet ophou oor communities [gemeenskappe] praat en met hulle begin praat. As jy regtig wil hê dat government communication [staatskommunikasie] moet werk, dan moet jy by die mense wat altyd laaste hoor begin. Die tannies wat vroeg opstaan vir taxis, die ouens wat shifts [skofte] werk, die youth [jeug] wat nie data het nie moet nie net 'n footnote [voetnoot] wees nie. Hulle moet die centre [middelpunt] van die GCIS wees. Die GCIS moet sy werk doen.

*English:*

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 36**

The GCIS has made progress in expanding digital platforms, improving media monitoring and strengthening the Thusong Service Centre programme, which is meant to bring government information closer to the communities. The PA insists that these centres must be properly resourced, properly staffed and properly located, not only in urban hubs, but in the very communities that have been historically excluded.

We also know the ongoing work of GCIS in co-ordinating communication across departments, especially during crises. However, co-ordination means nothing if the message never reaches the people. The PA calls for community-based communication strategies, including partnerships with local radios, community newspapers, faith-based organisations, and grassroots structures that have credibility on the ground.

Furthermore, GCIS must address the digital inequality that continues to marginalise coloureds and working-class communities. A communication strategy that relies heavily on online platforms while millions cannot afford data, is not a strategy, it is an exclusion mechanism.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 37**

The PA expects Vote 4 to prioritise accessible multilingual community centre communication. The PA supports Vote 4. I repeat, we support Vote 4 only on the condition that GCIS becomes a tool for real inclusion, not symbolic outreach. We expect measurable outcomes. We thank you.

Ms D E JAMES: Hon House Chair, ask any entity or department about their interaction with the Government Communication And Information System and the response is overwhelmingly negative. The fact that no director general has been permanently appointed to this entity is a glaring warning sign about its internal governance and institutional capacity to deliver on its critical mandate.

This is the very department responsible for government communications, yet still lacks clear standardised audience reach metrics such as the distinction between impressions and unique users. That alone tells you that this department does not fully understand the effectiveness of its own communication strategies.

There is also a serious misalignment between the department's key performance indicators and its budget allocations, raising

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 38**

further concerns about planning, oversight, and accountability.

We must also remember that this is an election year. South Africans do not want their phones, televisions, and social media feeds suddenly flooded with thinly disguised government propaganda, masquerading as public information campaigns celebrating supposed achievements. The GCIS has too often been used not as a genuine communications platform in the public interest, but as a political machinery designed to advance the image of the party in governance using state resources.

We are therefore of the view that any non-essential government advertising and promotional communication campaigns in the lead up to elections should be placed on hold. Instead, the focus and resources of this department should be directed towards supporting and capacitating the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, to deliver a powerful, impactful and far-reaching voter registration and voter education campaign in all official languages.

This is essential if we are serious about reversing the continued decline in voter registration and voter turnout that

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 39**

we are witnessing, election after election. A democracy cannot thrive when fewer and fewer citizens believe their participation matters or do not understand how their participation matters. This is especially relevant for the millions of young people who have completely checked out of our democratic process.

The role of government communication should be to strengthen democratic participation and not to promote political interests. We do not believe that the myriads of challenges facing this entity will be achieved. I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members we are aware that there is a problem with the video feed on the platform. It is being attended to by the IT. We heard the member's voice. I now recognise the hon Deputy Minister in the Presidency, the hon Morolong.

*Setswana:*

MOTLATSA TONA MO KANTORONG YA TAUTONA (Rre I K Morolong): A ke go leboge Modulasetilo.

*English:*

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 40

Maybe the first thing I must do before I deal with salutations or greetings is to remind my brother, hon Jimmy Manyi.

Mr D M SKOSANA: Chair, I've raised my hand. Can you recognise me please.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon member, what is your point of order? On the virtual platform?

Mr D M SKOSANA: Chair, I've raised my hand. Can I be recognised please.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon Skosana, please proceed with your point of order.

Mr D M SKOSANA: I just want to ask the Chair once again that all the other languages are here ...

*isiNdebele:*

... isiNdebele asikho.

