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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

The Council met at 14:00.

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

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Good afternoon, hon delegates, Minister, Deputy Minister, and all our guests that are on the virtual platform. Before we proceed, hon members, I would like to mention that we have a few apologies. We have one from the hon Chairperson of the Council and the hon Hadebe, who are both at the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth, CSPOC, that is happening in Gauteng this week. So, both of them are there, and that's the apologies from them.

ALLEGATION OF MISLEADING THE HOUSE

(Ruling)

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The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): I would also like to read out the ruling that we kept in abeyance, and this was on the point of order that was raised by hon Badenhorst on 2 June. Firstly, I would like to introduce the issue.

Hon delegates, during the policy debate on Budget Vote 29 on Agriculture, while hon Montwedi was debating, the hon Badenhorst rose on a point of order in terms of Rule 61(1)(b), stating that, and I quote, "It's a matter of fact that foot-and-mouth disease existed before Minister Steenhuisen became the Minister." Therefore, that hon member must retract the statement that it only came into being when hon Steenhuisen arrived. Two, at the time, I undertook to consult the Hansard and parliamentary audiovisual recordings and revert to the House with a considered ruling.

Three, having consulted the Hansard and listened to the parliamentary audiovisual recordings, the hon Montwedi is recorded as having said the following, and I quote, "The DA Minister who just addressed us now has caused a mess we find ourselves in today. South Africa maintained an FMD status without vaccine until the arrival of John Steenhuisen as a Minister of Agriculture, and the crisis worsened." Five,

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before hon Montwedi was interrupted by the point of order, he is recorded as having said, and I quote, "We all know that the current Speaker of Parliament, Ms Thoko Didiza, while serving as a Minister of Agriculture in the Sixth Parliament, established a multidisciplinary task team that successfully contained ..." and he goes on and quote. Four, in disputing the allegations by hon Badenhorst, hon Montwedi emphasised that, and I quote, "I said FMD was better contained under Thoko Didiza. I never said it was not there."

The question before the Deputy Chair is whether the hon Montwedi made the statement as alleged by hon Badenhorst, and if so, whether such statement constituted a deliberate attempt to mislead the House in contravention of Rule 61(1)(b).

Analysis one: Rule 61(1)(b) states that no delegate may deliberately make a statement which the delegate knows to be false. Two, having perused Hansard records and listened to parliamentary audiovisual recordings, I have ascertained that hon Montwedi did not make the statement as alleged. It is evident from his speech, as I quoted earlier, that FMD had existed before hon Steenhuisen became the Minister.

However, it worsened under his leadership, according to hon Montwedi's view. This is further evident from hon Montwedi's

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statement, and I quote, "South Africa maintained an FMD status without vaccine until the arrival of John Steenhuisen as the Minister of Agriculture, and the crisis worsened." Moreover, hon Montwedi acknowledged the existence of FMD before the current administration, as he stated that FMD was better contained under hon Thoko Didiza, who was the Minister of Agriculture during the Sixth Parliament.

Three, having carefully perused Hansard and listened to the parliamentary audiovisual recordings, I am satisfied that hon Montwedi did not make, at least did not state that foot-and-mouth disease only came into existence upon the appointment of hon Steenhuisen as Minister. Four, the remarks made by hon Montwedi, properly construed and read in context, amount to a political criticism of the handling and worsening of the foot-and-mouth disease crisis during the tenure of the current Minister. The statement reflects the hon Minister's assessment of the management of the matter and not a factual assertion that the disease itself originated during the current Minister's term of office.

In particular, the expression, I quote, "South Africa maintained an FMD status without vaccination until the arrival of John Steenhuisen as Minister of Agriculture, and the crisis

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worsened.” must be understood within the context of South Africa’s disease control and export status framework. The statement relates to the country’s recognised foot-and-mouth disease status and the subsequent deterioration of that status rather than suggesting that the disease itself did not previously exist. Five, it is therefore evident that hon Montwedi acknowledged either expressly or by implication that foot-and-mouth disease existed prior to the appointment of hon Steenhuisen and contended that the situation deteriorated under the current administration.

Six, accordingly, I cannot find that hon Montwedi deliberately misled the House as contemplated in Rule 61(1)(b). Seven, moreover, I have observed recently that points of order are being raised as a response to what a speaker on the podium is saying as the case on this matter. Eight, in this regard, I would like to urge hon delegates to guard against rising on points of order, especially where they hold a different view with the speaker on the podium.

The practice of this House and Parliament in general is where the member holds a different view or defer with the speaker on the podium, he or she should use the opportunity allocated to him or her during the debate to raise those matters instead of

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rising on a point of order. Nine, what debates are all about, that is the very purpose of parliamentary debate.

The ruling therefore, one, I therefore rule that the allegations made by hon Badenhorst against hon Montwedi cannot be sustained and therefore the point of order cannot be upheld because it was just a response to the speaker on the podium. Two, I once again appeal to hon delegates to debate matters rather than rising on spurious points of order. Three, delegates are encouraged instead to utilise the debate process itself to contest, rebut or challenge political arguments advanced in the House. That is a ruling on that matter, hon delegates, and I hope that sets the matter to rest.

The other issue is I want to also remind members that this week is exactly two years since we were sworn into the NCOP. I would like to congratulate all members who were sworn in at that time and are still with us in this House and commend you for the manner in which you conduct yourselves, especially when it comes to debates and also the questions that you ask to various Ministers, Deputy Ministers, as well as the President and the Deputy President. I want to thank all hon members for their participation, for their attendance, and the

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manner in which they conduct themselves. I think you can give yourselves a round of applause. Thank you very much.

Now, on to business of the day. I want to once again welcome the hon Minister, smart and stylish as always. Welcome, Minister, I know you like this House, so we always welcome you, and together with your Deputy Minister, thank you for being here with us. I also want to welcome the guests in the gallery, and I hope you'll enjoy your afternoon with us and join us whenever you feel you'd like to.

Hon delegates, I would like to remind delegates that Rules, in particular subrules 21, 22, and 23 of Rule 103 would apply. I would also like to welcome the special delegates that are on the platform, as well as the SA Local Government Association, Salga, representatives to the House. Hon delegates, I have been informed that there will be no notices of motion or motions without notice, and therefore, hon delegates, I shall now proceed to the Order of the Day, and that is a Policy debate on Budget Vote 41, Water and Sanitation Appropriation Bill B4 of 2026, the National Assembly Section 77 Bill. Hon delegates, I now call upon the hon Majodina, the Minister of Water and Sanitation, to open the debate for 18 minutes. Hon Minister?

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APPROPRIATION BILL

(Policy debate)

Debate on Budget Vote 41 – Water and Sanitation:

The MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: House Chairperson, thank you very much for this opportunity. To the hon members of this august House, thank you for this Budget Vote opportunity.

Deputy Ministers Mahlobo and Seitlholo, our director-general leading a solid administration over there on my right, and Mrs Mahlobo who is here to support – hey, better half. I'm alone; I'm supporting myself ...

IsiXhosa:

... ngoba adinamntu.

English:

Thank you very much to the chair of our select committee, the hon Kaunda, and the members of the selection committee who have done good oversight work.

Today, we are here in the National Council of Provinces, a unique place in our democratic architecture because it gives

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us the lived realities of provinces. The name itself explains who you are and what your role is. Municipalities and communities, districts, and provinces depend on you to provide feedback on the challenges as well as the successes that we are achieving as lawmakers.

Hon members, the debate therefore provides us with an important opportunity to report directly to you, as representatives of the provinces, on the work that the government is undertaking to improve water security and sanitation services across the country. Let me also acknowledge the special delegates who might be on the virtual platform, as well as the leadership of the SA Local Government Association.

Communities across many provinces continue to experience water interruptions that affect ageing infrastructure, sewage spillages, poor maintenance, and high levels of water losses. In some instances, areas such as Gauteng, the Western Cape, the deep rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal, as well as the Free State, there is infrastructure. There is no question about it. However, taps exist, but what does not flow is water, consistently, and that is the cry of South Africans. In other

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areas, wastewater treatment plants and systems have deteriorated to unacceptable levels.

It is precisely because of these challenges that the President declared water a crisis on 12 February 2026 and directed government to intensify interventions across the sector. The Department of Water and Sanitation is now implementing the National Water Action Plan together with provinces, municipalities, Water Boards, National Treasury, Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Human Settlements, and the private sector. Notwithstanding that, communities must also join us on this journey.

Today, I wish to focus specifically on what the department is doing in each province and specifically in each and every municipality to improve water and sanitation services. How are we unblocking delayed projects, supporting municipalities, expanding infrastructure, and restoring dignity to our people? The message we bring today is that government is intervening decisively. Projects are being accelerated, and partnerships are being strengthened to ensure that communities receive reliable water and sanitation services.

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As we strengthen municipal water services, hon members, municipalities remain at the centre of water and sanitation service delivery. Whilst the department is responsible for water resource management, regulation, as well as bulk infrastructure, municipalities remain responsible for ensuring that water reaches households and businesses. That business means reticulation and distribution are squarely on municipalities. We play our role, but we cannot take over their function.

For this reason, hon members, the department has intensified support to municipalities, particularly those municipalities experiencing severe service delivery challenges, including leaks and nonrevenue water. In the current financial year, the department has allocated R12,3 billion through infrastructure grants to municipalities. These funds support the regional bulk infrastructure grant projects, as well as water services infrastructure grant projects, across all provinces.

We are prioritising projects that bring immediate improvement to communities. These include, amongst others, completion of long-delayed infrastructure projects, rehabilitation of failing water treatment works, as well as wastewater systems, expansion of water supply to unserved communities, groundwater

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development and borehole projects, and interventions to improve drinking water quality and reduce sewer spillages. That is why, on 31 March, we issued a Green Drop Report in which we gave a full account of the state of wastewater treatment plants, as well as wastewater systems.

We are also increasing the use of Water Boards as capable implementing agents to support struggling municipalities. The department is further working closely with the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, as well as National Treasury, to strengthen governance, to improve the refinancing of water revenue, and to ensure that water service functions are managed professionally and sustainably.

Our budget allocation has declined from R23,4 billion in the 2025-2026 financial year to R22 billion for this financial year, 2026-2027. I am here to request all parties, all members, without any exception, to please support this budget. Failing to support this budget, rejection of this budget, will mean you are saying we must not unblock projects, and we must not give support to municipalities.

What I like ... I receive ... There are members I can quote here, but I do not want to speak about them.

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IsiXhosa:

Mandithi ndiyababona. Ndiyababona.

English:

Today, I know you are going to support. I am confident. They all have smiles. They are going to support this budget. You see, I receive six questions per member who previously rejected the budget, but now I know they understand why they must support it. I respond to them without failure. Why do you let me down then by not supporting the budget?

For the first time in this House, you have been given goodies. Inside those goodie bags, please take out the speech that I am talking about. Take out the speech because I am not going to read the entire speech. However, because you are the National Council of Provinces, I will make reference to the projects that have been completed, and I will make reference, per province, to the projects that are still in the pipeline.

On page seven of the speech ...

IsiXhosa:

Aninazo nina?

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English:

I hope my office is bringing more. You must bring more. On the Eastern Cape, I will just summarise. In the Eastern Cape, in Sarah Baartman, in particular, there is the Ndlambe Bulk Water Supply Project for which we have allocated R553 million. This is an eight-phase project. Five phases are 100% complete. Two are work in progress. They are standing at 79%. One is still in the work package.

In Makhanda, which is spoken about on a daily basis, we have allocated R524 million, of which, to date, R254 million has assisted us in delivering on the James Kleynhans Water Treatment Works, which I talked about. This is a three-phase project. Phases one and two have been completed. Phase three is currently at the implementation stage. I am just making those examples because some of the projects we reported on last year, in 2025–2026, have now been completed. Still on Makhanda, we have focused on Makhanda because of its strategic nature. We do not want that university to go away from there because that is the only source of development in that area. We have further undertaken emergency service interventions. Where the municipality wanted assistance, we assisted with R8,3 million, and that project has been completed. We further assisted them with smart water meters because they were unable

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to account for their water. Phase one of 1 541 smart water meters is done. Phase two is at 98%. It will be done by the end of June. Phase three will be completed in 2027.

The same applies to Kou-Kamma. We are done and dusted with phase one at a cost of R14,9 million. There are projects in Chris Hani that are done and dusted at a cost of R2,5 billion. It is a cluster project. We are left with 2%, which is about checking snags, trying to connect, and trying to commission. We will be done soon, by August 2026.

I will not finish all the projects in the Eastern Cape. I was just making those references, but the Eastern Cape is covered up to slide 13. That is the Eastern Cape.

I have ...

Setswana:

... gore batho ba kwa gae ba nkutlwe gore le bone nkile ka ba shebelela.

English:

In the Joe Gqabi District, in the Senqu municipality in particular, it is difficult to complete projects on time and

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on budget in the Eastern Cape because of the mountainous terrain. The topography does not make it easy compared to other provinces in the country. In the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo, it is not very easy to complete projects on time, but we are trying. We have allocated R361 million. Phase one is complete. Phase two is under construction and stands at 80%.

As I move quickly, the Free State is on slide 14 – Free State representatives, slide number 14. We are talking about Thabo Mofutsanyana there, Maluti-a-Phofung, and Lejweleputswa. Matjhabeng, in particular, was owing us a lot, but they are now paying their debt. In one day, as the department, we opened 22 projects on wastewater treatment systems because we had to intervene there. We have put a lot of security around those projects. That was on 5 March 2026. Those are ... The next slide, slide 15, is still the Free State, Fezile Dabi District Municipality.

Then, if you go to Limpopo, Mopani, the 24 villages under phase one are being supplied with water, and 450 000 people are fully connected. In Giyani, we have this project on reticulation for 31 villages for phase two. It is in the procurement stage.

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We are already implementing the Babanana Bulk Water Pipeline Project. Still in Limpopo, in the Mopani District, Maruleng, Elias Motsoaledi in Sekhukhune, and Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality, the amounts are set out there on slide 19.

Slide 20 is still referring to Limpopo. This is for your ease of reference, members, when you give reports in your provinces.

In KwaZulu-Natal, in the Zululand District Municipality in uMkhanyakude and other municipalities under it, we are already delivering there. iLembe District Municipality and uMgungundlovu District Municipality are clearly articulated there. In the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, for the Lower uMkhomazi Bulk Water Supply Scheme, there good enough extraction. Soon we will be augmenting water in KwaZulu-Natal, especially in eThekweni. I have spoken about iLembe. I have spoken about uMshwathi Local Municipality.

Then in Mpumalanga, in Nkangala, Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, and Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality, there is the Loskop Regional Bulk Water Scheme, which is also going to benefit Sekhukhune. You can see there that all five work packages are between 85% and 90% complete. They will be handed over by December 2026. In Gert Sibande, which includes

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Lekwa Local Municipality, we are on course even there, hon members and comrades. Mpumalanga province continues on slide 30 and slide 31 with Nkangala, Emalahleni, Mkhondo, and Ehlanzeni. We have tried to spread our wings as much as possible to ensure that we do not leave other areas.

In the North West, for Bojanala, Ngaka Modiri Molema in Mahikeng, as well as Mamusa, and Sol Plaatje in the Northern Cape, the details are set out there, hon members.

In the Western Cape, George Local Municipality, Drakenstein Local Municipality, in the Garden Route and in Knysna, we have been there.

I am now on slide number 40 dealing with the Rural Water Access Project. I wanted it in this interactive way.

