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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES MINI PLENARY

The Council met at 14:03.

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

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

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon delegates, I greet you all this afternoon and thank you for attending this session. Normally, when we have budget presentations in the House, we will welcome the Ministers that are presenting their budget. So, today I would like to welcome the hon Chairperson of the NCOP while she presents a budget in this House.

Hon delegates, I would like to remind delegates that rules, in particular sub-rules 21, 22 and 23 of Rule 103, would apply. I

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would like to welcome all of you and welcome the MECs who are present in the House, and also, on the virtual platform. I would also like to welcome Salga delegates and all hon members that are present.

I have been informed, hon delegates, that there will be no Notices of Motion or Motions Without Notice. We shall now proceed to the Order of the Day: That is a Policy Debate on Budget Vote 2, Parliament Appropriation Bill B4 of 2026, which is a Section 77 Bill. I now have the pleasure to call upon the hon Mtshweni-Tsipane, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, to open this debate for 25 minutes.

APPROPRIATION BILL

(Policy debate)

Debate on Vote No 2 - Parliament put:

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Deputy Chairperson of NCOP, Hon Les Govender, fellow Presiding Officers, the Chief Whip of the Council, hon Mmoiemang, permanent and special delegates to the NCOP, representatives of Salga in our midst, we are humbly graced today by the presence of the Secretary-General of CPA

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Headquarters, Mr Twigg, if I may request him to stand up so that you can see him. He is not alone, he is accompanied by his Deputy Secretary-General, Mr Matiea, if we may request him to stand, as well as Ms Charlotte Kobi, the Secretary to the NCOP, Adv Phindela, management and staff of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, we table Budget Vote 2 of Parliament for consideration and debate.

This Tabling comes as part of a marathon of Policy and Budget Votes from various departments constituting the core business of Parliament to consider and pass budgets for the benefit of our people. Cognisant of the magnitude of our mandate, as enshrined in the Constitution, we accordingly table what we can best refer to as, *'the people's budget'*.

It is a political instrument to enable the resources we present today, to ensure the deepening of accountability, meaningful public participation and the passing of quality and transformative laws, which can strengthen the capability of state to drive our historic mission for social change. Through this historic mission, we predicate the work of Parliament on ways that promote job creation and equity, through inclusive qualitative growth, combating extreme levels of poverty and reducing the cost of living, towards a better life for all.

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In May 1996, the Constitutional Assembly, made up of 490 members from the National Assembly and the Senate, which later became the National Council of Provinces, adopted the Constitution for a democratic South Africa. In this accord, this month marks 30 years since the adoption of the Constitution. The Constitution remains our national blueprint which enjoins a society based on democratic values, social justice and the restoration of human dignity.

Hon delegates, this Budget is also presented in a moment of global uncertainty because of ongoing geopolitical tensions and violence that affects our national mission to recreate new possibilities and a better future for all our people, especially the poor. This problem of uncertainty, as often reported, regrettably undermines the needed predictability of trade and investment, as our nation confronts new realities within the context of the changing world of work.

This global environment of conflict, also more visibly, negatively affects commodity prices, particularly oil, and disrupts global supply chains, with serious implications for global and local economies. Statistics SA has since reported an increase in consumer inflation to 4% in April, the highest level since August 2024. The rise in inflation presents

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serious challenges to reducing poverty and addressing the high cost of living - which is one of the key priorities of the 7th administration.

Furthermore, we approach the end of May, following the recent continent-wide commemorations of Africa Day. In this regard, the meaning of Africa Day was more pressing for our country, understanding current challenges of coexistence as we endeavour to reconnect with the significance and importance of this historic day.

Government, civil society, political parties and public intellectuals made the clarion call and made an appeal to the collective conscience of our people to remember, as the key struggle of memory against forgetting, the essence of Kwame Nkrumah's call for, "Africa to unite now or perish". These five words were not mere slogans; they were strategy, they were prophecy, they were diagnosis of what would heal Africa and a prescription of her healing. It was a call for Africa to assert itself and find its place amongst the world of nations.

Africa, today, stands at the most consequential crossroads in her post-independence history. To the East and to the West, old certainties are dissolving. The post-1945 multilateral

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order is under unprecedented stress. Great powers compete for supremacy. Trade wars erupt and subside. Technologies are weaponised. Information is also weaponised. Even the language of human rights has become a battleground of geopolitical contestation.

In this highly polarised global environment, Africa cannot afford to be a spectator. She cannot afford to be merely an object of other people's strategies. Africa must write her own script. Africa must define her own trajectory comprehensively. The starting point for doing so is the recognition of who we are, what we represent, and how best we want to represent our constituencies.

For us to attain our mandate, we must believe in our self-reliance, as the beginning of our joint strength. Thus, our shared belief is that Africa cannot be split into tiny political and economic units and hope to command its share of the globe and redress its historic challenges.

As we reflect on the work of the NCOP, I depart by providing a high-level report on the work of this House before reflecting generally on the work of Parliament. In respect of law-making,

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which is our primary function, the NCOP considered and adopted 18 Bills during the period under review.

Key among the legislation adopted were: The Division of Revenue Amendment Bill, which provides for the equitable division of revenue raised nationally among the national, provincial and local spheres of government - the legislation supports the achievement of the priorities set out by the 7th administration; the Public Service Amendment Bill, which aims to professionalise the public service by, among other things, preventing political interference in the day-to-day operations and administrative decisions of departments; and lastly, the Immigration Amendment Bill, which aligns the Immigration Act with Constitutional Court rulings, primarily by changing the process for arresting and detaining undocumented migrants and enhancing procedural fairness.

We continue to enhance measures to improve the quality of law-making, to ensure that our laws have the desired impact, and that we build the capacity to monitor their implementation. In so far as oversight and accountability are concerned, the NCOP has mechanisms in place to fulfil its oversight and accountability mandates. These include the work of committees,

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questions to the executive, House debates and resolutions, and following up on Executive undertakings.

Fifty-seven committee reports were considered and adopted. They include reports on the 2025 Fiscal Framework and Revenue Proposals, the 2023-24 General Consolidated Report on Local Government Audit Outcomes, the Protocol on Competition to the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, report on provinces' economic and budget performance, as well as reports on oversight work carried out in the provinces.

A total of about 1 909 Questions, both oral and written, were put to members of the executive in the past financial year, as against 1 322 in the 2024-25 financial year. Of these, 1 693 were written questions whilst 216 were oral questions. Of the 1 693 written questions, 1 668 were responded to, while 25 were late in terms of Rule 231 of the NCOP, compared to more than 200 in the preceding year. All the 216 oral questions in the reporting period were responded to.

The NCOP held 17 debates, which included the debates on 'Unlocking South Africa's Economic Potential', on 'Measures to Address Poverty and Hunger', on 'Revitalising rail and port

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infrastructure to boost South Africa's economic recovery and employment opportunities', on 'Empowering rural women to bridge the gender gap in food security and land tenure', on 'Recentering social justice and human rights for women and girls', and also on 'Pioneering Africa's inclusive economic growth through the African Continental Free Trade Area'.

The House considered and adopted 46 resolutions directed at several Ministers and state entities on matters relating to agriculture, basic education, public petitions, public infrastructure, social development and water and sanitation, among others. However, there are often delays in responses to House resolutions. To prevent these, I appeal to hon delegates to ensure that the resolutions are clearly defined and have realistic timelines for purposes of compliance or implementation.

Lastly, 11 Executive Undertakings were made by various members of Cabinet, including the Deputy President. Three of these were responded to by the end of the financial year, and we continue to expand the scope of the undertakings through the implementation of our flagship programmes. With regard to public participation, we want to report that this time around we went a step further by initiating the first Taking

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Parliament to the People programme in the 7th Parliament. This resulted in the hosting of this programme in the City of Matlosana, North West, just over two weeks ago.

The collaborative efforts of permanent and special delegates of this House, not to mention the role played by the technical staff and the insightful reflections by members of the public, as well as targeted commitments by the executive, made this programme a great success. I thought you will clap for yourselves hon members. During this reporting period, we also processed several petitions from members of the public. Petitions enable citizens to engage with their elected representatives on any issue that affects them in their daily lives.

Lastly, opportunities for public engagement were also created during the execution of our Provincial and Local Government Week programmes last year. Parliament will continue working more closely with provincial legislatures so that we strengthen, streamline and deepen public involvement in the legislative process, especially in respect of several observations made by our courts.

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With regard to co-operative government and intergovernmental relations, co-operative government sits at the centre of the work we do as the NCOP. One way of promoting the constitutional principles of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations is through the participation of special delegates and representatives of organised local government in the debates of the NCOP, to bring up matters that affect our provinces and our local spheres of government.