*English:*

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 41**

And if that's the case, it means that language has been undermined because I've been raising this issue many times. Our people are calling us to say, why are we undermined? Why there is no interpreter for IsiNdebele because all the other languages are there? Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Thank you, hon Skosana. I've got the point. You don't have to make a speech. Hon Frolick already reminded the Chamber that the problem is being dealt with, and we will refer that back to the House Chair. Thank you. Hon Deputy Minister, you may continue.

The DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Mr I K Morolong): Thank you very much, Chairperson. Let me remind hon Manyi of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, particularly Section 55 of the Constitution, and I've raised this matter before in the portfolio committee. I want to regurgitate it for the purpose of the debate today. The National Assembly must provide for mechanisms to ensure that all executive organs of state in the national sphere of government are accountable to it. In other words, it is the responsibility of Parliament to make sure that the executive and organs of states are accountable.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 42

So the modalities thereof are not determined by the members of the executive, but by yourselves, hon members. I thought it is important that we must remind you that it is your responsibility to particularly position Media Development and Diversity Agency, MDDA, Brand SA and Government Communication and Information System, GCIS, as to where it should report. It's not the responsibility of the executive.

Hon House Chairperson, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, chairperson of Communication and Digital Technologies, Minister in the Presidency, Ms Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Ms Nonceba Mhlauli, members of the Portfolio Committee on Communication and Digital Technologies and Planning Monitoring and Evaluation, chairperson and members of boards of Brand SA, MDDA, management and staff of GCIS, MDDA and Brand SA, ...

*Setswana:*

... pele ga ngwaga wa 1994, Aforikaborwa e ne e le naga e e eteletsweng pele ke puso ya tlhaolele. E ne e le naga e motheo wa yona o neng o le wa tlhaolele, wa mmala, wa kgatalelo le bosetlhogo jo bo tseneletseng. Ke nako eo go tlhageletse

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 43

digatlhamelamasisi tsa balwela kgololosego jaaka bo Rre Kaobitsa Bushy Maape yo o tlogetseng lefatshe le le ka kwano. Bra Bushy jaaka ne re mo bitsa, e ne ya nna motho wa bangwe ba ba neng ba tsaya tshwetso ya go nna masole a ntlwakgatlanong le puso ya tlhaolele, bosemorafe le kgatelelo ya batho ba ba ntsho ka kakaretso. Mme seno se ne sa dira gore a sotlakakiwe le go tshwarwa kwa Robben Island. Bra Bushy e ne e le mogaka wa kgololosego yo o neng a ineetse go aga Aforikaborwa o mošwa o o nyeumang ka ditšhono. Re gopola Bra Bushy jaaka mogaka o o neng a ineetse go direla setšhaba sa rona ebile a rata thuto thata. A mowa wa molwelakgaratlho yo o robale ka kagiso.

*English:*

Brand SA is an official marketing agency and custodian of the country's nation brand, which has successfully reconstructed the story of our country through its various initiatives and program, and we're not taking events only, Ntate Manyi. It strives to mobilize multi-sectoral stakeholders in an effort to create and manage the country's reputation and build its competitiveness.

In addition, we established the Media Development and Adversity Agency to promote media diversity, development, and

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 44**

access to information, particularly for historically disadvantaged and underserved communities, ensuring that South Africa has access to a diverse and representative media landscape.

As we table this 2026-27 Budget Vote for the Department of Government Communication and Information System, we stand tall on the shoulders of history, drawing strength and inspiration from our nation's defining milestone that continue to shape our vibrant democracy. Today the community sector has over 200 community radio stations, a thriving community television sector, and 300 print and online publications covering different urban and rural areas in all official languages. These platforms all add to diversity in content, ownership and voice, and plurality to create an ecosystem of complementarity and inclusivity.

This year, we proudly celebrate four epic moments in our nation's journey, each one a powerful beacon of courage, resilience, and unity of our people. A system of support will be put in place, led by GCIS and MDDA to assist stations in provinces to deal with statutory requirements such as Sars compliance, corporate governance, management and leadership,

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 45**

and community involvement. The intention is to create a model that can be replicated elsewhere in the country with modifications to take varying local contexts and conditions into account.