IsiXhosa:

Ningacofi iifoni, jongani into le ndithetha ngayo.

English:

On rural water access, one of the department's most important priorities is to tap into groundwater. Already, we are making interventions on borehole drilling and groundwater

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development. For the protection of natural springs, rainwater harvesting, rehabilitation of nonfunctional systems, and small-scale reticulation extensions.

IsiXhosa:

Liyaphela eli xesha.

English:

We will start with 2 600 settlements, with R200 million that we have put aside to serve unserved communities in deep rural areas as well as informal settlements.

We are starting in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, and the Eastern Cape. We are going to use our own Water Boards – Rand Water, Amatola, and Umgeni-uThukela – because this is phase one. We will come with phase two and phase three to involve all our Water Boards. We are kick-starting this in July. As we honour Tata Madiba this month, we will honour him through service delivery.

On 5 March, we established a Water Sector Anticorruption Forum, working with the Special Investigating Unit to ensure that we fight corruption in the sector, whether by officials or otherwise.

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In conclusion, the work under way across our provinces demonstrates that we are a government that is really in action. Together, we can build a water-secure South Africa. The time for action is now. Water is life. Sanitation is dignity; hence, I am the Minister of life and dignity. I thank you very much.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much, hon Minister. Hon delegates, I'm sure you'll agree that this Minister is indeed one of life and dignity. We want to thank you for that comprehensive report, as well as for giving copies to all of us so that we can peruse that in our own time and, of course, convey whatever is there to our respective provinces.

Hon delegates, now I would like to move to the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Co-operative Governance and Public Administration, the hon Kaunda, and he has 15 minutes.

Mr T M KAUNDA: Thank you, Treasurer-General. Hon Deputy Chairperson, the Chairperson of the NCOP, the House Chairpersons, the Minister of Water and Sanitation of the Republic of South Africa, ...

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IsiZulu:

... indoni yamanzi, ...

English:

... Minister Pemmy Majodina, the Deputy Minister David Mahlobo, and his wife, who is present, the Deputy Minister Seithlholo, hon members of this House, fellow South Africans, good afternoon. It is an honour to participate in this Budget Vote debate on behalf of the ANC and to contribute to a matter that lies at the heart of human dignity, economic development, public health and social justice, the provision of reliable water and sanitation services to our people. Hon Minister, we support this budget because we have seen you on the ground. You have been on the ground, working with municipalities and your Deputies, and addressing major challenges that are confronting our municipalities. So therefore, we don't give you a blank cheque, but we know that implementation is guaranteed. Water is life, and sanitation is dignity. As the ANC, we remain guided by the Freedom Charter, which declares that people shall share in the country's wealth and that all shall enjoy equal human rights.

Access to clean water and dignified sanitation is not just a service; it is a constitutional obligation. It is foundational

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to human dignity, equality, and survival. Where water does not reach our people, we are not merely facing a service delivery failure, but we are confronted with a constitutional failure.

IsiZulu:

Amanzi ayimpilo, ayisisekelo sempilo. Uma abantu bengenawo amanzi ayikho impilo esingathi bangayithola, kanye nokuvikela izifo eziba osomathuba umangabe amanzi engekho. Akukho nokuthuthuka okungaba khona umangabe abantu bakithi nesithunzi sabo singadicilelwa nasekutheni siqinisekiswa ukuthi siyavikelwa.

English:

We must position the water policy at the centre of the developmental state agenda. Water drives economic restructure, spatial transformation and productivity. No economy can function, no agriculture can grow, and no township can develop, or a rural area can develop without water. Simply put, water is economic infrastructure, water is social justice, and water is transformation.

We note that over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, the department has been allocating approximately R71,1 billion, comprising R21,9 billion in 2026-27, R21,2 billion in 2027-28,

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and R27,8 billion in 2028-29. A significant portion of this allocation is directed towards municipal infrastructure support through conditional grants amounting to R39,2 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period. This includes R21,4 billion for the regional bulk infrastructure grant and R17,8 billion for the water services infrastructure grant.

Furthermore, we note that the Water Trading Entity has budgeted approximately R59 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. These allocations demonstrate the government's commitment. However, budgets alone do not deliver this precious commodity called water. Pipes are the ones that deliver water. Infrastructure delivers water. Institutions deliver water. We must move from fragmented service delivery towards a well-co-ordinated national water security model, grounded firstly in long-term planning, climate resilience, and institutional coherence. We cannot continue operating in silos. Therefore, we welcome the intervention by His Excellency the President of the Republic of South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa, who's also the president of the ANC.

IsiZulu:

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Asikwazi-ke ...

English:

... for having established a National Water Crisis Committee, which is already on the ground attending to the challenges that our communities are faced with.

IsiZulu:

Asikwazi ukuhqhubeka nokusebenza ngokwehlukahlukana uma sifuna izixazululo ezizohlala isikhathi eside futhi zikwazi ukushintsha impilo zabantu bakithi zibe ngcono. Yingakho kubalulekile ukusetshenziswa ...

English:

... of the District Development Model ...

IsiZulu:

... siyisebenzise nayo ukuxhumanisa izindlela zokusebenza phakathi kaHulumeni kazwelonke, uHulumeni wezifundazwe kanye noHulumeni basekhaya.

English:

As a central mechanism, we underscore the importance of strengthening the National Water Resource Infrastructure

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Agency as a central mechanism for infrastructure planning, investment co-ordination, and project delivery. This institution must become the engine room of water infrastructure development in the Republic of South Africa. We support Integrated Water Resource Planning across surface water, groundwater, which also includes boreholes, water reuse, and desalination, which brings about a solution, especially to those who are located next to coastlines. A resilient water system is a diversified system. We note and welcome the reprioritisation of infrastructure spending towards projects that bring water directly to communities. We, therefore, support, hon Minister, the projects that you have just highlighted here. The completion of the delayed projects, reduction of water losses in municipalities, improving water reliability, and expanding access to communities which have never been serviced, and the diversification of the supply of water.

IsiZulu:

Akusizi-ke ukwakha amapayiphi nje kuphela kodwa engaphumi amanzi. Ngakhoke kubalulekile ukuthi nomasipala ngokusebenzisana nayonke iminyango, kubalulekile ukuthi amapayiphi esiwafakayo afakelwe ukuthi azoba nemiphumela.

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Ngakhoke uma amanzi engaphumi emapayipini, akuna sizo ngalutho ukufaka lawo mapayipi.

English:

We must begin to treat water infrastructure as a strategic national asset class, requiring disciplined planning, maintenance, risk management, and long-term investments. We, therefore, urge municipalities to conclude their water plans so that they are able to put these principles of diversification into practice and ensure that maintenance is prioritised in their budgets. At least 8% of their budgets should be allocated to maintenance. Municipalities face serious challenges of ageing infrastructure, skill shortages, financial instability, and high water losses. We must strengthen co-ordination between national departments, water boards, municipalities, and implementing agencies to reduce delays and ensure accountability. And we commend your team, hon Minister, led by Dr Phillips and all the water entities that are supporting our municipalities to turn the tide around.

And we have seen the results in many municipalities, where through intervention, especially through section 63 of the Water Services Act, we have seen such results on the ground.

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We, therefore, support the decisive interventions through the support of section 154 of the Constitution, section 139 of the Constitution, and section 63 of the Water Services Act.

Intervention is necessary. This is not a punishment. This is protection for our citizens. Equitable access must remain central. We must prioritise rural communities.

IsiZulu:

Abantu baseMkhanyakude, abantu basoPhongolo, abantu base-Harry Gwala koMzimkhulu, abantu baseThekwini, abantu baseMgungundlovu, abantu base-King Cetshwayo, badinga ukuthi ukuba bawathole amanzi. Ngakhoke kubalulekile ukuthi kusetshenziswane ngesikhulu isivini ukuletha izidingo kubantu, ikakhulukazi izidingo zamanzi. Nabantu abasemalokishini ngokunjalo kubafanele ukuthola amanzi ahlanzekile, futhi amanzi atholakala nsuku zonke, ...

English:

... and those underserved regions. Water access must not depend on where one lives. We must shift from crisis response to anticipatory water governance, driven by, firstly, planning, institutional alignment, and investment discipline.

IsiZulu:

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Kukhona umbono, mhlonishwa Ngqongqoshe, njengoba nami ngike ngaba khona laphaya komasipala, ngiye ngisho ukuthi, cha, into ehluphayo uma sithi akube nemali ebekwa eceleni yamanzi kuphela. Manje ...

English:

... if we haven't reviewed the White Paper on Local Government to ensure that if funding for municipalities is being reviewed, it becomes a challenge because ...

IsiZulu:

... omasipala baphila ngemali yamanzi, baphila ngemali yakgesi.

English:

So, without this money, ...

IsiZulu:

... uma uthi, ayibekelwe amanzi kuphela, ingenzi lutho enyene, kusho ukuthi omasipala bafike ngoba ngeke bakwazi ukusebenza.

English:

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So, we need to accelerate the process of reviewing the White Paper on Local Government and also turn the tide around for the financial model of municipalities, so that they will be able to have the capacity and capability to deliver water. Corruption and accountability: we must confront corruption. The water mafias must be dealt with decisively. Procurement abuse: we must close that tap.

IsiZulu:

Angingathi-ke ukuthengwa noma ukwabiwa kwamathenda kubonakale sengathi inhlobo enkulu ukucebisa abantu abambalwa. Ukwabiwa kwamathenda akube ukucebisa imiphakathi. Njengoba sifaka izingqalasizinda ezingaka nje, imali ezingaka esizichithayo zomphakathi, lezo zimali azifake abantu besifazane, bekwazi ukuthola amathuba kula mathenda ...

English:

... through social enterprises.

IsiZulu:

Ayifake ulusha lwakithi oluqedile emanyuvesi nasemakolishi oluhlezi emakhaya lungasebenzi. Ayifake abantu abakhubazekile. Ngaso sonke isikhathi sihlale sicabanga ekugcineni ngabo, nabo bekwazi ukuthola amathuba. Mese sifaka phakathi nezigagayi

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zempi. Abantu abazabalazela ukukhululwa kwaleli lizwe. Namhlanje abanye babo badla emigqonyeni kadoti ngoba bengenayo indlela yokusiphilisa. Ngakho amathenda awashintshwe, kodwa abe awokuhlomulisa iningi labantu emiphakathini yethu. Kungahlonyuliswa idlanzana elijika laphe liyophuza utshwala ngaleyo mali. Lithengele namantombazane izinto ezikhala kamnandi.

English:

These crimes steal from our people.

IsiZulu:

Akekho okufanele acebe ngobuhlungu babantu bakithi, ikakhulukazi izimali ezihlinzekelwa ukwenza imisebenzi. Isenti elilodwa nje elilahlekayo ngenxa yenkohlakalo, ukuphazamisa umsebenzi ekufanele ngabe udluliselwe nezinsiza kumphakathi wakithi.

English:

In conclusion, we must invest in reuse, desalination, groundwater, and climate-resilient infrastructure. Our developmental agenda depends on water. This budget reflects a clear commitment to strengthening the sector. The ANC supports this budget, but our support, hon Minister, is not a blank

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cheque. We want to continue to see implementation, accountability, and delivery of water to our people. The people of South Africa want to see results.

IsiZulu:

Futhi bayayazi imisebenzi emihle eyenziwe yilo Hulumeni we-ANC ukuthi, uhulumeni wobandlululo azange abahlinzeke ngamanzi. Yingakho omasipala uma bengena ngonyaka ka-2000, umsebenzi wokuqala uma bewubheka ngokwentando yeningi, kwakufanele kube ukuhlinzekelwa kwabantu ngamanzi. Futhi, kudluliselwa kulezo zindawo ezingakaze zibe nawo amanzi nhlobo. Ngakhoke, komasipala akusikhona ukuthi babe nobudedengu, kodwa omasipala bathi ake sigale ukwenzela ukuthi wonke umuntu ajabulele le nkonzo ekuthiwa amanzi. Ake siyidlulisele ezindaweni ezingathintwanga nhlobo uhulumeni wobandlululo.

Ngoba abantu bakithi kwakuthiwa bona abangatholi manzi, abangatholi migwaqo, futhi abangatholi gesi. Ngakhoke lokhu esikwenzayo siyi-ANC nemithetho nezinqubomgomo esiyishayile, isizishintshile izimpilo zabantu bakithi zaba ngcono.

Yingakhoke namhlanje sithi bangaphezu kwa-90% abantu bakithi asebekwazile ukuthola amanzi. Ngoba omasipala bakuqinisekisele ukuthi imali bayihlinzeka ukufaka izingqalasizinda ezizoyisa amanzi kubantu. Kodwa konke lokhu esikushilo, sithi,

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ukunakekelwa. Asibheke uhlobo lwezibonelelo esingazisbenzisa, mhlonishwa Ngqongqoshe. Sizithuthukise izibonelelo, ikakhulukazi omasipala, sifuna ukubabona bonke bezithengela bona amaloli athutha amanzi, banganciki kwamaloli athutha amanzi aphuma ngaphandle ngoba iwona adla izigidi. Lezo zigidi izona ezingabe zifaka amanzi, futhi zihambise amanzi emiphakathini yakithi. Kodwake futhi siqinisekise ukuthi nezibonelelo ezinemibandela yokuzilungisa izingqalasizinda ngoba zisesimweni esinzima njengamanje. Kodwa uma ngabe singabambisana siqhubeke senze lo msebenzi omuhle, i-ANC ewuqalile ngo-1994, impilo zabantu bakithi zizoqhubeka zishintshe zibe ngcono. Siyabonga. Asinamona, asinanzondo. Siletha intuthuko ebantwini.

Mr Z WILLIAMS (Eastern Cape): Hon Chair, hon Minister, my bright and beautiful sister hon Pemmy Majodina, the two Deputies, all members of the House, the SA Local Government Association, Salga, representatives and the chairperson of our select committee, the hon Kaunda, greetings. I am pleased to participate in this important debate on Budget Vote 41 of 2026 of the Department of Water and Sanitation.

First and foremost, water is not merely a natural resource. It is the foundation of human dignity, public health, food

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security, industrial growth and sustainable development. The promise of a better life for all cannot be realised without reliable and equitable access to water and sanitation. As we deliberate on this budget, we do so against the backdrop of increasing climate variability, ageing infrastructure, persistent municipal challenges and growing demand for water resources. These realities compel us to move with agency, innovation and unwavering commitment.

The 2026 Budget aptly recognises water security as a strategic imperative for economic growth and social stability. Our department has prioritised bulk infrastructure projects and water services initiatives aimed at improving access and addressing historical backlogs.

IsiXhosa:

Siyabulela Mphathiswa nooSekela Baphathiswa kuba ungenelelo lwakho ingakumbi kweli phondo lethu iMpuma Kapa. Uye wangenelela phaya eChris Hani, eMakana, naseAlfred Nzo. Usinike imali eninzi yokuba masizame ukulwa nokungabikho kwamanzi. Siyabulela kakhulu MaNdlangisa ngomsebenzi omhle.

English:

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South Africa's water challenges are not fundamentally about the scarcity of water alone. They are equally about governance, maintenance and institutional capacity. Water losses through leaks, nonrevenue water, inadequate asset management and financial instability in municipalities continue to undermine service delivery and compromise our performance as a state. These are issues that demand a new culture of accountability and professionalism.

We welcome the growing emphasis on partnerships between the department, our water boards and municipalities, including development finance institutions. Such collaborative approaches are necessary if we are to accelerate implementation and improve efficiency.