In this regard, we commend Salga for 98% attendance during debates. When it comes to actual participation by delegates, Limpopo led with 113%, which way surpasses our expectations. Let's not be jealous, hon delegates; let's be challenged and give them a round of applause. The 2025 Provincial Week programme, implemented in all our provinces, gave us the opportunity to focus on building viable municipalities for enhanced delivery of basic services to communities.

For the first time in the 7th Parliament, we implemented the Local Government Week under the theme, 'Restoring the dignity of our people through proper spatial planning, provision of human settlements, water and sanitation'. Convened in the City of Cape Town, with a change in format, the programme concluded with a strong call for systemic reform, improved

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intergovernmental co-ordination and prioritisation of vulnerable communities.

In respect of interventions, we received seven interventions in terms of section 139 of the Constitution - including reports on progress and 10 notices in terms of section 106(1)(a) of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act on allegations of maladministration, fraud, corruption and/or any other serious malpractices in some municipalities.

The NCOP has used these notices as a proactive measure to monitor progress and developments in the affected municipalities. Lastly, but more importantly, the provinces of North West, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Western Cape submitted the Annual Municipal Performance Reports for the 2023-24 financial year in terms of Section 47 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act.

These reports are critical for purposes of assessing the state of our municipalities, allowing for more proactive action in line with section 154 of the Constitution, which obliges both the national and provincial governments to support municipalities. From now on, we expect to receive these reports from all the provinces.

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On emerging issues that influence our work, some of the key emerging issues include, among others, enhancing oversight and accountability through an on-site based approach and the effective use of technological opportunities. However, Parliaments are already challenged to think through the implications of Artificial Intelligence; if not properly conceptualised, regulated, planned, co-ordinated, can reproduce and become another form of injustice.

This means that AI can enforce digital capitalism's hegemony and negatively impact the environment, notwithstanding the opportunities to empower those previously marginalised from infrastructure deployment. We are also challenged to develop stronger follow-up as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of our flagship programmes.

The challenges of a reducing budget for Parliament affects its responsiveness under a constrained fiscal and economic environment. Finally, we are challenged to assess the role and impact of the NCOP ahead of its 30th anniversary in February 2027, aligned with broader reflections on 30 years of the Constitution currently taking place.

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On the key achievements for 2025 on Parliament as an institution, as evidenced by the work I have outlined in respect of the NCOP, the 2025-26 financial year marked a period of institutional consolidation and accelerated implementation for the 7th Parliament. Parliament moved beyond the transitional and establishment-focused environment that characterised the previous reporting cycle.

The reporting year focused increasingly on operationalising strategic reforms, strengthening oversight effectiveness, modernising parliamentary systems, and embedding a more integrated, responsive and digitally enabled institutional environment. Emphasis was also placed on aligning parliamentary processes and oversight activities with the priorities of the 7th Parliament, the Medium-Term Development Plan and the broader objectives of the National Development Plan.

Overall, the achievement of the annual targets, particularly those relating to executive responsiveness, development of accountability standards, oversight priority plan, public participation improvements and legislative impact assessments, reflects Parliament's continued transition from foundational institutional reform to a more mature implementation and

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operational delivery. While fiscal pressures, operational complexities and implementation dependencies continue to present challenges, the institution demonstrated resilience and adaptability in advancing its strategic priorities.

What then are the priorities of this 7th Parliament? The institution continues to pursue its strategic priorities as follows: We want to strengthen oversight by enhancing mechanisms for monitoring government responsiveness, leveraging data for decision-making and embedding accountability frameworks to ensure effective executive oversight; enhancing legislative processes and public involvement by expanding and improving opportunities for the public to participate meaningfully in legislative and related processes; to improving public appointment processes by institutionalising open, transparent and standardized processes for the appointment and removal of public office bearers; and to improve international engagements by strengthening the ratification, domestication and monitoring of international agreements and commitments.

While the annual target on capacitating members to undertake these tasks was not fully met due to scheduling challenges, corrective measures have since been implemented.

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On international engagements and parliamentary diplomacy, several activities took place as part of advancing our role in international relations and parliamentary diplomacy. These include the consideration of international agreements, such as the Draft SADC Protocol on the Regional Parliament and the Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area. Parliament also hosted the 11th G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit - the first on African soil - during South Africa's G20 presidency.

In addition, Parliament hosted the 58th SADC Parliamentary Forum Plenary Assembly, which focused on the impact of climate change on women and youth, and the role of parliaments in mitigation and adaptation; Parliament will in June 2026 co-host the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth, Africa Region with the Gauteng Provincial Legislature.

We are also preparing to host the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference later this year, as you could see from our guest today, which will convene parliamentarians across the Commonwealth to deliberate on global political and contemporary issues as we repurpose this forum for the collective needs of our future.

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In addition, the parliamentary delegation remained actively engaged in the Pan-African Parliament, Pap. We support the new leadership of this body in efforts to ensure the full participation of African people in economic development and integration of the continent. Furthermore, participation in Brics parliamentary processes continues in support of the objectives of strengthening economic, political and social cooperation, as well as promoting multilateralism.

The total budget for Parliament for the 2026-27 financial year amounts to R6 376 094 billion. The total allocation received from the National Treasury amounts to R3 344 610 billion.

As I conclude, we coined this tabling, 'The people's budget,' understanding the current time and space of multiple interlocking challenges, asking that we turn the corner, return to the base, which is the people. The levels of social fragmentation, violence, hate speech, shattered families, communities and schools are contributing, according to various political thinkers, to the monumental eclipse of hope and collapse of meaning amongst many of our people.

Therefore, I also want to take this opportunity to thank all the delegates for their meaningful contribution in the House,

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and to particularly thank the Presiding Officers of this House for steering the House towards the right direction. I wish to thank the Chief Whip of Council, the Programming Whip and provincial whips. I also want to thank our select committee's chairperson for the important work that they do in this institution and the engine room of our work.

We also wish to thank all permanent and special delegates across all our provinces in ensuring that the NCOP remains a space for activism, robust engagement and service. We also want to acknowledge the work of the Secretary to the NCOP and the collective management and staff supporting the NCOP. I also want to thank provincial legislatures, Premiers and the speakers for the valuable contribution to the work of the NCOP. Lastly, my family, my beloved children and fellow comrades who are the pillar of my strength. I thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson, for your articulated presentation of your report. We thank you very much for that. I now have the privilege to call upon the next participant in the debate, and that is the Co-Chairperson of the Joint Financial Management Committee of Parliament, hon S Ndhlovu for 15 minutes.

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Ms S NDHLOVU: We are always the winners. Thank you, hon Deputy Chairperson. Hon Radebe, I hope you are not intimidating me.

Greetings to our Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, NCOP, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, our deputy Chairperson, hon Govender, our Chief Whip, hon Mmoiemang, House Chairpersons present here, the permanent and special delegates, our special guests who have been introduced today, the Secretary to the NCOP, Advocate Phindela and my friend on the other side, hon Badenhorst. We are also honoured to receive the guests from other countries who have come to listen to our debate. Hon Deputy Chairperson, my topic will emphasise the restoration, repositioning and placing of Parliament as the voice of the people.

Deputy Chairperson, this year, as the hon chairperson indicated, South Africa celebrates 30 years of its Constitution, a foundational document written by our forebears and shaped by our collective wisdom, cultures and customs. The African National Congress remains resolute in its mission to construct a South Africa that is truly non-racial, non-sexist and a prosperous democratic society. The House we call the NCOP, today, was at some point called the Senate, which was

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populated by white males, not even white women, but its design was meant to legislate the suffering and killing of Africans.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, I want to repeat it so that those who don't believe, should understand this statement. The House we call the NCOP, today, was at some point called the Senate, which was populated by white males, not even white women, but its design was meant to legislate the suffering and killing of Africans.

Today, I stand here proudly as an African woman representing ... [Interjections.]. Today, I stand here proudly as an African woman. I know, hon Deputy Chairperson, that there are those who are not feeling happy about this statement but unfortunately, we are not going to entertain that now.

Today, I stand here proudly as an African woman representing everyone and legislating freedom, dignity and peace for all. We stand, today, at a crossroad of fundamental consequence where we must refine our public institutions, including this very Parliament, to better serve as the authentic living voice of the people. This budget debate, Chair, is our commitment to restoring the dignity of our citizens and ensuring that this

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Parliament is not a distant monument, but a responsive heart of our democracy.

Chair, as I touch on the restoration project and how it can help us on the destruction of the architecture of the apartheid era, this project of restoring in South Africa goes far beyond a physical struggle of reconstruction and development. It is a transformation of a politics of memory. Yes, social, psychological and spiritual memory of identity and belonging. For too long, Chair, our public space has reflected an apartheid architecture designed for separation and marginalisation.