Community radio stations are unsustainable in their current regulatory environment as they are dependent on the discretion of advertisers and limited resources available to MDDA. We will soon expedite the implementation of digitization of community media.

We are also amending the Media Development and Diversity Agency Act, which will allow us to make significant changes in the sector, as proposed in the draft White Paper on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and Online Safety, as well as to strengthen the sector's compliance with Independent Communications Authority of SA, ICASA's 2019 Community Broadcasting Service Regulations.

We will also make provisions on community media diversity and plurality index to determine at one stage this country can declare that we have reached adequate levels of community media diversity, which is a key principle in dealing with

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 46**

community media sustainability. Given the fact that there are areas in the country where there's limited economic activity, we will create a reserve market where sustenance of community media projects will be continuous by government. As part of this support for community media, we will provide for legislative provision on the composition of community media boards and their term of office to protect government investment.

MDDA is dedicated to its core mandate of supporting and strengthening South Africa's community media sector, guided by a clear vision of a media landscape that is accessible, developmental, diverse and sustainable. The agency is committed to ensuring that historically disadvantaged communities are no longer mere consumers of media, but active participants, creators and owners.

The MDDA enters the 2027 financial year with a focus and ambitious program of action aimed at deepening institutional excellence and expanding support for community and small commercial media. The organization has a definitive plan to strengthen governance, improve operational efficiency, and ensure its long-term sustainability.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 47**

In the coming year, the agency will fund 22 community broadcasting projects and sync sprint and digital media initiatives while extending digital support to 20 media entities across the country. The MDDA will also intensify monitoring and evaluation efforts to ensure accountability impact and measurable outcomes from funded projects.

As our nation readies itself for the upcoming 2026 local government elections on the 4 November 2026, its all-hands-on deck to continue with our legacy of free and fair elections. The MDDA has joined hands with the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, SA National Editors Forum, the SA Local Government Association, and Africa Check to roll out a nationwide training program for journalists. This initiative will help strengthen credible reporting, combat disinformation, and subject the integrity of South Africa's democratic processes.

Brand SA whose work remains central to strengthening national identity, deepening social cohesion, and positioning South Africa as a competitive and credible nation on the global stage. In an increasingly complex international environment marked by geopolitical uncertainty and rapid technological

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 48**

change, the importance of a trusted nation brand has never been greater.

Brand SA is dipping into a new era of proactive engagement. It will expand its advocacy and position work to ensure that South Africa's voice resonates with greater authority within the global governance institutions and multilateral platforms. The mission is clear - to forge a resilient, globally competitive nation brand and position South Africa as a leading emerging market and strategic African hub for trade, investment and cutting-edge innovation.

Through strategic storytelling, Brand SA will showcase the full spectrum of our strength from our vast economic potential and vibrant culture heritage to our unwavering democratic values. At home, it will continue to champion nation-building initiatives that ignite, unite, and ensure that there's social cohesion and active citizenship, ensuring that a resilient domestic foundation remains the bedrock of our global influence.

South Africa finds itself competing with other nation brands for every tourist that travelled and every businessman that

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 49**

thinks of investing. This fierce competition now requests ...

[Time expired.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon Deputy Minister, your time has expired. You can finish your sentence.

The DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Mr I K Morolong): Thank you very much.

Mr M MRARA: Hon House Chair, hon Minister and Deputy Ministers, hon members and fellow South Africans, I rise to address Budget Vote 4 which is too often treated as procedural rather than constitutional. Section 195(g) of the Constitution does not frame that government communication as a service to the state may be offered when convenient. It frames timely, accurate and accessible information as an obligation flowing from the founding values of the Republic of South Africa.

The R803,2 million allocated to the Government Communication and Information System in 2026-2027 financial year and the R2,5 billion appropriated over the medium-term expenditure framework must therefore be assessed against the

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 50

constitutional benchmark, not against ambition of any single administration.