The Eastern Cape, like many other provinces, understands that access to clean water is inseparable from social justice. Every community without safe water reminds us that our democratic project and transformational project remain unfinished. Therefore, infrastructure investment must be accompanied by strengthening local government capacity, promoting technical skills and ensuring that every rand allocated translates into visible improvements in the lives of our people.

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Furthermore, climate change presents a new frontier that requires us to rethink water management. Droughts, floods and changing rainfall patterns necessitate investment in resilience, conservation, wastewater reuse and the protection of our catchment areas. Water sustainability must become a societal responsibility and not merely a government programme.

The National Development Plan and the African Union Agenda 2063, call upon us to build resilient infrastructure and promote sustainable resource management. Water security is central to these aspirations. It is therefore imperative that we embrace innovation, digital technologies and scientific research to improve forecasting, monitoring and efficient utilisation of our scarce resources.

In supporting Budget Vote 41, we must also insist on excellence in execution. Budgets alone do not change lives, but implementation does. Communities judge us not only by appropriations and policy, but by whether water flows into their taps, whether sanitation systems function effectively and whether human dignity is upheld. The success of this budget will not be measured by expenditure alone, but by the confidence of our citizens that the state can deliver on one of its most fundamental obligations.

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In conclusion, as President Nelson Mandela reminded us, water is fundamental to life and to prosperity of nations. Let us therefore recommit ourselves to building a South Africa in which water security becomes the cornerstone of inclusive growth, sustainability and development of human dignity. Thank you very much, Chair.

Dr I SCHEURKOGEL: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon Minister, hon Deputy Ministers and hon members, ...

Afrikaans:

... my mede Suid-Afrikaners, goeie middag.

Setswana:

Metsi ke bophelo.

English:

Water is life. Today, we debate a budget for life itself. Let me ask the one question that matters to the women in Giyani, the gogo [granny] in the Eastern Cape and the child in Winnie Mandela down in the Free State. Does this budget put water in the tap?

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Chairperson, we can table the most beautiful Annual Performance Plan, APP. We can recite the percentages, 90% access to a Reconstruction and Development Programme, RDP-level water service, but the man on the street does not read the APP. He reads an empty bucket. He feels how the reliability of water supply has declined to 67%, non-revenue water stands at 47%, and he definitely feels how 47% of our clean water is lost to leaks before it reaches his home.

Afrikaans:

Die mense op die grond gee nie om oor wie se bevoegdheid dit is nie. Hulle soek water in die kraan.

English:

South Africans do not care whose competency it is. They just want water in the tap. Here is the hard truth – 19% of rural South Africans do not have reliable water. One in three has no access to basic sanitation. In Limpopo, people drink from boreholes laced with E. coli, near the very schools where our children learn. This is not a statistic; this is the mother boiling dirty water and praying it does not make her baby sick.

Afrikaans:

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Geen water, geen waardigheid nie.

English:

No water, no dignity.

Fellow South Africans, the most beautiful thing about South Africa is our Constitution, which, at times, we consider a nice-to-have and it is not. Just yesterday, we commemorated 50 years since the Soweto Youth Uprising. Let me remind the members of this House that section 2 reads as follows.

This Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic. Law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled.

Section 27(1) then empowers South Africa. Everyone has the right to have access, not an option or when collapsed municipalities pay their water bill, a right to subsection (b), sufficient food and water. Minister, that is your APP. That is what you as the national plumber should be spending taxpayers' money on. Minister, the law gives you power, specifically in section 63 of the Water Services Act. The Constitution does not ask you to intervene in collapsing municipalities, it compels you. Yet, while taps run dry from

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Gauteng to the Free State, the department hides behind limited powers and forms yet another committee. The President assigns the Deputy President to lead the charge, who failed, and now a task team has been instituted.

Poverty is not natural, it is man-made. It can be overcome by human action. Taps, dry taps, are man-made too. They can be fixed but not by a committee chaired in Tshwane, while a village in Qwaqwa queues at a dirty stream.

Then, Deputy Chairperson, there is the question of the water boards. The Water Service Amendment Act hands the Minister the sole power to appoint these boards by the gazette. We asked for a simple thing. Let an independent, merit-based panel make these appointments, people who know engineering, people who know finance, people who can keep water flowing. However, that has been repeatedly refused in this House.

Why? Because a board appointed on merit cannot become a parking lot for cadres. It is enough. Our people thirst while jobs are handed to the connected, not to the competent. And yet those getting water from Vaal Central Water have been sitting with water shedding since 2021. Imagine, Minister, when you leave your ministerial home in the morning, you do

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not have water. When you get back from a long day of work, there is no water. Well, you don't have to struggle, because the ministerial home is in Cape Town, not in Odendaalsrus.

Chairperson, the constitutional right to water does not respect departmental red tape boundaries or lack of will. We are bound as members of this Parliament to respect that right. You can build a house, but a house without water in the tap is just a ...

Afrikaans:

... leë dop van verlore hoop van 'n beter Suid Afrika.

English:

Bulk supply, reticulation and housing must move as one. The ordinary South African is owed water, not excuses passed between ministers like a hot potato. There's an African proverb: Rain does not fall on one roof. The responsibility is shared, yes, and so must be the urgency. Kofi Annan reminded us that access to safe water is not a favour from government, it is a basic human right.

I say to this House, the people are watching.

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Afrikaans:

Genoeg is genoeg.

English:

Enough is enough. South Africans will not be fooled by a budget speech while the bucket stays empty. They will judge us not by our plans, but by whether the water comes out of the tap.

Setswana:

Batho ba rona ba nyorilwe.

English:

People are thirsty. Let us stop debating powers that are afraid to be used and start delivering the water that our Constitution promises. However long before this drought of leadership ends, the dawn will break and it will break at the ballot box. I thank you.

Setswana:

Ke a leboga.

Afrikaans:

Dankie.

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Mr B S MABEBO: Deputy Chairperson, hon Minister, Deputy Ministers, hon members, on Rebuilding Water Governance and Restoring Institutional Accountability, water is not merely a resource; it is a foundation of public health, economic growth, social stability and human dignity. Yet, millions of South Africans continue to experience unreliable water supply, failing sanitation systems, deteriorating infrastructure and declining public confidence in the institution responsible for delivering these essential services.

The challenge before us is not only one of infrastructure; it is fundamentally a governance challenge. Effective water governance requires institutional discipline, accountability and a performance-driven culture across all spheres of government. While South Africa possesses progressive legislation and sound policy frameworks, implementation failures continue to undermine service delivery outcomes.

Too many municipalities are burdened by ageing infrastructure, inadequate technical capacity, weak financial management and poor governance systems. The consequences are visible in recurring water shortages, deteriorating wastewater treatment facilities, rising water losses and increasing pressure on vulnerable communities.

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Hon members, persistent municipal failures require a strengthened governance correction framework capable of identifying distress systems long before they reach a crisis point. Intervention should not occur only when taps run dry and communities are forced to protest. Early warning mechanisms must be strengthened and detect operational decline, financial distress, infrastructure failures and governance weaknesses.

Equally important, interventions must be timely, co-ordinated and supported by meaningful technical and institutional assistance. Governments must move beyond reactive crisis management and embrace preventative governance to identify risks early and address them before they become service delivery distress.

Deputy Chairperson, the Blue Drop, Green Drop, and No Drop programmes have played an important role in assessing drinking water quality, wastewater management and water conservation programmes. However, management and water conservation performance assessment alone is no longer sufficient. These programmes must evolve into enforceable accountability mechanisms supported by the measurable consequences pathways.

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Municipalities that consistently perform poorly must face corrective measures, while those demonstrating excellence should be recognised and incentivised. Performance monitoring without accountability creates reports, while performance monitoring with accountability delivers results. The objective must be measurable improvement in service delivery, water quality, infrastructure maintenance and institutional performance.

Water governance cannot operate in silos. National government provides policy direction and regulatory oversight. Provinces support monitoring and capacity building. Municipalities remain responsible for frontline service delivery. Success depends on all three spheres functioning as a co-ordinated system rather than isolated entities.

Strengthened intergovernmental relations improve information sharing and greater policy coherence which is essential to building long-term resilience within the sector. Particular attention must be given to strengthening catchment management function. South African water resources must be managed through integrated approaches that recognise the interconnected nature of rivers, dams, groundwater systems and ecological infrastructure.

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As climate change intensifies water scarcity risk across many regions, strategic oversight of catchment systems becomes increasingly important. The sustainability of water governance institutions depends on stable funding models, skilled personnel and clearly defined operational mandates. Every rand invested in water governance should contribute directly to improved service delivery, infrastructure reliability, environmental sustainability and public confidence.

One of the most pressing challenges facing the sector is the growing crisis of water losses and nonrevenue water. Billions of litres of treated water are lost annually through leaking infrastructure, poor maintenance practices, illegal connections and weak monitoring systems.

Addressing the challenges requires strengthened performance governance frameworks that prioritise maintenance, operational efficiency, asset management and measurable performance targets. Infrastructure maintenance must become an ongoing operational priority rather than a response to failure.

The future of water governance will increasingly depend on digital modernisation and technological innovation. Smart infrastructure monitoring systems, predictive analytics,

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remote sensing technologies and real-time data platforms can improve efficiency and strengthen accountability. Reliable data is no longer a luxury; it is a prerequisite for effective governance. Investing in digital transformation will enable government to respond faster, plan more effectively and utilise resources more efficiently.

Equitable access to water remains a constitutional imperative and a more moral obligation. This transformation of the water allocation and licensing system remains critical to advancing social justice and economic inclusion. Historically disadvantaged communities, emerging farmers and previously excluded economic participants must have fair opportunities to access water resources.

Transformation and sustainability are not competing objectives. They are complementary pillars of responsible water governance. Ultimately, governance reform is about restoring public confidence. Communities must trust that institutions for water and sanitation services are capable, ethical, responsive and accountable. Public confidence cannot be legislated into existence. It must be earned through visible improvements in performance, transparent decision-

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making, ethical leadership and measurable service delivery outcomes.

South Africans do not judge government by policy documents alone; they judge government by whether water flows from their taps, whether sanitation systems function properly and whether public institutions fulfil their responsibilities. That is the standard by which we must measure ourselves as we confront growing infrastructure pressure, climate challenges, population growth and physical constraints.

Rebuilding water governance is not an optional reform; it is a national necessity. Let us commit ourselves to restoring institutional accountability, strengthening government systems, embracing innovation and ensuring that every South African enjoys reliable access to safe and dignified sanitation. In doing so, we will not only protect a critical resource, but we will also strengthen our democracy, advance social justice and build a more resilient future for generations to come.

Let me just quote this phrase from Thomas Sankara, who said, "We have choices: Either we choose clean water for everyone;

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or we choose champagne for a selected few." I say we choose water over champagne because we choose water.

In my closing remarks, ladies and gentlemen, hon members, I will quote from John F Kennedy, when he says, "Anyone who can solve the problems of water will be worthy of two Nobel Prizes: One for the peace; and one for silence." Hon Minister, I see you are about to receive the Nobel Prize. We support Budget Vote 41.

IsiZulu:

Amandla!

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION (Mr I S Seithloho): Deputy Chairperson, Minister Majodina, Deputy Minister Mahlobo, hon members, the director-general of the Department of Water and Sanitation, Dr Sean Phillips, our senior managers of the department, the leadership of our entities, chairpersons, members of the boards, chief executive officers and senior executives, the leadership of various stakeholders in the sector and civil society, fellow South Africans, from the onset we must echo the department's commitment to ensure that water flows to the taps of every home and every business in all corners of our country.

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However, our hard work and commitment must be met by better governance in municipalities. Municipalities play a key constitutional role in bringing water to the people of this country. This is a truth we cannot ignore. For water to flow, municipalities must be functional.

To illustrate this point, one is a simple tale of two municipalities as it were, in Emfuleni and in Midvaal, in Gauteng.

Midvaal Municipality is often celebrated as the best-run municipality in Gauteng and has consistently achieved clean audits from the Auditor-General.

Emfuleni, on the other hand, has struggled significantly with decaying infrastructure, persistent power outages, a water crisis and severe financial distress.

As a result, these neighbouring municipalities have different water and sanitation realities. The key ingredient in this difference is governance.

For us to ensure water security for all, the department must continue to be uncompromising in its regulatory role. The

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department has been strengthening its regulatory function and making its regulatory actions more consistent, and this has resulted in an increased number of civil action and criminal charges against municipalities for sewage pollution as well as actions against industrial polluters.

However, there are also limitations in the degree to which regulatory action can address poor performance. For example, the fact that the department currently has criminal charges under the National Water Act against 56 of the 144 water services authorities, WSAs, for sewage pollution has not resulted in a significant improvement in waste water management by municipalities. The number of criminal cases, not only against the municipalities as entities but also against the mayors and municipal managers in their personal capacity, is expected to increase further, as directed by the hon President during his state of the nation address. For us to ensure water security for all, there must be this level of accountability.

The department has 96 active criminal cases for sewage pollution, which involve 53 WSAs across all nine provinces. This follows the nonresponse of the municipalities to notices

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and directives. These cases are being investigated by the department's investigative unit as well as the SAPS.

In 53 of these cases, an investigation is currently underway, with a further 42 referred to the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, for a decision to prosecute. In one case, the NPA has decided to include charges against the municipal manager in his personal capacity. This level of accountability is our bold commitment to ensure water security for all, as access to water is a sacrosanct right.

A further 67 possible criminal cases are being investigated involving mining operations, agricultural operations, industry and dams, including the failed tailings facility of Jagersfontein, which is currently in court.

The department will be publishing a polluter register in July. The intention with the polluter register is to name and shame polluters and will include information on convictions, including presentence agreements, directives and published critical systems with noncompliant effluent in terms of the Green Drop Report.

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The register will have a geographical element to enable further identification of pollution hotspots. This again is part of our effort to ensure that we protect our water resources, and improve raw water quality and security.

The impact of pollution of our water resources is immense, particularly in hardworking river systems such as the Vaal River. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project currently transfers roughly around 800 million cubic metres of water annually into the Vaal River system at a significant cost to the citizens of the country, in order to improve South Africa's water security. This high-quality water is drastically diluted by the lower quality polluted water of the Vaal Dam. This means that Rand Water must then re-treat this water at great cost so that it meets drinking water standards.

Ultimately, this makes the cost of water high and threatens water security for all. We must therefore continue to work hard and together to fight the pollution of our water resources, as water is a precious resource that gives us life. It is therefore our collective duty to protect this precious resource.

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The department is pleased to report good progress in the control of aquatic alien invasive plant species at Hartbeespoort Dam, largely caused by pollution from municipal wastewater treatment works. The interventions, being implemented through Magalies Water in partnership with the Centre for Biological Control at Rhodes University, are yielding results.

The communities around the dam have also assisted in providing spaces and resources to assist in the rearing and the release of biological control agents, which are insects that weaken invasive plant species.

The deployment of nanobubble technology, which is oxygen gas bubbles that bind with ammonia and other elements to improve water quality at the dam, has also been successful in improving water quality. We will be expanding the reach of such technology during this year.

This project has not only assisted in profiling noncompliance of water users authorised to discharge treated water into our rivers and increased compliance and enforcement actions against these users in the catchment, which has yielded some results.

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However, the poor quality of effluent from three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng, including Mogale City, has not yet significantly improved despite enforcement action, including criminal charges. We therefore call on these municipalities to improve their wastewater systems so as to not continue polluting our dams, thus reversing our gains.