We are moving beyond the old big twirling extension mentality to build a Parliament that architecturally synthesises our diverse history and the rich cultural heritage of our nation. By undertaking this initiative, we are unravelling the web of history to ensure our institution represents the aspiration of every African by disrupting a blueprint of oppression to build an inclusive future for generations to come.

Chair, as I talk on the rules, restoring public confidence and repositioning Parliament as the voice of the people, we must maintain the highest standard of institutional integrity. The

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seventh edition of the *Joint Rules of Parliament*, as I am co-chairing it, provides the essential framework for this. These Rules, Chair, must be enforced not to suppress debate, but to preserve the dignity and good name of our Parliament. The Rules of Parliament, under Rule 20 of the *Joint Rules of Parliament*, our presiding officers are mandated to maintain order and proper decorum. I think this one, hon members, especially Badenhorst, must listen to this. While Rule 33 also guarantees freedom of speech, this right is always subject to the Rules and orders of this House.

We must never tolerate gross disorderly conduct, such as creating serious disruption by repeatedly undermining the authority of the chairpersons in terms of Rule 40. We say this as a reminder to presiding officers to always exercise their authority fully and remove any member who disregards this standard, Rule 42 in particular, to ensure that the work of the people continues. Our goal is a culture of consequence management and ethical behaviour that restores the public's faith in our democratic institution.

Chair, as I talk on the aligned parliamentary programme with the improved constituency work, our parliamentary programming must be the arm and leg of our people's needs. We seek to

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strengthen the link between all levels of government and the citizenry, moving away from a top-down approach. Our joint committee system is an engine room for this work, empowered by Rule 80, hon Chairperson, to determine its own work arrangement and even meet at venues beyond the seating of Parliament to be closer to the community we serve. We also aim to use both the District Development Model and Taking Parliament to the People programmes, as alluded by our hon chairperson, to ensure that our legislative work is deeply integrated into the specific needs of far-flung communities.

Chair, we are living in an era of advancing digital technology and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 4IR, which is not only changing society, economies, forms of organisations and ways of thinking, but also spaces of interacting, that is on the Battle of Ideas. Therefore, Chair, to expand Parliament's reach and accessibility, we call on our Parliament to embrace digital tools towards advancing the following.

Firstly, public participation. In accordance with Rule 12 of the joint standing committee, we invite the public to provide written comments and to give oral evidence under an oath of affirmation. This is also in line with Rule 80. Secondly, on technology and streaming, we are committed to transparency,

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which is also in line with Rule 30 and Rule 89 mandates, that virtual and hybrid sittings be live streamed whenever possible, ensuring that rural and working-class women can witness the democratic process from their own homes.

Thirdly, on artificial intelligence, AI, and digital tools, while we embrace modernisation, we warn against the abdication of women judgement and unethical manipulation of data. We encourage the use of AI to improve accountability, as seen with the recent "hallucinations" in policy documents by some Ministers using AI to write policies. I hope that one day they know who they are. As ANC leaders, we must ensure that our National AI Policy is driven by human expertise and rigorous evidence, not AI-generated shortcuts.

Fourthly, on social media, we will use the platform for feedback and connections, maintained with a revolutionary discipline rather than individual self-promotion. The ANC, in principle and practice, encourages robustness through the Battle of Ideas, Chair. Although such robustness must always be balanced with civility and fidelity to our statutory laws, one of the ANC principles also acknowledges a struggle within a struggle to dismantle patriarchy and sexism. While we value robust debates in the Battle of Ideas, Rule 52 and Rule 53

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prohibit the use of offensive, abusive or insulting language and the imputation of improper motives to fellow members.

Our democracy is people-centred and people-driven, placing the interests and well-being of the people first. Resistance to this transformation agenda must always be crushed by the combined forces of the people and the democratic state.

Chair, to the conservative and neoliberal forces, hon Billy, who claim life was better than on the ... Chairperson, on the critics and enemies of transformation like hon Billy, to the conservative and the neoliberal forces who claim life was still better under apartheid, we reject your narrative with the contempt it deserves. Perhaps, in your own spaces, you should reflect on one key question: For whom was life better during apartheid? For the oppressed millions or privileged few? A true and honest reflection can never defend cruel oppression and colonial privilege.

To this day, the ANC-led struggle continues to work tirelessly to expand services to the millions who were excluded by the oppressive apartheid regime. While critics sit on their ivory towers labelling our democracy as failure or a compromise, they ignore the transformative impact of the NCOP's radical

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initiative of Taking Parliament to the People, which is globally recognised as best practice and giving a voice to the voiceless and historically disadvantaged communities. Indeed, we are bringing government to the people.

Chair, as I conclude, I reiterate the ANC's solemn pledge in its 2024 election manifesto to speed up transformation and improve the lives of our people. We will not allow the gains of our democracy to be aborted. To do this, we must continue to defend our freedom and democracy at all costs, and abstain from falling into the waves of populism, fearmongering and rage-betting. Hence, we call on all fellow South Africans to join us as we defend our freedom and heart of democracy, even within these very walls.

As parliamentarians, we remain the true unyielding voice of the people. In the many initiatives that we undertake, we must ensure that we as parliamentarians in this House are not just debating in vacuum. We must include community voices like those in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, ensure they reach us directly, and drive our oversight and legislative agenda. Contrary to the cynical narrative of our detractors, such programmes prove that there is no Parliament without the

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people's voice. As we use this direct engagement to hold the executive accountable and turn our constitutional ...

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

Mr M BILLY: On a point of order, Chair, on Rule 51.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Rule 51?

Mr M BILLY: Yes, Chair.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Okay, go ahead.

Mr M BILLY: Chairperson, I wanted to check if there is any relevancy in what the member is speaking about, because the debate here is on Parliament and its budget. But perhaps for your indulgence, Chair, I'm failing to follow and understand the relevancy.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Okay, thank you. Your point of order is noted.

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Hon Ndhlovu, you may continue.

Ms S NDHLOVU: Thank you. I think that is one of the transformations that we must utilise, especially in this House. It shows that, indeed, there is something wrong with it.

Chairperson, I think it is on this basis that the ANC supports the parliamentary budget as critical to the building and restoration of Parliament, and critical to the transformation ideals of our constitutional democracy, as I conclude. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP (Mr K M Mmoiemang): Deputy Chairperson, greetings to yourself, the presiding officers, hon members of this august House, both permanent and special delegates, the special representative of SA Local Government Association, Salga, the guests as introduced, hon members and ladies and gentlemen, dumelang [good day].

Chairperson, right at the beginning, allow me to outline that the ANC supports this budget vote of Parliament. We support it because of the increases that the sterling work done by the committees, as registered in terms of oversight, from

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R3 million to R3,5 million. I think that has to be appreciated.

But let us also appreciate the increase done to the consolidated fund. But more than that, the increase registered in the budget for the Local Government Week and for Taking Parliament To The People. Of course, the committee would have done better on the Provincial Week because it's a decrease by minus 7%. We hope that in the future that will be corrected.

But there is a commitment from the committee and the leadership of the institution to look much more better in terms of the work that has to be done in terms of Parliament.

Chair, the second point is to express my profound appreciation to the leadership displayed by both the Whips, provincial Whips and party Whips, who continue to play an instrumental role in the political management work of the council and also the programming Whip.

Secondly, also, this is important, Chair, because the work that is done by the members of this House demands a huge sacrifice. Therefore, Deputy Chair, allow me to make reference to Tim Renton, who was the former Chief Whip to the United

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Kingdom, UK, Prime Minister, who likened the lack of a strong whip system in Parliament to an asbestos-ridden, leaky fire hazard of the building of lawmakers. So, Whips, indeed, are the cornerstone of this institution.

And also, allow me to quote Mr Paul Coy, a former British parliamentarian who characterised the important role of Whips in Parliament with an analogy deeply rooted in the history of the whip system in parliamentary government: "A ship without a boiler room". Illustrating how Whips propel and guide the political management of parliamentary work.

Deputy Chair, I want to, indeed, having read this, extend a word of sincere gratitude to the exceptional leadership that our members continue to display in the work that they do and the commitment that they display in managing the Parliamentary business.

Deputy Chair, behind every successful piece of legislation is the unseen, tireless work of the Whips securing mandates, facilitating delegates to brief provinces on critical section 76 legislation before the Council, ensuring that our Council meets its legislative agenda and that provinces send special delegates to attend sittings of the Council.

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It is the Whips who assist us in coordinating the order of speakers and managing the parliamentary programme.

Deputy Chair, I wish to state right from the beginning that the fact that administrative support to Whips remains elusive, is an area of concern, but we did communicate this matter to both the executive authority and also the Secretary to Parliament, STP, because it is important that the provincial Whips and community Whips get adequate support.