South Africa now has 12 official languages, including the sign language. A communication system that defaults to English and one or two African languages that do not satisfy section 195(g). The department's commitment in the 2026-27 financial year annual performance plan to expand the use of all official languages across flex flagship products, including the *Vukuzenzele Newspaper*, *Cabinet Statement*, and the state of the nation address is necessary, but it is not sufficient.

The R9,9 million set aside in the Products and Platform subprogramme over the medium term must translate into measurable linguistics reach. A publication produced in three languages while nine are excluded is not multilingual government; it is a selective government dressed in translation. The annual performance plan targets an audience reach of 800 million across digital platform in 2026-2027 financial year, rising to R1,1 billion by 2028-2029. The estimated performance for 2025-2026 is R180 million.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 51**

A more than fourfold leap in a single financial year warrants scrutiny on methodology, not applause. The portfolio committee was correct to insist that the targets must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. As the ANC, will welcome ambition at all material times, but ambitions disconnected from methodology becomes a performance indicator that sometimes is confusing.

Rich folk's figures derived from algorithmic impressions are not the same as citizens informed. A scroll passed on a social media feed does not equate to a household that knows how to apply for Sassa support, register a small business or access government bursaries. The Auditor-General will not audit impressions. The Auditor-General will always and shall always audit outcomes.

The R38,4 million in the Research Analysis and Knowledge Service subprogramme over the medium term together with three qualitative tracker surveys targeted for 2026-27 must be deployed to disaggregate, reach into demonstrable measures of comprehension, recall and behavioural update. A communication system that reaches every citizen cannot pass the platform that ordinary South Africans actually consume.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 52**

The commitment to direct 30% of government advertising spend to community media is not a charitable concession to a struggling sector; it is a structural correction to the historical exclusion of indigenous language and rural audiences from mainstream advertising media.

Hon Chairperson, the portfolio committee has flagged the current centralised media buying target of 40% over the five-year period as inadequate and must be revised upwards. The committee has equally pointed in its observation that the government media buying policy developed in 2018 remains unenforceable seven years later.

As the ANC, we cannot defend a policy frozen in draft form while community broadcasters carry close to R100 million in signal distribution debt to Sentech. The Minister must finalise this policy within the current financial year, present it to the committee, and report on the share of departmental advertising spend that has actually reached community media.

The Provincial and Local Liaison subprogramme is allocated R63,7 million over the medium term to support 1 250

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 53

communities and stakeholder engagement annually. These engagements are not for opportunities. They are the constitutional obligation of a government that has chosen to govern the mandate rather than by decree.

The Imbizo programme, community dialogues, and outreach at tax rents and shopping centres remain among the few mechanisms through which an elderly resident in Lusikisiki or a young person in Galeshewe can engage a Minister without an intermediary.

As the ANC, we expect this allocation to deliver in districts that have been historically underserved and not to be concentrated where coverage is almost saturated. The ANC supports Budget Vote 4 on the expressed understanding that the department's reporting will move from output counting to outcome measurements, and that the government media communication that does not reach every ... [Time expired.]

*Sesotho:*

Mof T K BODLANI: Ke a leboha, Modulasetulo.

*English:*

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 54**

As published in 1998, the Government Communications and Information System could not have imagined that in 2026, so much would have evolved in government communication strategies. Today, technology has advanced, the medium of communication has surpassed human imagination, and the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation is a thing. This budget provides Parliament with an opportunity to reflect on the GCIS to evaluate if it is fit to deliver change to South Africans as we debate the annual performance plan for 2026-2027.

The GCIS is mandated to provide professional services in government communications. As such, Programme 1 of the APP is for administration. For this financial year, the GCIS plans to upskill 20% of employees in digital communications and co-ordination skills. This, Minister, is a commendable plan, but one has to question if the 20% target is low and represents a snail's pace given that the GCIS also aims to improve responsiveness.

Deputy Minister, perhaps this 20% should include some Ministers who, after years of using facilities such as Zoom, are unable to use the correct backgrounds depicting their

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 55**

department corporate identity. This, while most departments have dedicated communication officials, we are subjected to looking at the nostrils of Ministers as they fail the basic camera positions, let alone mute and unmute functions. The GCIS, Minister, must get the basics right.