The establishment of the Catchment Management Agencies, CMAs, separates the water resource regulator from the municipal support function of the Department of Water and Sanitation. These CMAs will implement strategies to improve the resilience of catchments to perform their ecological function, including taking regulatory action against polluters.

The Vaal-Orange CMA has developed an action plan focusing on the Vaal River, with increased monitoring and evaluation of compliance of waste discharges into the system, together with enforcement. This will not only include municipalities but also industries and mines.

The remediation measures, compliance and enforcement activities of the CMAs, coupled with the support from the department to the municipal sector, as well as the reforms to the municipal sector, should progressively lead to an

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improvement in this particular catchment. The Vaal River Anti-Pollution Forum will also assist in ensuring that gains are made in improving the water quality in the system.

To assist in the remediation of pollution, the department has commenced with the development of the mitigation charge that is provided for under the pricing strategy.

The mitigation charge aims to finance strategic interventions to address specific issues in high-pollution areas and will be piloted in the Vaal catchment, among others.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank deputy director-general, DDG, Zwane, chief director Anet Muir and others who have consistently worked hard in making sure that this materialises.

We face a crisis in the sanitation sector. This crisis is not a natural disaster. It is a governance disaster. Let us be nuanced about why we are failing. The decline we see is as a result of a triad of failures – technical incompetence, which breeds a lack of innovation, financial mismanagement and a culture of impunity in local government.

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In many of our municipalities, maintenance has become a scary word. We have seen a shift from preventative maintenance to crisis management.

Why is this? This is because crisis management allows for the emergency procurement of water tankers – a business model that has become a parasite on the municipal fiscus. As the Minister often says, we as a Ministry vehemently oppose and condemn this phenomenon. We must work together to rid ourselves of this betrayal of our country. We need to instil a more patriotic relationship with our infrastructure if our nation is to survive and thrive.

In our continued work to ensure water security for all, we must think outside of conventional ways. South Africa is a water-scarce country and must reduce its average consumption of water per capita to ensure future water security for all.

An individual being served by sewerage waterborne sanitation systems flushes approximately 50 litres on average per day using water treated to potable standards, amounting to approximately a third of domestic use.

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Since 1994, there have been many new connections to waterborne sanitation systems, particularly in urban areas. However, most WSAs have failed to increase the capacity of their wastewater treatment works to cater for the increased number of connections, and many of these wastewater treatment works are overloaded or dysfunctional due to a lack of maintenance and poor operation.

This situation is resulting in widespread and increasing sewage pollution of water resources, as well as an increase in frequent sewer spillages in communities. This is causing damage to the environment and poses a major health risk, as well as creating unbearable living conditions. We must therefore look at nonconventional ways of conducting the business of water and sanitation.

New generation sanitation technologies have been developed, including water efficient, non-sewered closed or circular systems. On-site technologies that require little water are completely off-grid, non-sewered or are decentralised. With the new technologies, wastewater, black and grey water is treated on-site, producing a safe liquid effluent that can be reused instead of using drinking water to flush, and a small

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amount of safe solid matter that can be turned into valuable resources like fertiliser supporting the secular economy.

These technologies aim to provide sanitation services without the high capital investment and water usage required for large waterborne sewage systems, with centralised wastewater treatment works which reduce the risk of pollution by reducing large networks to conveyance and reducing the number of assets that have to be operated and maintained.

Over the coming decades, there must be a gradual process of transformation of sanitation in densely populated areas in South Africa to a situation where a mixed sanitation system is in place. This includes the current municipal-owned sewer systems with centralised wastewater treatment works, but with increased levels of private-sector financing and expertise, decentralised systems, including household level and household managed on-site closed systems, and local community level closed systems which are managed by the private sector with the approval of the municipalities.

New developments must increasingly use household level and community level closed systems, reducing water consumption and

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reducing the burden of maintaining and operating wastewater treatment systems on municipalities.

At the same time, municipalities must focus on improving the performance of their remaining seweraged wastewater treatment systems. There must be an increasing reuse of wastewater and an increasing economic use of the byproducts of both centralised and decentralised sanitation systems.

This new vision of sanitation will be implemented through the National Sanitation Integrated Plan towards 2030. It will be driven by the department and its Water Partnerships Office in partnership with the Water Research Commission, WRC, the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation and the Bill Gates Foundation.

These Revised Compulsory National Water and Sanitation Services Standards, which were gazetted by the department on the 6th of June 2025, has already created an enabling environment for the implementation of water efficient sanitation systems by outlawing new connections to overloaded waste treatment works.

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This means that a municipality may not approve a new additional bulk user connection to an existing water or wastewater system unless that particular system has the capacity to deal with the additional load. The revised standards also require consideration of water efficient decentralised systems in a new development.

In addition, a model of bylaws framework is being designed as a guideline to assist municipalities with the approval, adoption and regulation of off-grid decentralised and non-sewered sanitation systems.

The department is also engaging with the Department of Human Settlements to review the National Building Regulations and the Red Book to incorporate decentralised water efficient sanitation systems and to require all new toilets to be water efficient.

Furthermore, the Department of Water and Sanitation, the WRC, the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition are collaborating to support innovation and science for new sanitation technology and solutions.

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All of these commitments and efforts on our part are geared towards ensuring water security for all, and affording people of our country dignified sanitation.

However, these efforts must be met with functioning municipalities. Municipalities are the cornerstone of water and sanitation. We must therefore, as a nation, work towards better municipal governance. In this regard, that is why South Africans must be at the forefront in electing councillors that are fit for purpose. Thank you so much.

Mr B J FARMER: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, hon members, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. There is a simple truth that every South African understands. When the taps run dry, nothing else works. Schools cannot function, clinics cannot operate properly, farmers cannot produce food, and families cannot live with dignity.

Water is not the luxury, it's life. That is why this Budget Vote is one of the most important before this House. The PA supports investment into water and sanitation infrastructure because we understand that reliable water supply is fundamental to economic growth, public health, and human dignity.

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We know governments' continued investment into bulk water infrastructure, treatment facilities, municipal water projects, and sanitation programmes. These investments are necessary. But funding alone will not solve South Africa's water crisis. Implementation will.

The truth is that many communities are not suffering because South Africa lacks water. They are suffering because infrastructure is failing, pipes leak, reservoirs are poorly maintained, pump stations break down, Wastewater Treatment Plants collapse, infrastructure projects are delayed, and communities are left waiting.

In many municipalities, treated water never reaches households because it is a loss through aging infrastructure and poor maintenance. This is not simply an engineering problem; it is a governance problem.

The PA believes that municipalities must be held accountable for maintaining critical infrastructure. We cannot continue to spend billions building new projects while existing infrastructure is allowed to collapse. Maintenance is not glamorous and does not make headlines, but maintenance is what keeps water flowing.

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The PA is particularly concerned about communities living in informal settlements. For too many South Africans, access to clean water and dignified sanitation remains a daily struggle. People still stand in long queues at communal taps, and families still live next to overflowing sewage. Children still grow up in conditions that compromise their health and dignity. This cannot become normal. Housing delivery, water provision, and sanitation services must work together. A house without water is not dignity. A community without sanitation is not development. A municipality that cannot provide basic services is failing its people.

Hon members, the PA therefore calls for stronger oversight, stricter consequence management, and greater transparency in water infrastructure procurement. Communities deserve to know where the money is going and whether projects are on schedule. They deserve to see those responsible held accountable when projects fail.

This debate is ultimately about dignity. The Constitution promises access to sufficient water. That promise must mean something in practice. The government must deliver.

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In closing, hon Minister, 51 children are drowned in an abandoned 50-metre quarry filled up with water, which is chemically contaminated in Heidedal.

After parliamentary oversight in November 2025, a hydrogeological study was done of which such report remains missing. Still to this day, hon Minister, you are yet to answer some of the questions raised. It makes one wonder if those children would have been of white or black descent.

Even though the PA supports Budget Vote 41, we support it with clear expectations. Every South African, regardless of where they live, should be treated with the same importance than anyone else, because, hon Minister, coloured lives matter too. Salute!

Mr F J BADENHORST: Chairperson, hon Minister, hon Deputy Ministers, hon members, fellow South Africans, water is life. Yet, across South Africa, the quality of that life has been steadily eroded by a crisis that receives far less attention than water outages. The pollution of our rivers, dams, wetlands, and groundwater by failing municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants are critical.

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For too long, the debates focused only on whether water reaches the tap. But South Africans have every right to ask another question: What is the quality of the water flowing through our rivers, stored in our dams, and drawn from underground aquifers? The reality is deeply concerning.

Across the country, aging and dysfunctional wastewater treatment works are discharging partially treated, or in some cases, untreated, raw sewage into our water resources. The consequences are visible in collapsing river systems, deteriorating dam water quality, environmental degradation, and increasing risks to public health. What is even more alarming is the impact on groundwater. Millions of South Africans, particularly in rural communities, farms and smaller towns, continue to rely on boreholes and underground water resources for their daily needs. When wastewater infrastructure fails, contamination does not simply remain in a river. It infiltrates the ground, pollutes aquifers, and threatens water sources that communities have relied on for generations.

Once groundwater is contaminated, the damage can take years, sometimes decades, to reverse. This is why the DA believes

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that water quality must become a national priority alongside water security.

The Department of Water and Sanitation itself has repeatedly indicated that South Africa's primary challenge is not necessarily water availability, but rather the management, treatment, and delivery of water resources. The department has further committed itself to strengthening regulatory interventions aimed at addressing pollution and protecting water resources.

The DA welcomes the increasing focus on enforcement. For too long, municipalities have been allowed to pollute with little consequence. Communities suffer, ecosystems suffer, yet those responsible simply move on to the next council meeting. The era must come to an end.

The National Water Act already provides mechanisms to act against polluters. Those powers must now be exercised decisively and consistently. Where municipalities repeatedly fail to operate wastewater treatment works, the department does not hesitate to issue directives, pursue civil recovery actions, and where warranted open and criminal cases. Most importantly, accountability cannot remain institutional alone.

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The DA supports stronger measures to introduce personal accountability for those entrusted with governance responsibilities. Where gross negligence, willful disregard of legal obligations, or systematic failure contributes to environmental harm, mayors, municipal managers, and senior officials must face the consequences of their decisions, or a lack thereof.

Communities should not pay the price while decision-makers escape accountability. Sunlight remains one of the most effective disinfectants. The imminent announcement that the department will launch a National Polluter Register in July is therefore a welcome and important development. For the first time, South Africans will be able to see who is polluting our water resources, where pollution is occurring, and whether corrective action is being taken. Transparency creates accountability, and accountability drives action, and action protects our water resources.

The DA will support every initiative that exposes polluters, strengthens regulations, and ensure that those responsible are held accountable. At the same time, we must acknowledge that enforcement alone will not solve this crisis.

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As a party that believes in evidence-based decision-making, the DA recognises that we cannot rely solely on yesterday's technologies to solve tomorrow's sanitation challenges.

Population growth, climate pressures, water scarcity, and infrastructure backlogs require innovation. That is why we welcome the department's recognition of water-efficient sanitation solutions and non-sewer sanitation solutions within the Green Drop framework. The fact that water services authorities can earn additional Green Drop credits for adopting these technologies sends an important signal to the sector.

Innovation should be rewarded. In many communities, particularly remote settlements, rapidly growing rural towns, and water-stressed regions, conventional sewer systems are not always the most practical, affordable, or sustainable solutions.

New technologies can reduce water consumption, lower operating costs, improve resilience, and expand access to dignified sanitation services. The objective must not be to protect outdated systems. The objective must be to deliver better outcomes for people and the environment.

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The fight for clean water is ultimately a fight for public health, environmental sustainability, and human dignity. South Africans deserve rivers that are not contaminated by sewage. They deserve dams that are safe and protected. They deserve groundwater that remains fit for future generations, and they deserve municipalities that treat wastewater before it enters our environment.

The DA supports stronger enforcement, greater transparency through the National Polluter Register, meaningful consequences for those who fail in their duties, and the adoption of innovative sanitation technologies that are proven to work because protecting our water resources is not optional. It is fundamental to building a capable state, safeguarding public health, and securing South Africa's future. I thank you.

IsiZulu:

Mnu E NZIMANDE: Sihlalo sekuvele kwashintsha ukudla epuletini. Ngqongqoshe siyazibonga izipho zinhle kodwa ke naku okubalulekile. Thina simele abantu abangacaphuni entweni, abazihluphekayo. Simele izalukazi, izingane, omama kanye namadoda ahamba amabanga amade eyofuna amanzi ngoba lo hulumeni cha uyahluleka ukuthi abanikeze.

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English:

Unless this Parliament or this House's decision is subjected to test in courts, our people will continue to be subjected to this problem because the reasoning of the people that are coming here, they are able to identify the problem, but they are reasoning to conclusions. There is no rational connection; there is a problem. The continued conduct of DA, ANC, Inkatha and the right-wing parties to finance unsound and irrational plans with no direct impact on the lives of citizens is not supported by the MK Party. The plans are the enabler and if they are incorrectly couched definitely, they are not going to bring the change to the lives of our people. As long as the GNU is not subscribing to clean and good governance, corruption will persist. This is evident in the investigation by a Special Investigating Unit probing major water projects including Giyani, the Vaal River system, Rooiwal Wastewater Treatment Works, WWTW, Lepelle and eThekweni projects. Further the manifestation as confirmed also by the Minister of corruption under this administration through water tanker syndicate presumed to be involved in GNU partners.

IsiZulu:

Uyabona mina ngizalelwa lapha eZola, kamshaye aze afe.
Sekuphele amasonto amabili, awekho amanzi eZondi, eJabulani,

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eDobsonville. Izingane ngesikhathi esibucayi lapo kufanele ziye esikoleni, azinawo amanzi. Izalukazi zihamba amabanga amade, kulethwa lawo maloli amanzi, abanye bakhubazekile. Izingane ezincane, ezingaphansi kweminyaka eyisikhombisa zihamba ziyofuna amanzi ngoba ekhaya kunenkinga. Kwenziwa obani na? Kwenziwa yilabantu be-COJ. Ophathina be-GNU. Ancisha abantu ngoba afuna ukuletha amaloli amanzi kulesi sigaba esibucayi. Hhayi, aninamahloni!

English:

The budget does not appreciate the scale of the problem and shall not offset the historical backlog on water infrastructure and wastewater treatment works plant. The budget shortfall, as confirmed by the Minister. The budget required for 2026-27 to adequately overcome the current state of Minister's policies for infrastructure including bus pipes, pump station failures, and non-revenue water losses far outstrips the funds actually allocated.

We have seen the GNU partners boasting about the issuance of non-compliance certificates instead of intervention available in terms of section 63 of the Water Service Act. That is myopic. The Budget Vote does not provide direct impact on available facts established through the 2025 Green Drop

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Report. About 19 municipalities out of 23 in Free State do not have a Green Drop Certificate.

IsiZulu:

Angiphathi ke e-North West, KwaZulu-Natal naseLimpopo, yiqanda.

English:

Ekurhuleni is only one municipality that achieved. This implies severe environmental contamination, direct public health risk, and the degradation of water infrastructure.

According to the General Household Survey, May 2026, approximately 12,6 of households, which is above 2 million people, do not have access to pipe or tap water. That statistic was raised by Statistics SA. Government has to date failed to deal with the structural disparities, hence most of the 12,6% are considered by blacks and African children or people. They are happy because they are in this GNU, with people who have enjoyed all the privileges.