Hon Deputy Chair, this policy debate, as the Chair indicated, takes place in a year that marks the 30th anniversary of our Constitution and its institution, and more than that, it precedes the 30th anniversary of the National Council of Provinces, NCOP, as the second chamber of the South African Democratic Parliament, which will take place next year, February 2027.

So, therefore, Deputy Chair, the 30th anniversary of the NCOP will mark a critical milestone in the evolution of our democracy.

Chair, as we prepare the 30th anniversary of the NCOP, we must put in place a rigorous programme to not only celebrate the

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30th anniversary of the Council but also engage in rigorous and frank exercises to assess and evaluate the work of this House.

Chair, in terms of the global context, indeed, the debate takes place within the evolving global context of deepening crisis of neoliberal democracy and its institution, as evidenced by the current global economic decline, which began towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

This global economic downturn is accompanied by deepening inequality between the rich countries of the north and the south. The persistence of this crisis has in recent years eroded the electorate's trust in democracy and its institution, as evidenced by rising voter apathy and undemocratic forms of political engagement, including violent grassroots protests.

Chair, we stand here proud of our past and confident in the future, as the democratic Parliament in South Africa, particularly given the entrenchment of our constitutional fundamental principles of government of the people by the people, is pursuant of this.

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Our Parliament has adopted a vision of an activist Parliament, which is an organ of people's power to advance our national democratic goals of improving the quality of life.

Deputy Chair, to ensure that the vision of an activist Parliament is not merely a slogan, successive generations of leadership in this august House have conceptualised a number of programmes to ensure that we translate this activist Parliament from pious dream to reality.

What we have seen, we have seen visions and programmes like taking Parliament to the People, the Provincial Week and Local Government Week, as I indicated, much increase has been made in terms of this programme, which clearly illustrates the commitment by the institution to ensure that this programme becomes a success.

Accordingly, the impact of this programme ... of the NCOP's ongoing positioning and repositioning as a truly activist people's Parliament cannot be lost in the central focus of our debate of this important budget policy. This is particularly so because without adequate political funding, it will remain a pipe dream, even if there is a political will.

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Hon Deputy Chair, critical to South Africa's achievements in the democratic consolidation over the last 30 years has been the building of a robust architecture of democratic governance, oversight and accountability.

Therefore, we have seen this institution working around the multiparty programme. We have also seen the influence that the parliamentary oversight and accountability framework has given to us. But more than that, the fact that the robust and parliamentary oversight in this instance is different from what used to happen where oversight was the only domain of the opposition.

In this instance, as this House, we have ensured that all members of this House hold the executive accountable. We also have a rules committee that continues to give us guidance in terms of rules making. But more than that, Chair, as we stand here today, we look back with pride on our hybrid whippery system which integrates the voice of all political parties in setting the NCOP's political agenda and managing its business.

A defining political future for our whippery system is a decision-making culture rooted in consensus rather than majoritarianism.

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Deputy Chair, we owe this to the maturity of all the political parties represented in this House, especially as led by the ANC. Unlike many Parliaments around the world, it is important that we know that there is consensus in the work that we do.

More than that, Deputy Chair, it is also important to appreciate the good work that is done by the Parliamentary Budget Office, PBO, because of the work that it continues to do in giving advice to Parliament on budget and money Bills, equipping parliamentary committees with the technical expertise to conduct rigorous oversight of public finances and to hold the executive to account.

Of course, the leadership crisis in this PBO has to be addressed, and as the ANC we want to impress upon the leadership to resolve the leadership challenges around the PBO.

For us in the ANC, the more we forge and strengthen integrated co-operative governance, the more we strengthen our system of local government, positioning it at the cutting edge of service delivery, development and local socioeconomic transformation.

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Deputy Chair, among the critical instruments at the NCOP's disposal is to discharge this task of ensuring that we approve provincial intervention in local government. But of course, it is a concern and we want to impress upon all of us to ensure that in managing the intervention, we need to ensure that the outcome is far much better in terms of the intervention that we make and it will be important to ensure that as we re-look at the section 19 intervention, there has to be a commitment that the outcome must be different from the time when the intervention is made.

Hon Deputy Chair, while there is consensus in the political and public policy discourse about administrative, ethical and technical challenges that face local government, the two interrelated fundamental questions of challenges around leadership and oversight on one hand and also the configuration and management of the interface between the political office bearers and the administration has to improve.

More so, the Parliament of RSA continues to advance its provision of quality legal support, policy research, strategic and capacity support to parliamentary committees and hon

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members, including capacity development, training and empowerment of Members of Parliament.

Deputy Chair, the efficacy and effectiveness and impact of this support and how it is maximised to improve the quality of permanent delegates work, should be the subject of ongoing structured strategic review and reflection by hon members.

Hon Deputy Chair, the NCOP has designed and implemented an integrated public participation model in the national legislative process in line with the constitutional imperatives and we have, in the past, reflected on the work that the Constitutional Court, ConCourt, has done in terms of its pronouncement on the limitations that our public participation process find.

We will also remember the issues ... the judgment of Land Access Movement of SA, LAMOSASA, which is quite informative in terms of what to expect from public participation process:

The Constitution's vision of democracy includes representative and participatory elements. In August the court said that the ability to participate in the electoral process through voting is a badge of dignity and personhood.

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Similarly, when people, particularly the disempowered, participate in making laws that affect them as is their constitutional entitlement, it enhances their dignity.

Deputy Chair, before Parliament enacts legislation, it must take reasonable steps to facilitate public participation. The importance of public participation in South Africa cannot be understated. Affected people must be allowed to participate meaningfully in the legislative process. Public participation acts as a safeguard to prevent the interests of the marginalized being ignored or misrepresented.

Contrary to what some believe, at the core of the series of constitutional judgment is not just the technical administrative issues of keeping registers and record numbers of people who attended, but also substantive and fundamental political questions.

And on that note, hon Deputy Chair, like I said, the ANC supports this budget of Parliament. Thank you, Deputy Chair.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon members and fellow South Africans, good day. Parliament is not merely another department on the estimates of national expenditure.

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Parliament is the constitutional firewall between the people of South Africa and the abuse of state power. The stated purpose of this Vote is clear, to provide support services required for Parliament to fulfil its constitutional functions, assist political parties represented in Parliament and provide members with the facilities required to do their work.

What are those constitutional functions, hon members? To pass legislation, to scrutinise executive action, and to hold those in power accountable and, most importantly, to represent the people.

But today we must ask some uncomfortable questions. Who holds Parliament accountable when Parliament itself begins to fail in those duties? Because the greatest threat to Parliament is not always outside the institution, sometimes it sits comfortably within the institution. Institutions rarely collapse overnight. They decay through tolerated compromises, silence, and gradual erosions of standards. The Constitution envisioned Parliament as the defender of transparency and accountability. Yet increasingly, South Africans are watching an institution that appears more interested in protecting politically connected officials than protecting public trust.

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The clearest example is the ongoing controversy surrounding the Secretary to Parliament. South Africans have now become painfully aware of allegations surrounding the recruitment process, the remuneration package, salary adjustments, and governance failures linked to the Secretary to Parliament position. Instead of confronting these matters openly, honestly, and transparently, what have we seen? A coordinated attempt by ANC and MK cadres within the Joint Standing Committee on Financial Management of Parliament to sweep the matter under the carpet. Questions are being avoided, hon Ndlovu. Reports are being sanitised. Oversight is diluted and those asking uncomfortable questions are treated as the problem. That is not oversight, hon members. That is institutional self-protection.

At a time when Parliament claims fiscal pressure, the institution's own administrative spending tells a totally different story. More than R1 billion is now allocated to support services alone, excluding the rebuilding project, while Parliament's administrative programme exceeds R37 billion. Yet oversight committees are still expected to do more with less. while the executive authority and the Secretary to Parliament share more than R82 million for goods and services in their respective offices. Not sure what these

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goods are, but at the moment, hon Chairperson, it is at that amount, it must be very good.

The Secretary to Parliament is not a ceremonial appointment. It is one of the most powerful administrative office in the legislative arm of the state. The holder of that office is entrusted with ensuring sound financial governance and compliance with the financial management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act. Yet, while ordinary South Africans face unemployment, collapsing services and rising living costs, Parliament has found itself defending an executive salary package reportedly exceeding R6 million annually once all the benefits and provisions are included. Let me repeat that, R6 million annually. To put that in perspective, South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa earns just under 3,5 million annually, and that does not include the Phalaphala dollars. But the issue is not merely the salary itself. The issue is whether the due process was actually followed, whether disclosures were properly made, whether governance standards were consistently applied, and whether Parliament is willing to investigate itself with the same intensity it investigates others. Because if Parliament loses moral authority, then oversight itself becomes hollow theatre.