The formation of the Government of National Unity has allowed the GCIS to somewhat redeem itself. After years of serving as a mouthpiece for previous majority government, we welcome the efforts to serve all departments and make a call to the department to utilise your services, Minister, as you position yourselves as the custodians to influence adherence to standards for an effective government communication system and drive coherent government message.

Hon House Chair, with 54,8% allocation of the budget, Programme 2 requires a proactive GCIS for any information services content is king. Your ability to process and disseminate information could mean the difference between ignorance and an informed citizenry. With millions of followers on your platforms, there is a huge potential to be trusted source of government activities, eliminate fake news, mis- and disinformation, especially about South Africa.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 56**

We note with great concern that there is no allocation made for the 2026 Local Government Elections, which simply means that the GCIS will have to divert funds to cover these elections. This, Minister, would be a repeat of what we saw in the 2024 celebrations of the inauguration of President Ramaphosa, where no funds were allocated and GCIS needed to make a diversion in order to cover that cost.

We are also acutely aware that municipalities across the country are failing. This is news. Citizens have a right to hear through GCIS how their own towns and cities are being mismanaged and how municipalities are bankrupt, yet no one is held accountable. Equally, they need to know how provinces, such as the Western Cape, under the DA, have thriving municipalities.

We commend the men and women of GCIS who, as we debate another budget for the GCIS, do so without a director-general. This, while the GCIS has men and women who are fit for purpose. However, unfortunately, political principles battle to find a person who is already doing the job that they are doing.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 57

We also remain convinced, hon Minister, that the GCIS and MDDA are misplaced in the Presidency. The conversations must be heard of how we are going to correct this anomaly. We support calls for its move to the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies for better streamlining of our government communications entities.

*Sesotho:*

Ke a leboha.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Hon Chair, I greet hon members, fellow South Africans, representatives, and officials that are with us, and I say all protocol observed. As we sit here, on behalf of the ANC, we must declare that we support Budget Vote 4. In this declaration, we also emphasize that we have our own conditions. These conditions speak towards ensuring that there must be mass communication that is deliberate, intentional, and inclusive. There must not be any exclusion of any sector, community, or individual in South Africa. We must understand that as we debate Budget Vote 4, we speak of the Government Communication and Information System, GCIS, Media Development and Diversity Agency, MDDA, and Brand South Africa. Now, these

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 58

entities and institutions are quite critical regarding ensuring the brand and the face of this country.

Now, let me start with GCIS. On GCIS, we must understand that those who say they do not support this budget, and without stating that we will support it with conditions, and just ultimately dismiss it, are merely saying to South Africans that they do not want South Africans to receive enabling, empowering, and informative information. They want to be the ones who are driving the ship of misinformation, fake news, and propaganda, which we know the soldiers on this side are the ones who usually do that. We must understand how instrumental GCIS is. GCIS also has a responsibility ... [Interjections.] ... Chairperson, protect me ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon member. Order.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: As I proceed ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon ... you are drowning out the speaker. Can you please be quiet? Thank you. You may continue, hon member.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 59

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Thank you very much. From the reaction, we can tell that they know themselves, that they are the ones who are disseminating false and negative information that seeks to belittle and undermine the government and what the government has done for South Africans by providing misleading information to South African citizens. Also inciting violence across South Africa. We must understand that GCIS plays an instrumental role. We call upon ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon Chauke-Adonis, would you please take your seat. There is a point of order.

Mr W M DOUGLAS: Thank you, hon Chair, I am on a point of order. She was bringing Members of Parliament into disrepute, saying that we would be inciting violence, and she did refer to the people on the left ... [Interjections.]

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: I did not mean anyone ...  
[Interjections.]

Mr W M DOUGLAS: ... specifically to people on the left and people in camouflage, which makes very clear that she is talking about ...

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 60**

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Thank you very much. Hon Chauke-Adonis, did you say that? I could not hear because the shouting was so loud.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Thank you very much, Chair. I did not refer to any individual or party, but I did say some are making the loudest noise, who know that they incite violence. It could be anyone in this room.