The NDP goal 2030 for achieving universal access to basic water services remains an empty undertaking. The living condition of a black child is characterised by the raw sewer

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running in their yards, their streets, on a daily basis with sewage running down the rivers and dams. At this day and age ...

IsiZulu:

... abantu bakithi baphoqelegele ukuthi bayozikhulula emihosheni nasemahlathini. Uma ungakukholwa lokhu hamba uye ewadini lesikhombisa ngaphansi kwesifunda sase- Ngaka Modiri Molimo. Abanye bazikhululela emabhakedeni ebusuku ngoba besaba izigebengu ukuphuma ezindlini. Kuyothi kungasa nkosi yami bahambe bayochitha. Okubuye kube yizifo kubo.

English:

Is that what you call dignity, GNU? The Budget Vote before this House shall not make an impact on the citizens and the vulnerable group but prolong their pain and suffering.

As of 31st March 2026, municipalities owe more than R27 billion to water boards, including R23 billion in overdue payment, reflecting a deterioration from mid-2025 ...

[Inaudible.]. The Budget Vote does not provide an intervention on this fact. Water Research Commission Annual Report and Plans highlighted the national crisis deficit driven by failing infrastructure, a 47% critical status rate in

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wastewater systems, and up to a 17% national water shortage expected by 2030. Does this Budget Vote provide interventions? No, it does not.

Let me demonstrate how badly couched these plans are or these funded commitments. Programme 3 let's look at it. The percentage of feasibility studies for water and wastewater services project assets cannot be made a measure of reducing the number of unserved communities, but rather prove whether a future intervention is technically and financially viable, in simple terms, when you look at M&E.

The feasibility studies attest to what is a learning milestone indicator, not through output indicators. There is no alignment between the outcome and the output indicator. Once more, the output indicator is vague in a sense that though the department has full control of conducting them, which is feasibility studies, it chooses to use percentage rather than the number. Percentage is used when you don't have control.

Furthermore, the number of five-year water and sanitation rehabilitation plans developed or updated for disciplines is not a correct measure of an impact or outcome. Described as reliability of water service improved, instead it measured the

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product rather than the ultimate outcome, actual reliability. Meaning there is no nexus between the causal and the effects.

IsiZulu:

Asiyisekeli.

Mr D W BRYANT (Western Cape): Thank you very much, Chairperson, and hello to the Minister. Good to see you again, Deputy Minister. Before I start, I think it's quite intriguing to hear that the ANC has chosen water over champagne. So, we will be making sure that we look out at future events to ensure that only water is being consumed. The true test of any government is not the promises that it makes, but the basic services that it delivers.

In our country, access to clean and reliable water remains beyond the reach of far too many of our citizens. After decades of ANC misrule, many of our communities across the country continue to endure failing infrastructure, persistent interruptions and the consequences of poor and neglectful administration. For those living in poverty, the absence of a dependable water supply has impacted their health, it has become a barrier to the opportunity and it stripped away their fundamental human dignity.

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Across many parts of South Africa, the reliability of municipal water services has declined sharply. We can sit in this House and debate the statistics, but the citizens of this country don't drink statistics. When they look at their dry taps and they look at the sewage flowing down their streets, they ask themselves whether those they elected, not only their national and provincial leaders, but most importantly, their local governments, their mayors and their ward councillors, whether those politicians really care.

South Africa has more than a water scarcity problem. We have a profound governance problem that creeps into far too many of our government institutions. We have a crisis where billions of rands are allocated, yet dysfunctional and poorly managed municipalities fail to spend their infrastructure grants, returning precious resources to the National Treasury while the citizens go thirsty. It is our responsibility as public representatives to ensure that we protect the interests of all our citizens and that we never ever play politics with their health and wellbeing.

Indeed, the very purpose of this House is to ensure that our provincial interests are safeguarded. Yet, when the DA-led Western Cape government stepped up to protect the people of

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Knysna, it was political manoeuvring from the ANC that blocked the path to a permanent solution. For those who don't know, I'm referring to the chaos that took place in the Knysna Municipality and is still taking place.

We may remember three years ago, a dead and rotting body was found floating in the drinking water. The Premier of the Western Cape says that when they found that body and they tried to put it out, the body was so rotted that the arm came away from the body. For years, the residents of Knysna have suffered under a coalition that has delivered persistent grinding failures in governance, financial mismanagement and collapsing infrastructure.

The situation grew so dire and the local administration became so thoroughly incapable of fulfilling its basic executive obligations that the Western Cape Provincial Cabinet did what any responsible government would do. The province stepped in and invoked a constitutional intervention in terms of section 139 of the Constitution, to put that failing municipality under administration. It was a move designed to strip away the political paralysis, deploy technical experts and fix the water problems for the suffering residents of that town.

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It wasn't rooted in political games, it was intended to help and to protect the people of this province, exactly the job that we've been elected to fulfil. And what did the ANC in this House do? Well, instead of standing with the residents of Knysna, the ANC used its political weight in the NCOP to kill that section 139 intervention. They used the majority in this House to protect a dysfunctional political coalition on the ground, shielding failing politicians from accountability and blocking the province from taking over and fixing the town.

They voted to keep the keys of infrastructure in the hands of the very people who broke it. Nevertheless, while the ANC chose political games, the DA-led provincial government chose the people. When this House recommended that the province instead retreat to a section 154 support process instead of full administration, the Western Cape government didn't shrug its shoulders and walk away.

The Western Cape Provincial Minister of Local Government, Minister Anton Bredell, and his team dug in their heels and intensified their efforts, pouring millions of provincial funding into the very municipality that fought so hard to block them, refusing to allow the people of Knysna to be

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abandoned. They did this without their DA T-shirts on and they did this for the people of Knysna. We've seen the results.

In the 2024-25 financial year, the Western Cape government invested R9 million into interventions associated with the strength and support plan. In the 2025-26 year, the Western Cape government injected another R2,5 million. In the current 2026-27 financial year, the Western Cape government has allocated an additional R3,775 million to keep that town from collapsing.

Take as an example what our technical teams are doing right now at the Charlesford Pump Station. Some of you may have gone on a site visit when the NCOP visited and met the people responsible. The provincial support team has worked tirelessly to keep water pumping into the balancing dam and the great Knysna water treatment works.

When our teams arrived they discovered that pumps and motors previously procured or refurbished by the municipality during 2024-25 were entirely incompatible with the system, a textbook example of local supply chain failure. We corrected those errors. Today, two of the three primary pumps are operational

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and we have a clear five-month horizon to restore the dam to full capacity before the peak summer season begins.

We are doing the same for the collapsing road network, by the way. Decades of local neglect mean that large portions of Knysna's roads require total rehabilitation, a backlog that will take nearly ten years to completely resolve. Nevertheless, the reality is that provincial governments simply cannot be expected to save every failing municipality in South Africa.

The Constitution draws a very sharp line between support and responsibility. Section 154 requires the province to support a municipality, but sections 151 and 153 make it undeniably clear that the executive authority, the legislative authority and the ultimate responsibility to prioritise the basic needs of the community is in the local council. The Western Cape government can buy the pumps, but we can't force a dysfunctional council to maintain them.

We can draft the infrastructure plans, but we can't stop political coalitions from playing musical chairs with the administrative leadership. Just this year, on 27 February 2026, the Western Cape government explicitly offered to assume

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full executive responsibility for Knysna's failing water and sanitation, under section 63 of the Water Services Act.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP (Mr K M Mmoiemang): On a point of order, House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Yes, Chief Whip. Won't you take your seat, please, hon Bryant. Yes, Chief Whip.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP (Mr K M Mmoiemang): Chair, I rise on a point of order in terms of Rule 69, read in conjunction with Rule 63. The member is making a reflection on the decision that this House has taken and the rules does not make a provision for a member to do that. If the member wants to do that, there has to be a formal motion to amend the decision that this House has taken on the Knysna decision. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, Chief Whip. Hon Bryant, our Rule 63 quite clearly states: No delegate may reflect on any decision of the Council taken in the same annual session, except for the purpose of moving that that decision be amended or rescinded.

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So, I will ask you to ensure that your speech either speaks to that, or that you take a more direct line on this particular item and not reflect negatively on the decisions of this House, unless you are intending to move for the decision to be amended or rescinded. If you can continue with your speech, please.

Mr D W BRYANT (Western Cape): Thank you very much, Chairperson. On 27 February 2026, the Western Cape government explicitly offered to assume full executive responsibility for Knysna's failing water and sanitation services under Section 63 of the Water Services Act. The ANC-led municipal council, so, not this House, deliberately voted against that help. They chose to retain the function, meaning they chose to hold the responsibility.

On a positive note, the DA welcomes the announcement by the national Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, hon Seithlholo, who highlighted that there are now 100 active criminal cases for sewage pollution against 53 water service authorities across the country. Let this be a warning to every negligent municipal manager and political obstructionist in the Western Cape and across South Africa. The DA will not shield you from the consequences of your failures.

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If you violate the constitutional rights of our people to clean water and if you allow sewage to pollute your environment, we will support criminal prosecution against you in your personal capacity. The Western Cape government has proven its commitment to supporting every municipality, regardless of who governs it. However, sustainable improvement requires a collective commitment to governance, institutional stability and absolute accountability. The residents of Knysna, the residents of the Western Cape and the residents of South Africa deserve nothing less. Thank you.

Mr K CEZA: Hon House Chairperson and hon members, the EFF rejects the duction of the Department of Water and Sanitation budget from R23 billion to R22 billion. This at a time when water and insecurity have become one of the greatest threats of public health, economic development and human dignity.

Hon House Chairperson, Ward 5 Crossroads in Standerton have not had running water for 15 years. Fifteen years, hon House Chairperson. This means that a child born the day those taps run dry is now sitting in a high school classroom having never once experienced a simple dignity of running water in their own home. This is not a mere statistic; it is not an administrative oversight nor a minor technical challenge it is

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a constitutional betrayal and a crime perpetrated against the poor by a government that has normalised failure and expects our people to accept indignity as a way of life.

The proof of this disaster is in the numbers. The regional bulk infrastructure grant. The Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant, RBIG, allocated R20,130 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, to fund 70 crucial projects across all nine provinces will be fatally weakened.

Hon House Chairperson, look at the Water Service Infrastructure Grant sitting at R16,75 billion over the MTEF to support 341 initiatives. Because of these cuts, it will now complete 175 projects this financial year; barely halve of its target. Meanwhile municipalities already grappling in nine revenue water losses like the City of Johannesburg, will lose the sustained investment they need to fix leaking pipes and aging infrastructure and yet the budget is cut.

IsiXhosa:

Mphathiswa, bendisanqwenela ukumamela kuba ndikuve uthetha ngomcimbi wamanzi eNdlambe. Ndiqonda ukuba ndinqwenela ukukumamela mhlawumbi uza kuthetha ngentsebenziswano nezinye ii-arhente. Iyagwegweleza le nto phaya eNgqushwa. Amanzi awade

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afike ezitephini. Kunzima phaya ukusukela ngonyaka wama2016.
Kudala siyithetha le nto.

INkosi uNjokweni, Aah Daluxolo! eMpekweni uyakhalaza.
Undibhalela imiyalezo kwiqonga iWhatsApp umhla nezolo.
Ndiyakucela Mphathiswa uze ukhe ungenelele.

English:

Hon House Chairperson, this is not fiscal prudence, this is organised abandonment of the poor. It is the conscious political decision of leaving the working-class community without water while billions of rand are wasted through corruption, mismanagement and fruitless expenditure elsewhere in the state.

Hon House Chairperson, let us bring this Chamber, face-to-face with lived experiences of Standerton residents for this is not an abstract debate. This is grim reality documented on the ground by the EFF in Lekoa Dipaliseng Local Municipality region. The Standerton Water Treatment Plant sources draw water from the Vaal River and supplies the township of Sakhile, Rooikopen and surrounding communities. What the EFF found there is the microcosm of everything wrong with the department's approach. Decades of inadequate maintenance and

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delayed upgrades have left critical equipment beyond the operational life spend. Algae growth in the Vaal River clocks retraction systems reducing the volume of water that can be processed, a problem that involves algae monitoring and water quality investment could address.

Frequent breakdowns of raw water pumping units compounded by electricity interruptions and cable faults have repeatedly shutdown operations at the plant.

The refurbishment programme while necessarily has itself caused temporary shutdowns and reduced production capacity, worsening shortages in the short term because there was no operational continuity plan. The people who bear the cost of all this are households spending days and sometimes weeks without running water. Residents queue for hours at water tanks like refugees in their own country. Let us be honest, a water tanker is not service delivery, hon Minister. It is a public confession that the state has failed. Children, the elderly and the people with disabilities disproportionately affected. Schools struggling to maintain hygiene, clinics unable to meet basic sanitation standards, businesses shutting their doors.

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Hon House Chairperson, the Standerton situation also illustrates the broader infrastructure collapse facing municipalities across all provinces. This crisis is not unique, it is not an isolated municipal problem but what happens when a department manages decline instead of building capacity. For Standerton is what happens when government abandons maintenance, planning and accountability, ultimately abandons the people.

Regardless of province or municipality, the bottom line is that the state has failed to deliver the fundamental right to water to the majority of our people. These ongoing crises in the result of the department's lack of both necessary technical skills and genuine political will.

Almost every water board is broken, operating instead as a tool of political leverage. This department's leaders care nothing for running functional institutions. Instead, their sole interest is creating a safe haven for politically connected insiders to plunder public funds.

Hon House Chairperson, so the annual performance plan, APP, must be judged against these harsh realities. We demand answers to four critical questions. How does this APP rescue

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financial distressed municipalities like Lekoa where infrastructure is crumbling but local revenue base is completely depleted? Where is the fully funded planned finished refurbishment treatment plants like Standerton's ensuring guaranteed operational continuity rather than just starting projects for show? Where is the accountability mechanism for the R20 billion RBIG fund, while communities like Crossroad have waited for 15 years without basic tap access? What is the department's specific target for reducing the 48% nonrevenue water loss?

Finally, while we welcome the establishment of the National Water Crises Committee and note the R156 billion infrastructure investment over three years, cutting the annual budget right now in the very year those commitments need to begin materialising defies logic. For a committee stripped of its budget is nothing more than a press release.

However, hon House Chairperson, the EFF does not enter this debate simply to criticise, we come with a concrete programme. Our manifesto is not a wish list; it is specific costed set of commitments with strict timelines and targeted delivery areas.

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On state capacity, we must crash the corrupt tender system in water infrastructure, by in sourcing workers who maintain public services. We must end the toxic cycle where contractors get paid while pumps remain broken.

On technology, we must introduce Internet of things solutions for waste management, smart monitoring of water systems and real time leak detection as such addressing the 48% nonrevenue water loss at source.

On waste water, we must fully capacitated national waster water plants and invest heavily in Research and Development, for desalination and water reuse to diversify our national water mix.

On sanitation, we must eradicate the bucket toilet completely. Every household will receive a flushing toilet linked to the sewerage mainline and high quality practical onsite sanitation technology.

Hon House Chairperson, a budget is a moral document. It tells you exactly what the government values. This budget cut from R23 billion to R22 billion, reduced in the middle of a national water emergency tells us exactly what this government

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values. It does not value the women in Sakhile Township who wakes up at four in the morning to queue for a tanker. It does not value a child in Ward 5 Crossroad who has never drunk water from their own tap. It does not value the small business owner in Standerton who cannot open because the municipality cannot deliver water. It does not value the constitutional right to dignity that section 27 was written to protect.