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Let us be frank, the public is no longer naive. Ward 28, the Emfuleni proved that yesterday. The DA celebrates a historic first win in a township. South Africans can see when committees are weaponised to shield politically connected individuals. They can see when accountability suddenly disappears once cadres are involved. They can see when government party members close ranks. The danger is not financial. The danger is institutional decay.

This Parliament cannot demand accountability from municipalities, state-owned enterprises, departments and Ministers while refusing to apply this same standard internally. We cannot lecture municipalities about irregular expenditure while allegations within Parliament are politically managed. We cannot summon accounting officers before committees and demand transparency while resistance emerges the moment scrutiny reaches the top administration of Parliament itself. That contradiction destroys credibility.

Parliament's constitutional mandate includes representing the people and providing a national forum for public consideration of issues. That requires public confidence. Confidence is not built through press releases and political spin. It is built through transparency, consequence management and ethical

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leadership. We must therefore use this Budget Vote not simply to approve expenditure, but to reaffirm principles.

Parliament must become smaller in bureaucracy and bigger in integrity. Political parties represented here must also reflect honestly on whether Parliament is serving citizens or serving insiders. Because every time legitimate oversight is blocked, every time difficult questions are avoided, and every time cadres protect cadres, Parliament drifts further away from the people it was created to serve. The DA will continue asking those uncomfortable questions. I can assure you of that we will not stop. Not because it is politically convenient, not because accountability cannot be selective, but purely because accountability should be and cannot be selective. If Parliament cannot clean its own House, it loses the model standing to demand accountability from the rest of the state. If that happens, then the very institution designed to protect constitutional democracy becomes complicit in weakening it. I thank you.

Ms S NGONGO (Eastern Cape): House Chairperson, greeting to you, to the Speaker of the National Assembly, hon Thokozile Didiza, the Members of the National Executive, present, the hon members, both Permanent and Special Delegates, fellow South Africans.

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Allow me to rise on behalf of the Acting Eastern Cape Premier, hon Mlungisi Mvoko, and the people of the Eastern Cape Province, to participate in this important Policy Debate on Budget Vote 2 - Parliament.

We do so fully conscious of the significance of Parliament within our constitutional democracy, and in particular the central role of the National Council of Province plays, as the institutional voice of provinces and local government within the national legislative framework.

This debate takes place against the backdrop of mounting fiscal pressures confronting all spheres of government. Across the country, provinces continue to grapple with increasing service delivery demands amid constrained public finances, rising operational costs and persistent socio-economic challenges.

It is therefore appropriate that, in debating the budget allocation of Parliament itself, we also reflect on the implications that budget reductions and fiscal constraints may have on the ability of provincial legislatures and oversight institutions to effectively discharge their constitutional obligations.

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Oversight remains one of the most important responsibilities entrusted to democratic institutions. It is through oversight that accountability is strengthened, transparency is safeguarded and public confidence in government is maintained.

The NCOP in particular occupies a strategic position in ensuring that the voices, realities and developmental concerns of provinces are not marginalised within national discourse and policy-making processes.

Any weakening of institutional oversight capacity, whether through budgetary limitations or operational constraints, has direct implications for the health and effectiveness of our democracy.

As provinces, we rely on Parliament and specifically the NCOP to ensure that national policy and fiscal decisions remain responsive to the lived realities of communities on the ground.

The Eastern Cape understands these realities intimately. Our province continues to confront historical underdevelopment, infrastructure backlogs, poverty, unemployment and uneven spatial development.

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At the same time, our people expect a capable developmental state that remains present, responsive and accountable. This requires not only capable provincial administrations, but also strong legislative institutions at both Provincial and National levels.

The fiscal pressures facing government are real and cannot be ignored. However, we must equally acknowledge that budget reductions inevitably place strain on the ability of institutions to fulfil their mandates optimally.

Reduced budgets impact oversight visits, public participation programmes, committee work, constituency engagements, research support and institutional capacity-building.

Yet these functions are indispensable to participatory democracy and accountable governance.

We must therefore guard against a situation where fiscal consolidation unintentionally weakens democratic oversight and institutional effectiveness.

The Eastern Cape Provincial Government continues to support efforts aimed at strengthening governance, improving

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efficiency and eliminating wasteful expenditure. We equally support prudent fiscal management and responsible public spending.

However, fiscal discipline must remain balanced with the developmental responsibilities of the democratic state.

The Acting Premier of the Eastern Cape has consistently emphasised that long-term fiscal sustainability will ultimately depend on growing the economy, expanding productive sectors and unlocking investment-led development.

This is why the province continues advancing strategic growth frontiers in automotive manufacturing, oceans economy, tourism, agriculture, renewable energy, logistics and infrastructure development.

These interventions are intended not only to stimulate economic growth and create jobs, but also to strengthen the broader fiscal capacity of the state over a period of time.

On the same token, we must continue ensuring that public institutions remain adequately capacitated to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities effectively.

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The strength of our democracy depends not only on the policies we adopt, but also on the institutional capacity available to implement, monitor and account for those policies.

As the Eastern Cape Province, we therefore reaffirm our support for a Parliament that is accessible, effective, people-centred and capable of exercising robust oversight in the interests of all South Africans.

We further reaffirm our commitment to cooperative governance and constructive intergovernmental engagement in pursuit of inclusive development and social progress. I thank you, hon House Chairperson and the delegates.

Mr V GERICKE: Hon House Chairperson, good afternoon dignitaries and the Secretary of Parliament, the National Council of Provinces, NCOP, and colleagues. Hon House Chairperson, today we discuss a very special vote as budget of Parliament is to be passed. As we all know the Parliament of South Africa plays a very critical role in our constitutional democracy since 1994. It makes it special and critical as Parliament was never democratic institution before 1994.

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Parliament, and this is important to note before 1994 was used as a powerful tool, to pass discriminatory laws, promote racism and inequality and sideline the masses of black South Africans who also needed services just as our white counterparts.

It is of utmost important to know that Parliament was used as a racist institution to divide different races and people of colour. For this reason, the apartheid government instituted what is called the tricameral system to class people according to race and allocated budget according to race. Therefore, that Parliament consisted of the House of Assembly for Whites only, the House of representatives for the so-called coloureds and the House of delegates for Indians.

Ethnic black people and this is important Comrade Jane Mananiso, ethnic black people were totally excluded from the system of Parliament and had to depend on the homeland system where ethnic black people were relegated to black homelands to administer their own affairs. It is a matter of fact. So, if a white people tells you he has nothing to do with apartheid, he does not know the history of apartheid, our history tells us that they benefitted from a crooked system that benefitted whites only. It cuts across the education, justice system and

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all over. So, they have benefited. Therefore, we have lost like Borad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, BBBEE, employment equity and so on, to get to an equal level.

Today, 32-years ago, after 1994, South Africa has a parliamentary democracy where all parties race and ethnicities are represented in this Parliament. This democracy was earned, with defying the system of the oppressor with defiance, incarceration and even capital punishment for hanging people to death for their political convictions.

This budget before us today hon House Chairperson, does not give justification to the role Parliament has played to keep our democracy alive, stimulate public participation and oversight. The constitutional emphasis of Parliament is that the people shall govern. It is where the voices of the people should be heard through their public representatives.

Hon House Chairperson, it is however very painful and agonising to witness on the daily basis how this Parliament and its committees are redressing and drifting away from its initial mandate to hold the executive to account. This is clearly evident in the manner how some committee meetings are conducted. Instead of equal and democratic debate on behalf of

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the people of our land, committee meetings have become the battle ground to where the political elite is being protected at all costs. Some committee chairpersons are openly siding with corrupt practices using committee meetings to protect their political cronies and go all out to treat the opposition as enemies. Opposition party members are sidelined, ejected from meetings and humiliated by some of these staunch protectors of the corrupt political elite.

Such is the case in the Joint Standing Committee on Defence where bizarre rulings are being made and none of these chairpersons come to the defence of truth, justice and democracy. Such chairpersons cannot be trusted with power and authority. They are simply a disgrace for South Africa and her people.

The EFF is vindicated by the recent ruling in the Phala Phal matter where the ANC abused their majority to protect President Cyril Ramaphosa not to account in this matter.

The role chairperson of Parliament should have been to exercise oversight and institute action when wrongdoing is found. The arrogance of the ANC has now led to the impeachment of the President. This was a moment where the resources of

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Parliament have been waited and abused. Parliament cannot circumvent or abdicate its responsibility in order to achieve certain outcome in favour of certain individuals. This is simple corrupt and criminal.

Hon House Chairperson, the EFF notes with grave concern how the budget of 2026-27 has been cut with hundreds and millions of rand. This will inevitably have an effect on parliamentary services within the institution. The current staff members are already running around to meet their clients and administrative functions, due to a shortage of qualified and competent staff members to perform those functions. These austerity measures and decrease in budgets make it extremely difficult to enable Ministers to do their oversight visits and this a recipe for disaster as Ministers are not enabled to visit communities who suffer severely because of the lack of services.