An HON MEMBER: Withdraw, you said soldiers, wena [you].

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Order, please. Order. Thank you very much. We will listen to the Hansard and rule on that. Thank you, can you continue?

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Thank you very much. As I indicated, I might be blind but not deaf, so I know where the sound is coming from. As I indicated, the GCIS is quite critical and instrumental in disseminating information and connecting South Africans with government information, ensuring that they can gain access to ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 61

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon Chauke-Adonis, will you please take your seat. There is a point of order.

Mr W M DOUGLAS: Hon Chair, you have now heard it for yourself. She confirmed that she is speaking about us on the left. So, we need ... [Interjections.] ... she must withdraw the statement. Thank you. [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon members, if you are not going to calm down, I will switch off your microphones. [Interjections.]

Mr M MANYI: House Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): The hon member referred to herself. That is not a point of order. Hon member, your point of order, please.

Mr M MANYI: Chair, maybe I should read Rule 85 because I think in this place it is totally misunderstood. Other people talk about you did not mention names. Nothing here requires names. The Rule says:

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 62

- (1) No member may impute improper motives to any other member or cast personal reflections upon members' integrity and dignity or verbally abuse a member in any other way.

Now, when she says "we" on this side are disseminating information, she is casting aspersions without any substantiation. She is referring to us as a group. We are members. Here, there is no requirement to mention names in this Rule.

Mr C M DUGMORE: I have a point of order. You cannot ignore our point of order.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon Dugmore, can I just rule on the point of order that I am busy with before I listen to your point of order? Hon member, as I ruled earlier, I said I would listen to the Hansard because of all the noise that you were making while I was trying to take a point of order. I did not hear what the member said. That Rule, as you quoted it, is there, and I will wait for the table staff to listen to the Hansard so that we can make a ruling. Hon Dugmore, your point of order, if it is not on the same point.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 63

Mr C M DUGMORE: Thank you, Chair, just to address you on that ruling and accepting your ruling, it would have been a different matter if hon Adonis had mentioned, for instance, hon Reddy by name ... [Interjections.] ... He inspired violence. She didn't mention his name. But we know that hon Reddy inspires violence. [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon members, I have already made a ruling on that. We will listen to the Hansard, and we will make a ruling. If the members in this House on both sides are not happy, we will refer it to the Rules Committee. You may continue. Thank you.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Chairperson, as I proceed, and as I was saying that GCIS has a responsibility to disseminate information in all 12 official languages. Therefore, this is an expectation that information must reach the most remote rural areas in our country. It must reach the most vulnerable in our society. It has been said here that GCIS has a responsibility to disseminate information that is enabling, empowering, and informative on all government activities across all spheres of government. And that is the responsibility it has. Additionally, GCIS must also contribute

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 64**

towards the civic education and voter registration processes that we will be undertaking as we go to the elections on 4th November. And therefore, we call upon the Minister of the Treasury and the relevant entities and institutions to ensure that there is a budget allocation that will enable GCIS and other communication institutions to do so and provide the necessary support. We must understand that GCIS, those who say it is used as a machinery for false propaganda on behalf of the apparently ruling government, this is undermining the GCIS. This completely undermines the GCIS. We must understand that the GCIS profiles even those Ministers who are from the opposition who are now part of the Government of National Unity, GNU. We must understand that GCIS highlights all issues across municipalities, even where the ANC might be facing difficulties and challenges. It is very transparent and does not mislead any South African. We also request that GCIS provide a strategic ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Order, please. Hon members on the left, can you respect the Rules of this House? If you want to speak, raise your hand for a point of order. If you interject ... I must remind all of you on the left and on the right side that you are not allowed to drown out the speaker.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 65**

At the moment, you are drowning out the speaker. Please, can we continue?