The EFF proposes a different aggressive path. A path that eliminates unequal access, eradicates bucket toilets, ends water shedding and builds the state capacity to deliver water as a right not a favour. We propose national, regional, and municipal water frameworks targeted at completion years. We reject the management of decline and insist on construction of capable developmental state. We demand the economy now, we want water now and we want sanitation now. Economic freedom in our lifetime is not possible without water and sanitation. We will not stop fighting until every South African can turn on a tap. Thank you very much, hon House Chairperson.

Mr R B MAKAMU (Limpopo): Hon House Chairperson, greetings to the hon Minister, Ms Majodina, Deputy Ministers Seithholo and Mahlobo, the chairperson of the select committee, colleagues and MECs, permanent and special delegates. I stand before you

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today to participate in this Budget Vote debate at the time when the weight of our constitutional mandate has never been more visible or more urgent as it is now. We are guided by a singular foundational truth enshrined in our supreme law, section 27 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It accords to every person the right of access to sufficient water.

Furthermore section 27 (2) places a clear obligation on the state to track reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of this right. To the people of Limpopo, these are not merely legal abstractions or ink parchments, they are daily lived realities.

Water is the dignity of our mothers. It is the health of our children. It is the lifeblood of our agricultural economy and the prerequisite for any meaningful industrial growth. It is on this premise that water provision remains an apex priority for the Limpopo provincial government. We recognise that, while progress has been made, the ghost of persistent service delivery challenges continues to haunt many of our settlements. We do not shy away from this reality.

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Instead, we confront it with a strategy born of rigor and necessity. To address this challenge, we have developed and are currently implementing the provincial water and sanitation strategy. It is not a one-size-fits-all document. It is a differentiated response designed specifically for the unique topographic and social economic landscape of the people. The strategy is built on four critical pillars. One is government reform, two, infrastructure co-ordination, three, improvement on water quality, and four, accessibility and sustainability.

Our approach prioritises measurable outcomes. We are focused on the reduction of unsafe and underserved settlements. We are no longer satisfied with spending the budget. We are now obsessed with the impact of the spent. To this end, we have integrated rigorous regulatory performance indicators - the blue drop, the green drop, and the not-broke requirements. In our provincial monitoring framework, we want excellence to be the standard, not an exception.

While the strategy provides a roadmap, the implementation requires a war footing. The full institutionalisation of our strategy remains a work in progress, but we have accelerated the pace. Under the decisive leadership of our premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, we have established water war rooms.

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This was a direct response to the Provincial Executive Council Resolution in December 2025, aimed at strengthening co-ordination, oversight and rapid response. The war rooms are intended to function as an operational nerve centre. They bring together every player in the water value chain, from an engineer to a municipal manager, from provincial department to other stakeholders.

The mission is simple - to unblock service delivery constraints and accelerate implementation. When a pump fails in a village, the war room must know. When a water service authority is struggling, the war room must provide support.

I am pleased to report to this House that we are seeing the fruits of this discipline. The war rooms that are also sometimes attended by the Minister. In Vhembe and in the Polokwane, municipalities are not only functional but have begun to demonstrate a marked improvement in co-ordination, and report progress. Just recently, the Capricorn District Municipality and Waterberg District Municipality launched their respective war rooms.

We are currently working hand-in-hand with the leadership of Sukuna and Mopani district and Lephalale Local Municipality to

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ensure that they do as the Mogalakwena Local Municipality to establish their structures. We will not rest until every corner of our province is covered with the oversight mechanism.

Our efforts in Limpopo do not exist in a vacuum. We were part of the national collective. The recent convening of the Water Summit on 30 April 2026 by President Cyril Ramaphosa in Boksburg was a watershed moment. By bringing together premiers, mayors from across the country, the President signalled a significant national intervention.

This message was clear. We must confront the country's water challenges with a renewed sense of urgency and accountability. Limpopo stands ready to play its part in this national mission to ensure reliable and safe water supply for all citizens.

A strategy without a budget is hallucination. The municipal infrastructure grant, MIG, remains a most critical funding instrument for the provision of upgrading of basic services.

In the 2025-26 financial year, the province's MIG allocations stood almost at R3,4 billion, which was increased by 0,5% from

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the previous year. However, the story is not in the size of the allocation but in the efficiency of the expenditure.

At the end of May, I proudly reported that we spent almost R2,9 billion, which translates to almost 87%. To put this in perspective, it is a significant improvement of about 3,4%. Perhaps most importantly, in the era where underspending often leads to a stoppage in allocation of funds away from those that need them most, I am proud to announce that no municipality in Limpopo lost any money during the reallocation process. This is due to the improved spending patterns and the rigorous oversight provided by our provincial structures.

The road ahead is still long. We are under no illusion that the challenges of water scarcity and infrastructure aging will vanish overnight. However, the progress that we have made, the institutionalisation of our strategy, the functionality of our water war rooms, and the disciplined expenditure of our grants tell a story.

As Limpopo, we remain unshakeable in the commitment of ensuring that our people receive safe, clean and drinkable water. We want water that is available. We want water that is reliable. We want water that is of the highest quality. We are

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convinced that this budget and the plans that have been laid out by the Minister are moving us in the right direction.

We are building a Limpopo where no child will walk miles for a bucket of water, where no community is left behind. It is for these reasons and with a deep sense of responsibility to the people we serve that we decisively give our full support for this budget to be implemented in the coming financial year. I thank you.

Ms T BREEDT: Hon House Chairperson, the Constitution recognises access to water as a basic human right. Yet, for millions of South Africans, access to reliable water has become the exception rather than the rule. We have reached a point where communities celebrate when there is water in their taps. Not because the water quality is exceptional, but because they have become accustomed to failure.

Afrikaans:

In die Vrystaat sien ek in die besonder hoe die nasionale waterkrisis in gemeenskappe afspeel. En ongelukkig is al die stories dieselfde - rioolwerke wat nie werk nie, pompstasies wat verval, pype wat lek, kontrakteurs wat betaal word, maar projekte wat nooit voltooi word nie.

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Die departement se eie prestasies en teikens fokus op assesserings, planne, monitering en regulatoriese nakoming. Die APP toon byvoorbeeld dat meer as 1 000 waterstelsels en afvalwerke oor die mediumtermyn beoordeel gaan word vir blou- en groendruppelvereistes. Nêrens word die belangrikste vraag egter gevra nie: Het ek water in my kraan?

English:

Because access to infrastructure is meaningless if the infrastructure does not work.

Afrikaans:

Ek dink aan Kroonstad, en Spesifiek in Crossstraat in Kroonstad waar die rioolinfrastruktuur in duie gestort het. Daar is nie 'n gekwalifiseerde ingenieur aangestel nie, en nadat die werk voltooi is, spoel die rou riool nou uit die stormwaterinfrastruktuur uit en die gemeenskap sit steeds met die gevolge.

Dis die belastingbetaler wat weereens met die probleem sit en die rekening moet betaal.

In Petrusburg is die rioolwerke in so 'n toestand dat wanneer jy een straat se blokkasie opgelos het, gaan dit na die

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volgende straat. Teen die tyd dat jy by die einde van die dorp kom, moet jy weer voor begin.

Dit is nie volhoubare dienslewering nie en dit is beslis nie waardige dienslewering nie. Ek dink ook nie dit is wat die Grondwet bedoel het toe hy gesê het dat water en sanitasie 'n basiese menslike reg is nie.

Wat dit nog alles erger maak is die finansiële implikasie van alles.

English:

Municipalities owe water boards more than R25 billion.

Afrikaans:

In 'n parlementêre vraag, Minister, het u self te kenne gegee dat meer as R10,2 miljard aan Vaal Sentraal alleen verskuldig is. En die grootste sondebok is weereens die Vrystaat.

Machabeng is R9 miljard aan Vaal Sentraal verskuldig en dit is 'n bose kringloop. Wanbetaling lei natuurlik tot nie-nakoming van instandhouding, wat lei tot stelsels wat faal. En wie ly? Die gemeenskap.

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Ek wil egter erkenning gee aan die Minister waar erkenning toekom. En dit is in Setsoto. Ná jare wat ons met Marquarddamwal gesukkel het, het u geluister en lyk dit nou of daar lig aan die einde van 'n donker tonnel is. Dit wys dat wanneer daar 'n wil is, is daar 'n weg.

Maar dieselfde kan ongelukkig nie gesê word van dele van Nketoana en Mafube of enige van die ander munisipaliteite in die Vrystaat nie. Daar is nie water in die krane nie en rou riool loop in die strate.

Wat nog meer daartoe bydra is waterverliese. Bykans 50% van alle munisipaliteite se water word verloor deur lekkasies, verouderde infrastruktuur en swak instandhouding. Ons kan dit nie toelaat nie.

English:

The FF Plus believes maintenance must become as important as new infrastructure. More often than not, it is cheaper fixing the problem than refurbishing or building a new pipeline.

Afrikaans:

So, voor die eerste registrasienaweek vir 4 November se verkiesing moet ons tog onthou dat dit ons tyd is.

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English:

It is our time.

Afrikaans:

Dit is gemeenskappe se tyd om toegang tot drinkbare water te hê. Dit is tyd dat munisipaliteite hul waterrade betaal om hulle gemeenskappe te dien. Dit is tyd dat infrastruktuur begin werk. Die eenvoudige vraag is: Het ek water in my krane? Ek dank u.

Mr S K MASHILO (Mpumalanga): House Chairperson, to hon members, the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Deputy Ministers, my colleagues, Members of the Executive Council, MECs, indeed the leadership of SA Local Government Association, Salga. Allow me to participate in this important debate, where we are dealing with an important item, water, and indeed water is life.

In the past week, we woke up to the devastating news of the passing of the late His Majesty King Makhosonke II, the King of AmaNdebele Nation. For four decades, the King has led the nation so well he has in his life, championed education as well as land and water as an important instrument of life. We

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extend the deep condolences to the Royal House and His Majesty, kids and all the people of AmaNdebele in this regard.

In the midst of the devastation, may we also acknowledge this youth month, whose class of 1976 permanently impacted the politics of our country. As we all know, today's youth are confronted by a number of issues which we are expected to address.

Allow me, to join the colleague as a province to support the budget presented by our Minister. We do share the same views, that the reduction of our budget at these point in times remains a big challenge. However, as a province, we all live within the budget that have been allocated.

Today, I'm deeply honoured to rise on behalf of the province of Mpumalanga, to report on the concrete progress, planned interventions, and the fiscal framework that will deliver sustainable water and sanitation services for all in the province.

Allow me, to welcome this budget speech as presented by our hon Minister. We appreciate the budget allocation for our

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province. Indeed, it will go a long way in supporting our services and the delivery that we have planned as a province.

The completion of infrastructure delivery programme that will be seamless as the merger of our two departments precisely, that the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, CoGTA, then and the Department of Human Settlement, now known as the Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, COGHSTA.

As a province, we have taken these conscious decisions, believing very well that these two departments, if we put their budgets together, precisely will be able to take the services of our people forward.

Through our endeavours to complete projects, we are proud to report that the Loskop Bulk Water Scheme is nearing completion at most, 90% construction status. That shall give water to areas like Tembisile, where it has got almost 34 wards in that regard.

A total budget of R93,8 million for the bulk infrastructure provision across all three districts has been planned for the 2026-27 financial year. With the quest of allocating bulk

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services for the planned 600 sites, an amount of R50 million has been allocated accordingly in the province.

The department is in the process of completing five bulk sewer and water projects in the following areas, namely, Komatipoort Access road, Mashishing Bulk Sewer, Empumelelweni Bulk Water in the eMalahleni, Rondebosch Bulk Water Sewer, in the Steve Tshwete, Mechanical and Electrical upgrades of Phola Iraq Pump Station and Treatment Plant.

Indeed, Lekwa, which is Standerton water treatment plant works, is under upgrade and Ward 5, as it was indicated earlier by hon member, that item is receiving attention, together with the support from the Seriti Green Mining.

The priority projects receiving attention are KaMhlushwa Bulk, Brendan Village and Hospital View at a combined budget of R41 million in so far.

Since the 1996 census, the ANC-led government has achieved a remarkable increase in the number of households with sustainable and reliable access to water. The proportion of households with access to water rose from 75% to an impressive 89% by 2025.

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These statistics vividly illustrate significant progress in improving water infrastructure and expanding public health initiatives across communities. Additionally, there was a notable 1,8% increase in water access during the 2025-26 financial year compared to the 2024 General Household Survey as it was indicated by Surveyor General.

Over the years, our government has restored the dignity of our people through access to waterborne sanitation projects, thus, contributing towards a safe public health. From 1996, about 228 000 households benefited significantly from such important projects.

Furthermore, by 2024, a tremendous upward trend was achieved, with a 67% increase in access to flushing toilets.

As an ANC-led government, we believe in making changes to the quality of life for our people, through delivering improved public health infrastructure. The numerous projects that we have implemented attest to that.

During the coronavirus, COVID, pandemic, there was a need for increased water provision. The Provincial executive council subsequently availed funds for the department to implement

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projects, including the installation of 247 boreholes at schools and 129 boreholes within communities that were experiencing water challenges.

Moreover, JoJo tankers and 11 large steel storage tanks were distributed through-out the province. Thereafter, an additional 39 schools were added.

A total budget of R182,707 185 was allocated for implementation. However, R158, 662 000 was paid due to unfavourable conditions of some areas, such as lack of water, while some areas had collapsible materials.

As a department, we have recently implemented a solar borehole electrification project, 10 boreholes at Dr J S Moroka, and nine in Nkomazi Municipality.

To maintain a sustainable upkeep of existing water infrastructure services, municipalities are expected to allocate between 8% and 12% of the equitable share or their own revenue specifically for the operations and maintenance of these vital systems.

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Over a period of time, we've realised that our municipalities have under-budgeted the maintenance, thus the impact we are feeling at some point.

Water service authorities are strongly encouraged to ring-fence this portion of the budget, ensuring that it is exclusively dedicated to maintaining and enhancing infrastructure.

Additionally, municipalities can access 10% of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, the MIG and the Water Services Infrastructure Grant, WSIG, for the same purpose, providing further financial support for the ongoing sustainability and functionality of water service facilities.

In terms of the green and the blue drop, the drop assessment programme is a monitoring tool used by the Department of Water and Sanitation to evaluate the quality of water and the extent of leaks within the systems managed by all Water Service Authorities and Providers across the country.

During the inaugural Blue Drop assessment in 2011, only four out of 17 municipalities in the province achieved scores above 50%, while the remainder were classified as being in a

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critical state. Notably, only one municipality, Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, attained an impressive score of 96% and received a certificate.

However, over the years, there has been significant improvement among the Water Service Authorities, with only four remaining in a critical state in the 2023 assessment. Two municipalities, Victor Khanye and Govan Mbeki achieved scores above 90%, and four systems were awarded certificates. Importantly, it is worth reporting that Mpumalanga has no systems classified as a critical risk, suggesting that there's progress above all.

Regarding the first Green Drop Assessment in 2009, three out of the 17 municipalities scored above 50%, with the rest also in a critical condition. Progress has been made/observed over time, as only six municipalities were in a critical state during the 2021 assessment.

In the 2024 assessment, the province saw a great improvement across municipalities, leaving only two municipalities in the critical zone. Congratulations go to Chief Albert Luthuli, Msukaligwa, and Thaba Chweu for being awarded most improved

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Water Services Authorities, and indeed to Steve Tshwete Local Municipality for being best in the country.