As for the National Council of Provinces, NCOP, it is becoming increasingly difficult to reach out to different provinces due to austerity measures. It has nothing to do with the officials it has to do with political decision-making.

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The Constitution mandates the NCOP to service all provinces. We are on the wrong side of the Constitution when we neglect provinces in Taking Parliament to the People. There are in many communities who want to speak to Parliament about the issues of government affecting their daily lives.

We have recently seen in the outreach to the North West province how members of communities vented the anger at poor governance, poverty, unemployment, corruption and violence in their province. Today, the EFF warns this institution of dark days ahead if the voices of the people are consistently being ignored. The EFF regard the appointment of commissions of enquiries as the utmost waste of time and resources when the outcome or recommendations of such enquiries are swept under the carpet. And when only the President may decide as and when the public may have access to such information, since we have one word in common, hon Badenhorst and that is "swept under the carpet." However, it does not mean we are on the same page.

The relevant committees of Parliament bestowed with such authority must hold the executive to account in order to avoid long, procrastinated and laborious processes. However,

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seemingly it does not happen as members of those parties continue to protect the corrupt, dishonest and the criminals.

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of South Africa has consistently ruled that public participation is and I quote, "A thread woven into the fabric of democracy and cannot be ignored."

The public has a right to make meaningful contributions towards law-making process. Parliament must enable and promote such practices.

The EFF says that this budget falls short of doing so. It subsequently deprives the general public of the right to participate in these processes.

Colleagues, it is worth noting and hon House Chairperson, let all communities and households have access to the Internet and libraries. Further to this the apartheid government has deprived our people from access to education. This is exactly those types of communities should be prioritised in terms of public participation.

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The country is in a current state of confusion regarding the impeachment of the President, media reports and social media activities render opinions that are in many instances uninformed, deliberate and dissentious. It is sending wrong message to political investors and negatively influence the market. The very basic and simply thing to do is to follow the processes of the Constitution. The Constitution mandates oversight over the executive by Parliament, even those processes have been abused to the embarrassment of our country. No oversight and it is part of the NCOP. No oversight of Parliament makes us an undemocratic country fighting those who stand for justice.

Innocent citizens will eventually pay the price for this political miscalculation and abuse of the majority votes.

The EFF calls for the prosecution of those who led the process in Parliament and undermined the laws to protect the corrupt. As the EFF we shall go all out till the end to hold the executive accountable and demand justice. This is to protect our Constitution and our country's parliamentary democracy. Those in charge of the administration of Parliament must assist each and every process in a democratic, informed and in transparent manner to secure justice for all.

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This budget is undermining one of the Constitution's imperatives under Chapter 4 in terms of holding the executive grounds to account, ensure government by the people and represent provincial interests.

Therefore, hon House Chairperson, lastly the EFF rejects this budget and call on the executive to reinforce a budget that will enable Parliament, committees and officials to do justice to the people of South Africa. I thank you. I thank Comrade Billy for listening attentively today. By the way hon House Chairperson, he is from the DA. Thank you.

Ms L P MHLONGO: Hon Chairperson, hon members, Vote 2 is not an ordinary budget. It is a budget of the institution entrusted with defending the people of South Africa against corruption, abuse of power, maladministration and a state of failure.

IsiZulu:

Iphalamende likhonela ukuqiniseka ukuthi kukhona ukuziphendulela. Uma iPhalamende uqobo lwalo libuthakathaka, khonake inkohlakalo iyanda, iminyango iyawa, omasipala bayahluleka, futhi nabantu bayahlupheka.

English:

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The 2026 estimate of national expenditure allocates over R3,34 billion to Parliament for the 2026-27 financial year, increasing from approximately R3,2 billion in 2024-25. Of this amount, over R843 million is allocated to legislation and oversight alone. The people of South Africa, therefore, have the right to ask what measurable improvement has Parliament delivered in exchange for these billions. Because South Africans remain trapped in governance crises

IsiZulu:

Izinga lokungasebenzi lingaphezu kukwa-41%. Omasipala bayaqhubeka nokuwa ngokwezimali. Imiphakathi ezweni lonke iyabhikisha ngenxa yokushoda kwamanzi, ukuvuza kwendle, imigwaqo ehohlokayo, ukucishwa kogesi, inani lwezindlu esingakhiwe, ubugebengu kanye nezinhlelo zezempilo ezingasebenzi.

English:

At the centre of all these failures is one issue, lack of accountability. And Parliament must accept responsibility for failing to sufficiently enforce accountability across states. The Constitution mandates Parliament to scrutinise and oversee executive action. Yet too often, committees simply receive presentations, while departments repeatedly miss targets,

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accumulate irregular expenditures, and fail communities without consequences. The National Development Plan, NDP, commits South Africa to reducing poverty, unemployment, and inequality, strengthening governance, and building a capable state. But none of these goals can be achieved if Parliament remains weak in oversight. Oversight cannot be reduced to meetings, reports, and recommendations that are never enforced.

IsiZulu:

Abantu baseNingizimu Afrika abalidingi iPhalamende elizolandela izinqumo nje kuphela. Badinga iPhalamende elisebenzayo. Balindele iPhalamende elisebenzisa izinhlelo. Iphalamende elilandelela ukusetshenziswa kahle kwezimali. Iphalamende eliveza inkohlakalo. Iphalamende eliphogelela ukuqondiswa kwezigwegwe.

English:

One of the clear examples of failure under Vote 2 is the building of Parliament itself. The fire occurred in January 2022. Yes, it's 2026. South Africans are still hearing about the revised timelines, escalating costs, procurement concerns, and project delays. The rebuilding project is estimated at approximately R4,6 billion.

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IsiZulu:

Iphalamende lingazifuna kanjani izibophezelo kumasipala neminyango uma kuyilona elihlulekayo? Iphalamende ugobo lwalo alikwazi ukuqedelela uhlelo lwalo lokulivuselela ngesikhathi esifanele.

English:

The rebuilding process reflects the same governance failures seen across the government. Weak project planning, ineffective oversight, shifting deadlines, poor contract management and weak expenditure controls.

IsiZulu:

Abakhokhi bentela bayaqhubeka nokuthwala imithwalo enzima wezimali ... ukubambezeleka nokungasebenzi kahle.

English:

Even more concerning are repeated concerns relating to irregular expenditure, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, fraudulent account payments and weakness in financial controls linked to the rebuilding process. The clean audit alone is not enough. South Africans are not interested in the technical compliance while governance outcomes continue to decline. The

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real question is whether public money is producing accountability and improving people's lives.

Every Member of Parliament, every political party, and every parliamentary employee has a constitutional duty to the people of South Africa. This institution is funded by taxpayers who expect action against corruption and service delivery failures. The MK Party, therefore, believes Vote 2 must strengthen the building of ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Please don't drown the speaker. You can heckle, but please, don't drown the speaker. Hon Pienaar, please stop your gestures, please. We know that you are a supporter of Orlando Pirates. Don't raise that. Sure. [Interjections.]

Ms L P MHLONGO: I am not sure. Maybe you want to take the podium. You want to talk? [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Mhlongo. When I am on this chair, I'm the only person who can call someone to speak. Please, don't take my power. Otherwise, I will have you removed from that position. Over to you.

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Ms L P MHLONGO: ... stronger forensic and investigative support to committees, real-time expenditure and procurement monitoring systems, stricter consequence management mechanism, stronger oversight follow-up systems, improved constituency support structures, and measurable oversight outcomes linked directly to service delivery.

IsiZulu:

Iningizimu Afrika ayikwazi ukubukela ukuhluleka kwePhalamende, ukuhluleka kombuso, kusukela emakomidini kuya emiphakathini, imiphakathi iyaqhubeka iyantula.

English:

The people deserve more and the people deserve better, without fear or favour. Therefore, MK Party rejects. And with that being said, with Taking Parliament to the People in the North West, we had a conversation with one of the communities. They said they only attended the programme because there was food. And that was not good.

IsiZulu:

Siyabonga

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The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): House Chairperson, hon Radebe, thank you very much for the introduction. The hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, hon House Chairpersons, hon Chief Whip, hon members, the Secretary to the NCOP, Adv Phindela, distinguished guests, hon House Chairperson, at the outset, I want to express and stress upon the importance of today's Budget Vote, particularly as we approach the mid-term period of the Seventh Dispensation. The clock is not moving, Chair.