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: We understand that the toy soldiers get very upset. As we proceed, we move on to Brand SA. Brand SA is instrumental in ensuring the brand visibility of this country. It must also highlight the work that is to be done when we speak about the national dialogue. The same work that was done by GCIS and Brand SA towards the G20 must be the same effort and dedication that goes into the national dialogue. The national dialogue is instrumental; it does not belong to any political party but belongs to South African citizens. We must understand that, as a country that is evolving, this is not just time-consuming, as political parties would want to address. They have already taken a political calculation that is miscalculated and not in the interest of South African citizens. We are saying that South Africans must participate in the national dialogue, and that GCIS, other communication institutions, and agencies must cover it adequately.

We are now moving to the MDDA. The MDDA has created multiple platforms for print media, radio outlets, local radio stations, and other platforms for those who are emerging in

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 66**

rural, townships, and peri-urban communities. And therefore, we are saying this must be further accelerated. It must not stop now. It must continue. We are saying there must be a ringfenced strategic framework to guide the MDDA's work. And therefore, even their accountability must be measurable. And this speaks to all these institutions and entities. We want a framework, a strategy, and a plan that seeks not to speak about what you can present. But we must be able to see tangible and impactful results ultimately. We are not just going through a tick box exercise, but we must be able to measure the impact of the work that you have presented and what this budget has been approved and passed for. Now, when it comes to the other political parties ... and we understand that there are those from the DA who might want to support the Minister ... and we do appreciate the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, but we must understand that he is one of the individuals and the political party in which they do not want to see the broad-based black economic empowerment, BBBEE, going forward. They seek to oppress those who are marginally and historically disadvantaged. We asked the Minister, what are your plans when it comes to the BBBEE ICT Sector Council? Because you seek to disband that council. We are saying you must account and say,

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 67

what measures have you taken? You cannot come here as the DA and tell us ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon member, can you please take your seat? There is a point of order. Hon Christie, did you raise a point of order?

Ms K A CHRISTIE: Hon Chair, is a 32,7% unemployment rate not oppressing the poor?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Can you please lower the noise? I cannot hear the point of order. Hon Christie, can you repeat your point of order?

Ms K A CHRISTIE: Chair, may I ask the hon member a question?  
[Interjections.]

Ms C M PHIRI: It is a question. It is not a point of order.  
Sit down.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon Phiri, you did not raise your hand on a point of order. I am not addressing you on the platform. I am addressing hon Christie. Thank you.

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 68**

Ms K A CHRISTIE: Chair, may I ask hon Chauke a question?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms C Labuschagne): Hon Chauke, would you take a question?

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: It was not a point of order. It is a question. I decline to respond to the question, but ... [Inaudible.] ... if necessary. Thank you very much, hon Christie. As I was saying, the DA seeks to undermine progressive legislation and policies that seek to empower our African South African individuals, those who are in SMMEs and businesses, and those who are emerging in the ICT sector. We must say we will not allow this as the ANC. We will come and defend the BBBEE at all costs. We will never undermine the progress that we have made in the dispensation of our democracy. We must also indicate that we are calling on the Minister to finalize the government media buying policy. We have taken a resolution in the Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies that this must be brought forward to the Cabinet and the portfolio committee, and this must be done in this financial year. We must understand that not bringing this forward will continue to undermine government beneficiation and ensure that state-owned

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 69

institutions can benefit, but also that we can benefit through SMMEs and emerging industries. Lastly, I must ... [Time expired.]

*IsiZulu:*

... Malibongwe! Uzoyithola kanjani uhleli ekhonenini?

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon Chair, indeed, listening is a skill. I spoke about the appointment of the director-general, DG, that has to be processed by the Department of Public Service and Administration and go to Cabinet. All of you did not hear that. You were then still talking about it. That's why I thanked the acting director-general.

Let me start where I need to start. The partner in the government of national unity, GNU, wants us to move the Government Communication and Information System, GCIS, to the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies. The PA and the IFP are complaining about data and inaccessibility of the digital divide. The digital divide is continuing because a Minister responsible for the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies has not taken forward the deployment of community internet access, which we started when I was the

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 70**

Minister there. Also, the Minister of the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies has not taken forward the reduction of cost of data which I started when I was Minister in that portfolio. Taking GCIS to that portfolio: Is it going to be run by artificial intelligence, AI? I just needed to clarify that part. We appreciate your support, hon Bodlani.