Thank you very much. We support the budget. [Time expired.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you very much hon Mashilo. Hon delegates, I'm sure you'll join me in welcoming the near completion of our gallery. I think it's looking excellent, and I'd like to thank everyone involved with that. We look forward to the official opening.

And let's, as usual, just welcome the visitors that we have in the gallery. And a particular warm welcome to Mrs Magriet Pienaar, who is the wife of our very own delegate, Mr "Nico" Pienaar. You're very welcome, ma'am. Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION (Mr M D Mahlobo): House Chairperson, hon Ryder, to our Minister, Comrade Pemmy Majodina, Thole, to the Deputy Minister, my force, Ntate Morolong Seithholo, to the Chair of our committee, Comrade ... [Inaudible.] ... and to our Chief Whip, hon Comrade Kenny, and all delegates that are here, the Chair of our entities, my beautiful wife Mpumi and my daughter, Joanne, and fellow delegates, yesterday, His Excellency, our President, did the

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commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the June 16th, now known as the National Youth Day. That day reminds us of the courage, sacrifice and determination of young people of 1976, who stood up against injustice and demanded a better future.

Their struggle was about dignity, equality, opportunity and the right of all South Africans to realise their full potential. Youth are not merely the future leaders. They are the active drivers of progress, innovation and social change. Their boundless energies and fresh perspective are the foundation upon which strong resilient societies are built. I was having a discussion with my Minister to say, where do we start when you look at people being all over in certain instances? Our presentation of the budget today must be understood in context. If you look at water, the first component is water security.

Where will water come from? The ANC government has reconfirmed that this country, in terms of water balance, you look at the billions of cubic metres, in terms of the system that is being designed, we're on the right track. Their localised deficit - the Garden Route, your Knysna, your George, your Eastern Cape - they had a lot of droughts for quite some time, including Middle Letaba. However, equally, this government has been able

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to draw a lot of water because of the interconnectedness with other countries: Lesotho, Eswatini, you name all of them, the good work on how we will ensure that this country doesn't run out of water.

Therefore, reconfirmation of the policy around surface water, exploring groundwater, desalination, which is seawater, but also increasing the yield in the system, whether through recycling, reuse, water reclamation, that's what you do to ensure that the country does not run out of water. In our own case, the issues of population growth, they've placed a lot of demand. When the Deputy Minister, DM, Seithloho was presenting here, he was talking about whether this water is fit for use, not only for human beings, but for the ecological reserve, for the industries and the economy we need, but also our international obligation.

Look at Minister Majodina's speech. She has concentrated on what I call it water supply and sanitation reliability.

Whether can we guarantee, whether you will have water all the time, industries will have water, and all those that are going to use water. Read the speech well. When it comes to Minister Majodina, it's us who gave you the data that in this country the municipalities over 32 years have done well. However, when

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they've done well, there are wearing signs. That's why there's a crisis. What is our intervention?

This government led by the ANC and by President, this budget has over 800 projects across all national departments, that has an element of water, and that is about R55 billion. What Minister has given you, she has given you over 400 projects, just over one financial year, to assist these municipalities to respond on issues, on unsafe communities, on communities that are suffering on reliability and the issues of sufficiency. Please read it that way.

Let me deal about where water will come from and what this Ministry is doing. I have reconfirmed the correctness of the water mix. However, secondly, I have reconfirmed that the use of technology, you can go to Knysna, there is a desalination plant there - go to Richards Bay, go to other municipalities in the Eastern Cape. Exploring seawater is an option because electricity is available. We know how to dispose the prime.

However, the most important issue, and Minister says to you, unsafe communities, no infrastructure, explore groundwater. Groundwater, we do have the data as a country, we are using less than 17%, we can't be able to use more. Reuse is one of

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the biggest issues to get more water, whether mine reclamation and others. I thought let's just put this one into bed. Then our ability to respond to the impact of disasters, how do we build better? How do we ensure that our aqueducts and all this infrastructure that we built there are not being washed away? Our engineers, in terms of our client resilience strategies, are doing better.

We went to Lesotho, Minister, with the President. That dam they are building a retarding system. When it floods, you can't be able to hold the water for a little bit much longer, so that you can be able to release it. It's the most important aspect. We must also be able to say, don't leave communities behind. Indigenous knowledge is very important. The Eastern Seaboard is receiving more than 800 millimetres per annum of rainfall, when certain areas are receiving less than 450. Climate change is an important aspect, and the country must be able to respond to it. One of the issues that people are speaking here is like someone comes from somewhere else.

Minister, we've reconfirmed that our drop reports, as an assessment tool, we've reinstated it. Congratulations to Mpumalanga, they've done well and the worst we took them to court. Ermelo, they were in court, R300 million and others and

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they are doing so well. Chief Albert Luthuli, they are doing so well. There is someone who speaks, the less we do politics in the Western Cape, those people in Khayelitsha and Gugulethu are people too. Inhumane conditions, don't politicise this matter, because we are living in a class house.

The report by the Auditor-General, AG, the report by the National Treasury and the report by court, these are our own reports. Because of those reports, that's why His Excellency the President has said to the National Crisis Committee, let's put a turnaround plan. Water security, water supply, and reliability and the quality of water to respond and deal with issues of corruption. What we want to report to you now is that our agency which is called the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency is now running. We're able to conclude it. We will get the money from the markets, because most of our bulk infrastructure projects are off budget in terms of funding.

The board is there, and very capable men and women. You can be proud of that. As I speak right now, that agency will inherit more than 80 projects in more than 30 municipalities, and these projects are over above R130 billion. The Catchment Management Agencies, CMAs, are in place. There are six of

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them. The Water User Association are in place. Therefore, the democratisation and the management of water is not a problem. Unlocking water for economic use and issues of reallocation and redress through water use licencing, more than 80% are done within 90 days.

We don't keep water licences. However, more importantly, there is no water use licence - that there is a backlog. However, we're also saying our dams must be used for transformation. 99 ... [Inaudible] ... have been thrown out. Now, we do have access for black communities, women and youth around those dams to have access to our dams. More importantly, we've issued the report by Judge Ngoepe retired around communities where repairing rights are kept with the issues of water use rights. We will start with issues of water reforms around compulsory licencing so that water can be used by all South Africans.

I've spoken about the green drops. We'll continue to do so. On reforms, we are the one that says that water must be managed as a local business entity in terms of the utility model, the trading services, more than R54 billion that are being done for the metros, and all municipalities. It is the right thing to do that when you sweat the asset, invest back on an asset

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so that your returns can be achieved. I've also spoken about the question of Independent Economic Regulator. The water must be paid for. However, it must be paid the fair value, it must be affordable, it must not leave communities behind, but it must be cost reflective. That's why our tariff and pricing strategy has started to be in effect as we speak right now.

As I've indicated, there're many things that we're doing around infrastructure financing. In financing infrastructure, I've spoken that 800 projects, more than R55 billion in our own case. Read the report.

IsiZulu:

Laphaya ekhaya kuMasipala waseMsukaligwa ...

English:

... just check on page 29. You will see the good work that we are doing in our own province. On private sector, involving private sector is not a swear word. It's not ideological, and it's not dialectic. Most of our dams, we funded them off budget using the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority, TCTA. As I speak right now, there are 30 projects that we're assisting, 18 municipalities over R40 billion using our partnership

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office, because we need the money to deliver the water to our citizens.

In terms of the infrastructure fund, now they have an opportunity of four windows, and there's a lot of money we've got, whether for Polokwane, whether for eThekweni, you can name them. More than R25 billion is available. There is something called blue bonds and green bonds for issues of ecological infrastructure. When you look at that, Cape Town is benefiting from the Rand Merchant Bank that we are doing so. At least we can move from issues of delivery of infrastructure to issues of sustainability. We can count the partnership with the mines. Olifants Management Model in Sekhukhune will bring the water to Polokwane and to Mogalakwena. The mining sector will have water to run.

In the Northern Cape, the Vaal Gamagara Water Scheme, there are many of them because we understand the art of bringing money through various means. There are many dams that we've done. Look at Lesotho Highlands Water Project is coming on board, 2028-29. Clanwilliam Dam is well above 67%. Tzaneen Dam by December next year. There's a list of them that we can demonstrate that this government is hard at work in changing

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the condition in which our people are dealing with the challenges.

Therefore, in terms of the budget the Minister has given to you, we wanted to support the budget over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF. It's more than R130 billion, divided in the first year, R41 billion, R45 billion in the second year, and R48 billion. That also includes the trading account. As we know, we run the trading entity. The issues of nonpayment and the user pay principles are very important that we must enforce. The challenges that are confronting both South Africa and the global water sector are very complex. Therefore, it requires parliamentarians to understand it, appreciate it and remember it is interconnected and it is very increasingly that is its agent. Climate change, water scarcity, aging infrastructure, rapid urbanisation, pollution, population growth and finance constraint require co-operation, innovation and decisive action at every level.

South Africa cannot respond to these challenges through fragmented efforts or isolation. We must respond with unity of purpose, a shared vision and unwavering commitment to sustainable development and human dignity. We must recommit ourselves in investing in operation and maintenance. We must

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recommit ourselves to good governance and clean governance and professionalisation of the sector so that we are fit for purpose, so that we can respond around the challenges that our nation fits. We must ensure that the poor and the vulnerable communities remain at the centre of our agenda. We must approach development that leaves the most vulnerable people that they must never be left behind. We must ensure that their dignity and inclusion are taken care of.

Through this budget today, led by Minister Comrade Pemmy Majodina, Thole, we want to recommit ourselves to restoring and strengthening the trust between the state and the people we serve. Trust is built when water flows from the tap, when ways to water systems function properly, when infrastructure is maintained, and when public resources are managed responsibly, and when institutions can respond. Madiba would have called upon all of us that we have a duty to overcome poverty, inequality and underdevelopment. This is not an issue that we are trying to be of an issue of charity. It is our response.

Therefore, I want to ask this House that let's be united. I can hear a lot. It's a season for politics. It's a season for the election. However, think about these people, they look up

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to you for solution. Some of the people are here, they are just wanting to claim easy victories. This challenge of water will be resolved. We're up to the task under the leadership of the President. However, more importantly, we work with the entire society, business, labour and civil society to respond. On behalf of our Minister and our President, please support this budget. May God bless all of you and bless our country and her sons and daughters. Thank you.

Cllr K PHUKUNTSI (Salga): House Chair, greetings to the Minister and Deputy Minister, greetings to the members of the National Council of Provinces, the members of executive council, MECs, in the House and on the platform, we bring greetings from the SA Local Government Association.

The SA Local Government Association, Salga, welcomes the opportunity to respond to the 2026-27 Budget Vote of the Department of Water and Sanitation. Hon Chairperson, water is life and sanitation is dignity. These are constitutional imperatives that underpin human dignity, public health, economic development, and social justice.

While we acknowledge the Minister's recognition of the challenges facing the sector, the key question is whether this

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Budget Vote adequately equips municipalities with the resources, support, and capacity required to fulfil their constitutional mandate.

Municipal challenges cannot be viewed in isolation. They reflect deeper weaknesses across the entire water services value chain. Although the Minister has indicated that water supply remains broadly balanced, recent developments—particularly in Gauteng, suggest a system under growing strain.

Earlier this year, Rand Water confirmed that demand in Johannesburg and Tshwane exceeded allocated volumes, requiring supply reductions. The Auditor-General's water report further highlighted excessive water consumption, high levels of non-revenue water, and delays in strategic projects such as Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

These realities reinforce the need for improved system efficiency, climate resilience, and long-term water security planning. Many municipal challenges originate beyond municipal boundaries. Major bulk infrastructure projects continue to experience delays of between five and eleven years, while approximately 71% of Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant

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projects are behind schedule, with costs escalating by an estimated R9,4 billion.

At the same time, national water infrastructure remains under-maintained, while deteriorating catchment management continues to reduce dam capacity and compromise water quality. These are not municipal failures alone; they are systemic challenges that require systemic solutions.

The sector has also suffered from regulatory and institutional delays. The suspension of the Blue Drop, Green Drop and No Drop Programmes between 2014 and 2022 created a significant oversight gap, while delays in catchment management reforms have hindered integrated water governance.

Municipal performance cannot therefore be assessed independently of these broader system failures. Yet municipalities remain the visible face of service delivery and bear the consequences when systems fail.

Municipalities also face a fundamental contradiction. They must provide water as a basic human right while maintaining financially sustainable services through cost-reflective tariffs. Rising bulk water costs, increasing electricity

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tariffs, growing debt obligations, and declining affordability continue to widen this gap. Without a more differentiated and context-sensitive funding model, inequalities will deepen, particularly in rural and distressed municipalities.

The SA Local Government Association therefore believes that a differentiated approach to municipal support is essential. Municipalities differ significantly in capacity, revenue, and infrastructure condition. A one-size-fits-all approach will not succeed.

While section 78 of the Municipal Systems Act provides an important framework, implementation requires funding, technical support, and regulatory flexibility. Infrastructure rehabilitation remains one of the sector's most urgent priorities.

Existing assets continue to deteriorate due to years of under-maintenance, and there is insufficient clarity on how municipalities will finance asset replacement under the new norms and standards that came into effect on 1 April 2026.

The Budget Vote is also largely silent on critical issues such as water reconciliation strategies, climate resilience of bulk

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infrastructure, and planning informed by catchment-level data. These omissions pose risks to the long-term sustainability of the sector.

The situation in provinces such as the Northern Cape further demonstrates the need for differentiated and evidence-based budgeting. High-risk municipalities require targeted support and corrective interventions. Section 154 of the Constitution is clear. Support must come before enforcement.

The SA Local Government Association welcomes initiatives such as the National Water Action Plan and Watercom. However, their success will depend on meaningful intergovernmental collaboration. Without genuine partnership across all spheres of government, reforms risk becoming compliance exercises rather than practical solutions.

We are encouraged by the collaboration between Salga, the Development Bank South Africa, DBSA, and the Water Partnership Office, which is helping unlock infrastructure investment opportunities. However, many municipalities still lack the capacity to develop bankable projects. Project preparation support and alternative financing mechanisms remain critical if we are to close the infrastructure funding gap.

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Every delayed project represents lost economic opportunities, reduced public confidence, and prolonged hardship for communities. Conversely, successful infrastructure delivery stimulates economic growth, creates jobs, strengthens municipal finances, and restores dignity through reliable access to water and sanitation.

At the heart of these challenges lies a governance issue. Water service delivery requires coordinated planning, aligned budgets, shared accountability, and sustained collaboration across all spheres of government. Municipalities are not failing because of a lack of commitment; they are operating within a fragmented and constrained system.

What is required is reform across the entire water value chain, not a narrow focus on municipal performance alone. Salga therefore calls for the following:

The urgent acceleration of delayed bulk water infrastructure projects, with accountability across all implementing agents; a decisive shift towards maintenance, rehabilitation, and lifecycle asset investment; a differentiated tariff and funding framework that recognises municipal realities and protects vulnerable provinces; evidence-based regulation

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supported by credible data, efficient licensing, and practical compliance support; the establishment of a permanent intergovernmental forum to coordinate planning, budgets, and service delivery priorities; and a binding intergovernmental compact to strengthen accountability and restore public confidence in the sector.

Ultimately, this Budget Vote will be judged not by its intentions, but by its impact. Municipalities cannot continue to carry the burden of public dissatisfaction while upstream delays, inadequate maintenance, fragmented governance, and weak accountability remain unresolved.