South Africans hold high hopes of Parliament to effectively oversee the work of the executive and to swiftly implement the electoral mandate of the Seventh Dispensation. Within this context, Parliament must continue to play a critical role of overseeing the planning, budgeting, and implementation of key priorities to give the poor and marginalised a better quality of life. Therefore, in executing our constitutional obligations, we must ensure that the budget for the current financial year is equitably allocated between the Houses and across the various divisions of Parliament.

The Financial Management of Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures Act 10 of 2009 places a clear responsibility on the executive authority to oversee the preparation of

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Parliament's Annual Performance Plan, APP, and budgets. This framework exists to ensure that Parliament funds are used lawfully, transparently, and for the purposes of strengthening our constitutional democracy. The proposed expenditure set out in Vote 2 is therefore appropriately designed to support the execution of the Seventh Parliament's strategy, which is intended to respond directly to the mandate given to us by the people of South Africa.

The electoral mandate of the Seventh Dispensation, as outlined in the strategy of Parliament, demands that we adequately represent the interests of our communities in the work that we do. We are further constitutionally obligated to legislate and oversee the executive functions, while facilitating public involvement in the business of Parliament to advance the objectives of an inclusive and participatory democracy. If we are serious about restoring public trust, then we must strive to ensure that this budget achieves the following three constitutional imperatives, which include strengthening oversight and accountability, improving public participation, and lawmaking.

In order to strengthen the NCOP's oversight and accountability work, we must ensure that adequate resources are allocated for

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the execution of the NCOP Select Committee work, including the NCOP's flagship programmes that we will institute this year. I want to draw the attention to ourselves of the importance of strengthening our oversight, accountability, and tracking mechanisms, particularly, as it relates to the advancing of intergovernmental relations and co-operative governance. The three-sphere planning and tracking and report-back mechanism is a cornerstone oversight and tracking mechanism intended to ensure governance coherence through strategic accountability across the three spheres of government.

This strategic programme also recognises the importance of the District Development Model, DDM, to address three-sphere planning disjuncture, budget misalignment, and policy implementation challenges across all nine provinces. The NCOP, therefore, is strategically positioned to ensure that all three spheres of government effectively utilise the District Development Model, DDM, as the most appropriate mechanism for addressing policy implementation changes. I must therefore express my sincere appreciation to the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, who has consistently supported the oversight and tracking objectives embedded in the three-sphere planning and the DDM oversight programme.

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I also wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the Deputy President of the Republic as the Leader of Government Business for his endorsement and continued support of this important programme. The programme continues to embody key aspects of the NCOP's constitutional mandate, which are especially significant during the current development phase, where South Africans expect the NCOP to play a more impactful role in oversight, co-ordination and accountability across the three spheres of government.

In order to achieve the strategic objectives of the three spheres and DDM model oversight, it is imperative that this programme is adequately budgeted for, to ensure that we achieve the transformative objectives of the Seventh Dispensation. We therefore call for adequate and sustained budget allocation for the provincial rollout of this programme, which will serve as part of our collective strategy towards ensuring that the NCOP evolves into a more effective oversight and tracking construct, representing the interests of ordinary South Africans across all nine provinces.

Sustained and strategic engagement across the three spheres and DDM oversight and tracking programme will ensure that the development priorities of the Seventh Dispensation are

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coherently planned and implemented. Hon members, Parliament belongs to the people of South Africa. Parliament's budget must, therefore, support programmes that bring Parliament closer to its citizens, particularly those in the rural areas, and we must ensure that technological outreach and language services must be further invested in so that no voice is excluded due to geographic distances.

We also welcome the efforts initiated by the Public Education Unit to continue looking at approaches to improve public participation. Compliance with the Finance Management Act of Parliament and provincial legislatures requires more than meeting audit requirements. It demands a culture of discipline, efficiency and consequence management. Every rand spent must demonstrate value for money and advance the work of the institution. The Seventh Parliament operates in a context of limited fiscal space and high public expectation.

This means we cannot afford waste and fiscal leakage. This budget must therefore reflect discipline, prioritisation and clear link between resources and our developmental outcomes. With this budget we call for dedicated provision for sectoral Parliament. Sectoral Parliaments form a crucial part of advancing our democracy by giving youth, women and people with

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disabilities and other sectors that direct platform to engage Parliament and shape the national agenda. This year, sectoral commemorative days will focus on the 72-year anniversary of the Woman's Charter of 1954, the 70th anniversary of the 1956 Women's March, the 50th anniversary of 16 June 1976 and the 30 years' anniversary of our Constitution.

All these anniversaries represent pivotal landmarks in history, which have significantly contributed to shaping the strategic intent and underpinning objectives of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. We therefore call on the institution to support these initiatives and ensure that they are meaningfully commemorated through the work of Parliament. We cannot avoid the ongoing migration challenges facing our country. These challenges place pressure on funding allocation, which impacts on public services and communities, and of course, the rule of law.

With this budget, we call for strict and lawful immigration enforcement to protect our borders and ensure that entry and stay in South Africa are regulated in line with the Constitution and the Immigration Act. At the same time, we must be unambiguous in commending all forms of violence, as no amount of frustration justifies attacks on foreign nationals

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in our country. We also need to warn businesses that employ undocumented individuals as a violation of the law. This practice undermines labour standards, disadvantages South African workers and it creates conditions for exploitation.

As I conclude, I wish to urge every political party in this House, and I want to stress, every political party in the South to support this budget. It's unfortunate that the MK Party and the EFF have spoken before me. Whilst they go on to say that we must listen to the people; we must ensure that we have public participation and we must go out there and engage with communities, I wonder how they expect us to do that in the absence of a budget? Yes, we were just told now that people ate the food when we went to the North West, of course, why not? We went there, we engaged with them, they came in their numbers, and they spoke, and having spoken, why shouldn't we give them something to eat?

They spent the whole day with us. So, there was nothing wrong with that and that is why I will say, let us support this budget. And as I close, I want to thank all Whips in this House, all Table staff, administrative staff, especially the staff in my office, security personnel, adv Phindela, for the

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role that they play to ensure that this House functions well.
I thank you, hon House Chairperson.

Ms M G MAKHURUPETJE (Limpopo): Hon House Chairperson, thank you so very much. I am not sure if I am visible.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon Makhurupetje, you are visible and audible.

Ms M G MAKHURUPETJE (Limpopo): May I ask for my picture there so that hon members may see me. However, if you allow me for the sake of network, allow me to switch off the camera.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr B A Radebe): Hon member, you are allowed.

Ms M G MAKHURUPETJE (Limpopo): Thank you so much.

Hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, NCOP, the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, permanent delegates of the National Council of Provinces, special delegates, SA Local Government Association, Salga, representatives present, invited guest to this important debate, good afternoon. We are gathered here on the debate on Budget Vote No 2: Parliament.

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While Budget Vote No 2 entails both the National Assembly and the NCOP, it is worth indicating that the barometer with which to measure the impact made by the NCOP on the performance of the oversight work, public participation, law-making and international engagements is embedded on the background of the architecture behind it.

The NCOP is by design an upper House of the House of Parliament designed to represent the country's nine provinces and local government at national level. It is a platform designed to ensure provincial interest and local concerns are taken into account in national legislation policy-making and oversight. Put simply is the bedrock of South Africa's co-operative governance it is uniquely South African institution design to unite the country across spheres of government and reflect the diversity of society in pursuing a better life for all. Its role was summed up by the former President who was the first President of the Republic of South Africa Tata Nelson Mandela while addressing the NCOP on 29 August 1997 in Cape Town when he said and I quote:

The National Council of Provinces was set up as one of the core institutions of co-operative governance. This entails a recognition that we are one country with one overriding

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objective to work together to build a better life for all. The issue facing all of us as public representatives is not so much whether a competency has been granted to this or the other sphere of government, but how to serve each individual South African through the length and breadth of the country.

It is on this background that we look at the total budget allocation for Budget Vote No 2. We should be able to assess if indeed the bulk of the allocation across the programmes of the NCOP and the accompanying expenditure are such that they ensure that provincial interests and local concerns are taken into account in national policy-making and oversight.

In being responsive to its mandate, two priorities of the Seventh Administration of Parliament in 2026-27 stand out. This are firstly, putting efforts in plays towards enhancing mechanisms to monitor government responsiveness, improve better utilisation, implement accountability frameworks. Secondly, providing meaningful and adequate opportunities for people to be able to be involved in legislative and other process.

It is the fact that the Seventh Parliament has historically experienced underfunding in the past and it has continued to

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impose greater risk and constrains in the exercise of meaningful oversight and public participation.

We should acknowledge the fact that increased budget aimed at expanding oversight work, law-making capacity and public participation in all programmes of Parliament and particularly the National Council of Provinces is crucial in providing services some quick wins on service delivery across provinces and local government throughout the country.