Hon Singh, a Minister is not a post box. When allegations are made against a member of a board, the Minister needs to apply her mind and do the necessary consultations. That is why it took time. If you look at the veracity of the allegations, I needed to satisfy myself if those allegations are sound and would stand the test of time when we submit them to Parliament and the portfolio committee for processing. Therefore, you cannot come here and say we are incompetent and we have not done anything to address the issues. We are very competent and that's why we have processed the matters the way we have processed them.

When you choose only one issue at the Media Development and Diversity Agency, MDDA, the question is: Why are you not supporting the initiatives of the MDDA in supporting

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 71**

community-based media? They are targeting the number and they are targeting ... but because of the funding issue. And it is not the first one that they are doing. This is an accumulation of the number of what they are doing. We have 356 community-based media. Out of that number, we have already serviced more than 200 to support them migrate into digital infrastructure. We cannot be selective in wanting to criticise the work we are doing.

If members are genuine about the budget and the underfunding of the GCIS and its entities, members were informed by the chairperson of the Appropriations committee that they can make a submission within 10 days from this Vote and make sure that the funding is increased. That provision is there in the law.

We appreciate the support from the PA. We also appreciate the support from the IFP. We will continue to demand from Cabinet that our colleagues come with a proposal of reducing data.

Indeed, the cost of data must fall and he make sure that he accelerates digital inclusivity and bridge the digital divide by including community hotspots for Wi-Fi so that our people can be able to access facilities. It is not because they want to access communication, but because they need to access other

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 72**

services that are there in government through online capabilities.

The imbizos [gatherings] are done by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. Or maybe it is a pity. Yes, hon Gcilishe, you are back. I think we need to fact check your things. You said GCIS do not communicate. It was not an alleged king. They said they were installing a king and they backtracked. In that communication, because we co-ordinate a system, the Deputy Minister of Traditional Affairs, the hon Rev Burns Ncamashe was there communicating and interacting in that community to make sure that those matters ... because we cannot be undermined in our own country. That's why the Nigerian government also apologised.

When we talk about xenophobia, we need to talk about immigration. Is immigration not a challenge? It is a challenge and we must have a fair discussion on why people are trending southwards. Why are they running away from their own countries? We say: Who are here legally? Legally, you have 55 000 refugees and you have 82 000 asylumseekers. That number would not create a problem in South Africa because they are legally in. Home Affairs has received and approved 1,3 million

**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026**

**VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Page: 73**

people to come in but we have, in terms of Statistics SA, data that is above. That is why we are strengthening our work to make sure that our borders are safe and that law enforcement takes its responsibility of making sure that those who are in the country illegally and undocumented, are deported back to their home countries.

But we cannot allow anyone who is not a law enforcement to come and say, we want your passport, we want your ... We cannot allow the mobilisations that want to destabilise the country, that wants to use an excuse of attacking other people on the basis of saying we are dealing with illegal immigration. By the way, the people that are being attacked are not only undocumented foreigners. They are attacking even people who don't speak a particular language - the people who speak Xitsonga and people who speak Tshivenda. It is a problem, and we are dealing with it.

We should not be inconvenienced. There is illegal immigration challenge in South Africa, and we are seized with dealing with it. We have put the White Papers. There are employers who continuously not want to employ South Africans and in the

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2026

VOTE NO 4 - GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

Page: 74

convenience of employing non-South Africans and create tensions to us.

Talking of corruption, it's us who have instituted measures to deal with corruption, including the very Madlanga Commission.

Vho [Hon] Manyi, you spoke about load reduction. You said we won't sort out load shedding. We have sorted out load shedding. Now you want to use load reduction. We have given a commitment that seven provinces will be rid of load reduction by December 2026, and three by March 2027. And we are going to deliver on that. Thank you, members.

*Xitsonga:*

Ndza khensa.

*Tshivenda:*

Ndo livhuwa.

Debate concluded

The mini plenary rose at 18:27.