What the sector requires now is not more plans, but funded, coordinated, measurable, and implementable reform. Water is life, and when the delivery of water is delayed, dignity itself is delayed.

I thank you.

Mr O J MOKAE: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister, the hon Deputy Ministers, hon members and fellow South Africans, good day. I centre my debate this afternoon on the independence of

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South Africa's water boards, particularly on their appointments.

This is important because many of the challenges in the water sector are heavily influenced by maladministration and political interference in the board appointments. You see, corruption thrives on this interference and core to it is the process in which water boards are appointed, thus requiring a review in legislation regarding the appointment of water boards in South Africa, and particularly the Water Services Act.

For far too long, water boards have been plagued by corruption, while residents pay the price with their constitutional rights being infringed. This is compounded by a failure to appoint competent people to do the jobs required and officials being pressurised by those above.

Corruption in the water sector has been systemic and deeply entrenched over the years. Research indicates that corruption in the water sector will not end if flagrant abuses and wrongdoings go unpunished. A culture must be established in which misconduct has consequences. When you do wrong, your actions must be met with harsh punishment. We know too well

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that when corruption thrives, it is the residents and the ordinary men on the streets who suffer the most.

The Democratic Alliance promotes and advocates for independent, professional and skilled water boards. Above all, these boards must have ethical officials and processes must be in place to remove those who break the rules for corrupt practices. The selection panel should also comprise of individuals with the relevant education and experience in their backgrounds.

Challenges in the water sector, I know, hon Deputy Minister, are very complex and many gaps have been identified to address the water crisis. However, we believe that the appointments should be far removed from the hands of politicians. Much of the corruption is driven by wider political challenges. What hon Scheurkogel and hon Badenhorst have outlined is due to the ANC Ministers leading water boards into governance and financial management problems. At the centre of this is the political interference in the water boards and a technical skills deficit to remedy the problems. It is a fact, hon members, whether we like it or not. That is why we need Ministers not to have unilateral power to appoint board members.

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Ending corruption, indeed, will not solve all the country's water problems, as we need R400 billion to address the maintenance backlog. However, washing corruption out of the water sector will create an environment in which larger water problems can be tackled. It is against this backdrop that we welcome any efforts to combat corruption. The establishment of the Water Sector Anti-Corruption Forum as an arm to fight this scourge in the water sector is important and must be strengthened to deal head-on with malfeasance and corrupt practices.

We note, hon Minister Majodina, that this forum will drive investigation and enforcement measures to ensure our country's water resources are shielded from corruption and mismanagement by working with the Special Investigating Unit. Importantly, this forum speaks to the whole-of-society approach, which seeks to enhance and mobilise academia, civil society and the private sector to prevent and fight corruption. These efforts, hon members, are a step in the right direction, as our country can no longer tolerate any form of corruption. Simply put, it is expensive and morally wrong.

We all agree that water is life and sanitation is dignity. Unfortunately, those who do not support this budget, the

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uMkhonto weSizwe Party and the EFF, do not support life and dignity. Hon Ceza, the nerve of coming to this podium and saying, presenting concrete plans is hypocrisy of the highest level!

Hon Deputy Chair, the Democratic Alliance will support this budget and will continue our efforts in playing our oversight role over the resources of this department and the state, and holding the Minister and her colleagues to the highest standards of service and service delivery for the people of South Africa. With that, hon Deputy Chair, the Democratic Alliance supports this budget. Thank you.

Setswana:

Ke a leboga.

Afrikaans:

Baie dankie.

Ms K R MOLOKOMME: Deputy Chair, let me take this opportunity and greet the hon Minister, Deputy Ministers, the chairperson of the committee, hon members, SA Local Government Association, Salga, special delegates and our loved South Africans who are listening to us today, blessed evening to you

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all. I am honoured and also delighted to take part in this debate today, the Budget Vote of the Department of Water and Sanitation. Today, this policy debate reminds me of the revolutionary words of Amilcar Cabral, a poet, a revolutionary, intellectual, and also a politician who said, I quote.

Always bear in mind that people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children.

He further said.

Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, and failures. Claim no easy victories.

I just want to address some of the issues that members have raised now, and I am happy that hon Scheurkogel, has acknowledged that the Annual Performance Plan, APP, and the budget that was presented here in the House is a good budget, and really, it shows that the department is ready to address the issues that are faced by our communities. Also, when the

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Minister was here, she provided you with the booklet that indicates what is happening in all the provinces.

They have projects, and I believe that members will have ample time to look into that booklet and see that the ANC is working. Now, I am standing here as a typical rural girl who grew up in the dusty street of Morwe village. When you talk about the issue of water, I really know what is happening. In around 1999, when I was growing up in my village, we only had one pump where they were using a windmill. The whole village was relying on that only one borehole, Minister.

Around 1995-96, we had about five taps, if you still remember, Mvula Trust. So, that is what was happening. There were about 50 households that were depending on that. Today, as I am standing here, every household has a tap inside, there is running water. So, I am saying this because some of the hon members do not even have the experience of where we come from as blacks. I am also happy that you have indicated that only 19% does not have access to water. Remember the 30 years of democracy when we were trying to deal with the injustices that was caused by apartheid government. So, it is only 19%.

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The APP also in budget is indicating that per year, the project that the department is going to - this is an ongoing process until 2030 - and I believe that during that time in 2030, you will be left with less than 2 or 3% of people who are not having access to water. So, we are really doing well as the ANC-leading government. I am happy that we are really addressing the issues that are faced by our people on the ground. Hon Nzimande, you know, this thing of always demanding from government... the other thing is that when you are sitting in the committees, for any question that you are asking, you are provided with answers, including the EFF.

In our last meeting that we held, members acknowledged, the Deputy Minister was also present in that meeting to say, the APP that you have presented, is the best APP. If I was a teacher, I was going to say you are number one department that has presented the APP that really talks to... and that has answered all the questions that members has raised. So, we need to support this budget, so that when we come here and demand, we know that we are demanding things that will be of use to our people, and therefore, there will be money that will be allocated to the needs of our people.

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We cannot come here and claim that we really represent people on the ground. How do you represent people, but you deny them access to services? Obviously, when you do not approve this budget, you are saying you do not qualify to have water and sanitation. So, we need to tell no lies and claim no easy victories. I am not sure whether I am going to pronounce your name correctly, my hon member here. You know, I was sitting there asking myself if I am listening to the councillor, because obviously, your speech was talking about Knysna, and I had hoped that you will represent the people of the Western Cape. So, I was asking myself if this is a council meeting or what?

So, when we come here, we need to talk about the national issues, and not blame the municipalities, while we know very well that the provincial government is not even assisting that municipality. We went there as the committee and met the stakeholders. So, the invocation of 139 that you are talking about, we have engaged the stakeholders, and we know what is happening. You have led that municipality for so many years, the crisis that is happening there is because of the DA government. So, you cannot come here and want to claim an easy victory. You need to go back and do your homework very well.

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I want to address hon Mokaë, concerning the political interference about which you are talking, I do not know because you are not even a member of the committee. You were briefed wrongly; hence you have incorrect information. I do not know whether you are sitting in the appointments of board members or what, because the work that we are seeing it is done by this department, and it really shows. You were not listening attentively when the Minister and the Deputy Minister were presenting here.

There is an improvement in this department, and also, when the President was giving his state of the nation address, Sona, he has always touched on some of the issues. So, we must not mislead this House. We need to state facts, so we cannot come here and start talking about the political interference, while we do not even have proof of what we are saying. So, as the ANC, we are going to lead because we know we are on the ground with our communities, and we know what is it that they are going through.

That is why the APP and the department are always helping the municipalities, even though we know that some of the issues are the responsibilities of the municipalities. So, the support that the department is giving is acknowledgeable. I

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can give an example of eMfuleni, where we went to check section 63 that is happening there. That project, Minister, is really making an impact, and also the empowerment and employment of young people. We also appreciate the learnership that they are getting.

It is not only in eMfuleni, but you have also mentioned most of the projects that you are doing and we are appreciating that. Therefore, we are saying to the young people that they should take the opportunity that is given to them, like these learnerships, and make sure that they use them to their advantage. As you were celebrating yesterday, I know that you are saying, nothing about us without us. So, we hope that you will grab the opportunities that are brought by the government with full hands.

Also, as the committee, we want to condemn the illegal connections. We also went to Limpopo, where we have seen the illegal connections in Giyani. This caused the disruption of the flow of water to some households. So, we are saying that we need to condemn these tendencies, and also curb the destruction of the infrastructure for the benefit of the water tankers. We know that there are some people who are destroying

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infrastructures in municipalities so that they can get businesses.

So, we are saying, let us work together; let us hold hands as the three spheres of government, and also, we must make use of the District Development Model, DDM, so that we do not operate in silos. We know that some of these projects are implemented by the national government and also working with the province and local municipalities. We are saying, let us use the DDM as one example, and to make sure that it is here; it is living, and the aim is to take services to the people working together and not working in silos.

So, by so saying, I want to say, let us hold hands and work together as Members of Parliament and we must not come here and grandstand. Our task is to make sure that we hold the executive, provincial government, and the municipalities accountable of the promises that they are supposed to fulfil, so that our people get services as enshrined in our Constitution. I thank you very much, hon Deputy Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: Hon House Chair, let me thank all participants who contributed positively on this budget. I am happy about you, hon Ceza today. You are able to

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contextualize where the problem is, and we are on the same page in terms of understanding where the problem lies. You see, ...

IsiZulu:

... Mphephethwa kufuneka ngikhulume nawe ngesiZulu. Inkinga yakho ukungakwazi ukuhlukanisa phakathi komsebenzi wethu singuMnyango wezaManzi nomsebenzi womasipala. Wena awunandaba nomasipala nje wena ufuna ukuthi sihambe siyotshontsha izinto zakamasipala. Le zinto enizijwayele ukuzenza zokutshontsha njengeqembu loMkhonto weSizwe.

English:

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Minister, can you please take your seat. On what Rule are you rising on hon member?

Mr E NZIMANDE: No, I respect the Minister, but ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Sorry?

Mr E NZIMANDE: ... can you ask the Minister not to point a finger at me?

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The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): No, no, can you take your seat.

Mr E NZIMANDE: That is not parliamentary.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): No, she is not pointing it directly at you. She's pointing it generally.

Mr E NZIMANDE: You won't control the meeting. I will react. You won't control the meeting.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Take your seat.

Mr E NZIMANDE: I am going to react, and you are not going to control this meeting. She can't point it at me like this.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Take your seat please. Thank you. Hon Minister, please continue.

The MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: I am not pointing at you, but I will address you. I will address you. Mphephethwa, you better try to understand, and I am offering myself to workshop you on the role of municipality, on the role of the

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so-called reticulation. Tell me, when you say there's no water, tell me when taps are on and off, it is not the department. We are responsible for the water resource. We are responsible for the bulk water supply. I've been saying that here, and I can say that ...

IsiZulu:

... kuwe kanje, sibhekane kanje. Ngikutshele futhi ngikubonise ufuna ukuncedwa baba.

English:

You need to ... [Inaudible.] ... really. I am very worried about you. You are such a gentleman who come here and talk things that are odd; things that are very odd. I even gave you the statistics. We cannot be all over. Your very section 63 that you misunderstand depends on section 139. You don't wake up and intervene on section 63 ...

IsiZulu:

... lunga, awulunge baba uNzimande ...

Afrikaans:

... asseblief tog ...

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IsiZulu:

... ngiyakucela.

English:

You see, members here are raising very critical points, and those critical points are saying you do what you can do as a department, but beyond you, something is not happening. The members of DA, you see, just here at Nyanga, Gugulethu, Philippi, this so-called, "you are better", "you are governing better", where? You are governing better around where suburbs are. Where our people are you are nowhere. Yesterday I was in Nyanga ...

IsiXhosa:

...ipotapota ...

English:

... is still there. That is sanitation ... [Inaudible.] ... You call that dignity? It can't be. And that is the responsibility of the municipality to serve all citizens the same way. Let's go there. We don't own new water tankers. It is me that stood here several times to say municipalities, please insource water tankers. The City of Johannesburg has

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already insourced 20 out of the 40 that they targeted, and that is meant for emergency services.

Dr I S SCHEURKOGEL: Hon Chair!

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Minister, can you please take a seat? On what Rule are you standing on?

Dr I S SCHEURKOGEL: I would just like to know if the Minister is prepared to take a question about why Johannesburg has no water.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): All right, I will check with the Minister. Are you prepared to take a question?

IsiZulu:

UNGQONNGQOSHE WEZAMANZI NOKUTHUTHWA KWENDLE: Awuyilethe baba, awusheshe.

English:

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Okay, the answer is?

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The MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: Yes!

Dr I S SCHEURKOGEL: So, Minister, if you're saying that there are certain areas that has no water in Cape Town, why do all the areas in Johannesburg not have water?

The MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: The issue of Johannesburg is a growing nation, growing economy, ... [Inaudible.] ... infrastructure ... No, no, you asked a question. You better listen. Listening is a skill. There is decaying infrastructure. You are talking about 12 000 long water infrastructure. ... [Inaudible.] ... It's bad governance because the DA was there. You messed it up. You come and say it's bad governance. ... [Inaudible.] ... It was you, DA, there. You messed up. You come and grandstand here. [Inaudible.] ... district ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Order, members. Let's allow the Minister to respond. Continue, hon Minister.

IsiXhosa:

UMPHATHISWA WEZAMANZI NOGUTYULO LWELINDLE: Akukho potapota eRhawutini. Ipotapota yinto yalapha. Siyazela apha.

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English:

The iLembe District have already installed 30 water tankers and we appreciate such moves. I will, for the sake of time, finish with the issue of Standerton which was raised by hon Farmer. We are going to provide you ... because through Breede-Olifants Catchment Management Agency, Bocma, we have issued a directive. That's a private quarry. So we have issued a directive on that. We are going to assist you. Also, we must give just a user-friendly document at what point we intervene through section 63, as well as the issue of ...

IsiXhosa:

... hayi, ndiza kubuya ngezinye, bakhona aba kufuneka ndibakhawulezele.

English:

The water network, it does not end with us. You can crucify me when there's no water resource at all. The MECs that were on the virtual platform are confirming because they are hands-on. I appreciate all these MECs because they know exactly what is happening about this project and that project. Some of the projects are multi-year projects. So you cannot see the results quickly, but we are on course, we are on track. We are doing our work.

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Nkosi Mabebo, I think you hit it on the nail when you talked about these issues. The availability of water in terms of what Deputy Minister Mahlobo was saying, the security of water, there's no problem about that. That is why every day you jump water on the street. It's because we provide. We provide bulk water supply, but it does not reach the communities. That is why we have to strengthen municipalities but unfortunately, no one says to us here that all these parties are prepared to amend the Constitution so that we relieve some of the responsibilities of municipalities. Municipalities find it very difficult because even consumers don't pay. So, that function is too heavy for them. The funding model, as it was said by one of the MECs, is unfortunately not in the favour of municipalities. I really appreciate the good work and the good presentations and debates here. Looking forward for those ...

IsiZulu:

... ngizoqala wena Mphephethwa angikukhombi uyabona ngithi kanje. Ngifuna ukuninika isifundo.

English:

Thank you.

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The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much hon Minister for your response. I want to thank all the delegates that participated in this debate. I would like to thank the Minister, the two Deputy Ministers, permanent delegates, the MECs, and all special delegates and Salga representatives for availing themselves for the sitting today.

Debate concluded.

The Council adjourned at 17:25.