We should start by acknowledging the size of the available budget for 2026-27 financial year to gage and assess if priorities contained in the annual performance of Parliament particularly the NCOP are responsive to the NCOP mandate.

We have since acknowledge that the total allocation by National Treasury to Parliament is R3,3 billion. The increase on revenue and donor funding must be leveraged on in the near future for increased funding and oversight law-making capacity and participation. We should applaud the Parliament Budget Office for increased allocation on oversight, law-making and public participation. This overall increase constitutes of 9% increase from the baseline. There is a need to put effort towards restoration of the dignity of our people, and this

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would simply mean we commit the service delivery that works. We must strive to improve quality of life or everything we do we must strive for increased citizen and sustainable development.

Hon House Chairperson, the 2026 Taking Parliament to the People was held on 10 to 15 May 2026 in the North West province. This NCOP flagship programme remains critical in providing the opportunity for national reflection on issues affecting local government. This programme is a direct intervention in the improvement of the lives of our people through accelerated service delivery.

Hon House Chairperson, I must be able to indicate that we should applaud the work of the NCOP working under constrained circumstances. The NCOP was able to pass over 24 Bills, and which is very critical including climate change and other important Bills.

We should as well continue to leverage from the Provincial Week for increased impact on service delivery on local government throughout the country.

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I must indicate that as the Limpopo province we are proud that we had a successful NCOP Provincial Week for the past two years. The first one was in Waterberg where we were able to look at some of the water treatment plants and some of the areas including Community Residential Unit, CRU, Marapong Project just to mention a few. However, as well we were able to go 2025-26 financial year, we were able to go to Mopane as well where we went to all municipalities in the province. We must be able to indicate that those visits by the NCOP especially dealing with critical service delivery which have stuck like water projects as well as the roads projects are going a long way to assist the community. We continue to make a remarkable progress across projects visited during this period with the resumption of work on some of the abandoned projects. We must thank and appreciate the work of the provincial government of Limpopo because once the report is finalised, they are able to deal with some of the outstanding matters.

Hon House Chairperson, note must be taken by the legislator operating under difficult constraints and also advancing their strategic priorities on strengthening oversight mechanisms enhancing the legislative process and refining the system of public office appointments and expanding international

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engagements. We should address as a matter of urgency and intervention of widening gap between legislature sector ambitions and in financial constrains as a greater concern. This is because of persistent budget shortfalls could undermine the constitutional responsibility of the NCOP and ultimately the people we serve.

Hon House Chairperson, this budget is a bold plan aimed at addressing the immediate challenges and needs of Parliament holistically. It is a testament of our resolve to do more with the limited resources to overcome challenges and build a better life for all South Africans. In this regard, we call all delegates to the NCOP to support this budget and collaborate in the strengthening the oversight work, law-making strengthening and public participation across the country. We therefore as the ANC Limpopo support the approval of this budget. Thank you so much.

Mr B J FARMER: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon members, and I do greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Parliament is the people's voice, the place where lived pain of ordinary South Africans must be brought into the centre of national decision-making. That is why this Budget Vote matters.

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Maybe we should take away the salary of those not supporting the party. The PA supports this Budget Vote because Parliament must be properly resourced to do its own institutional work. Our support, however, comes with a clear message. This budget must strengthen Parliament's service to the people, not just its internal administration.

The approximately R3,344 billion to Parliament for the 2026-27 financial year is not only about how much money Parliament receives. We must ask, what does the public gets in return? South Africans are tired of institutions that speak about accountability but do not deliver on it.

They want a Parliament that is visible, accessible, and fearless, that reaches people in rural towns, fishing communities, informal settlements, farms, townships, and the forgotten villages - exactly what we did in North West.

For the PA, Parliament must become more than a debating Chamber. It must become a working engine of consequence. When a Minister fails to answer questions properly, Parliament must follow up. When departments ignore committee recommendations, Parliament must escalate. When public money is wasted, Parliament must expose it.

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When communities cry out for help, Parliament must not only listen, but it must also act. Oversight cannot be a tick box exercise. It cannot be members flying into a province, taking photographs, holding meetings and then disappear, while the same problems remain. Oversight must produce results. If a committee visits a municipality and finds broken water systems, collapsing roads, abandoned projects or misused funds, then Parliament must track that matter until action is taken.

We must also speak about public participation. The Constitution requires Parliament to create a national forum where the public can consider issues and express their views. But too many citizens still feel far removed from Parliament. A farmer in the Northern Cape, a fisherman in Lambert's Bay, a mother in George, a young person in Eldorado Park, or a pensioner in a rural village must not feel that Parliament is only for politicians and lawyers.

Public participation must be simplified. Committee documents must be accessible. Public notes must reach communities early. Technology must be used, but not in a way that excludes people without data or devices.

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A Parliament that claims to represent the people must speak in a way that people understand. We must reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and strengthen constituency offices. We must ensure that petitions, complaints and community submissions do not disappear into administrative silence. The PA will always stand for a Parliament to become a place where citizens can see that their voice matters.

This Budget Vote must also improve the quality of parliamentary work. Members must be equipped to do a better job, draft stronger legislation, interrogate budgets properly and follow the money. Parliament cannot allow departments to come before committees with vague answers and polished presentations, while communities continue to suffer.

The PA believes in straight talk, strong oversight and consequence management. Underspending must be as worth a sin as corruption. If a department underspends while people are waiting for services, Parliament must ask why. If a budget grows but delivery collapses, Parliament must ask who benefited. If corruption is found, Parliament must demand action.

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In closing, the PA supports this budget. We support it because we believe Parliament must work harder, reach further, and hold government tighter, because Parliament belongs to the people and every rand spent on Parliament must ultimately serve them.

Afrikaans:

Moenie baiza [huiwer] nie, ma se kind.

English:

Salute!

Mr D R RYDER: Hon Chairperson, before you start the clock, I know that hon Farmer left about 20 seconds on the clock, because for a change, he did not highlight the by-election results. So let me congratulate the DA in Emfuleni for a historical win last night, taking a township ward from the ANC in Emfuleni in Evaton with a PA getting barely 7,5%.

A Parliament that works properly is good for every South African, regardless of political affiliation. The constitutional basis is strong. The National Assembly must provide mechanisms to ensure executive accountability and maintain oversight over executive authority and organs of

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state. The NCOP has similar powers, with the added constitutional purpose of providing a national forum for provincial issues. Both Houses are also required to conduct business openly and facilitate public involvement.

The powers already exist. The problem is not the absence of powers. The problem is whether we choose to use them properly. Parliament must become less of a venue where government explains itself, and more of an institution where the executive is forced to account, where citizens can see consequences, and where committees drive measurable improvement.

What we need is a Parliament that follows the money, follows the promises, follows the failures, and follows up in alignment with our strategy. Our strategy says that we receive inputs, process them, produce outputs that result in meaningful outcomes and ultimately have an impact on the people we serve and on the other spheres of government.

So, we agree what is needed. We have been given a budget. Why then has the Zondo Commission found Parliament to have failed in its responsibilities to South Africans? Perhaps the most painful indictment of our institution came not from opposition

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benches, not from newspapers, but from the Zondo Commission itself, where it said: "The oversight mechanism itself is too weak, too partisan, too reactive and too fragmented." That is why the public perception of Parliament is at an all-time low?

Each year, we are given a budget and told to use it to do the work expected of us. Each year, we embark on programmes largely similar to the ones we undertook the year before. We perform the same actions and expect to have a bigger impact. South Africa does not suffer from a shortage of plans, workshops, presentations and strategies. It suffers from a shortage of measurable outcomes, of water and electricity.

We cannot continue blindly down this road. We need to rethink parliament to suit the realities we find ourselves in. We need a Parliament that has teeth, that understands its role and is equipped to fulfil that role. We need to change our approach to oversight, so that we actually follow the money and hold the government to account.

Yes, the budget process we are busy with is a negotiation. Government departments come and show us their annual performance plans and ask us to fund them. Directors-general

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tell us their grand plans and how much they will cost. They promise to achieve certain things.

It is at this stage that we should be asking some key questions. Is this what South Africa needs or wants? Are the planned programmes going to improve lives? Are the measures that are proposed to establish whether the plan is being carried out effectively actually measuring the right thing? Is there value for money?

Historically, members have been largely satisfied with the plans presented and have thus approved the plans and granted the budget without making too many material changes. And then the annual report comes out for the department, showing that 100% of the budget has been spent, but only 50% of the already soft targets were met. But there is always a promise to do better next year, and the next annual plan remains largely unchanged, but the cost of delivery has gone up, so we must increase the budget by inflation plus a bit. Oh, and sorry about the slip ups, but no consequences will follow.

Can we honestly continue like this? With the occasional site visit to a half-built site and an appropriately contrite looking contractor summoned to appear and take the scorn of

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MPs, hoping to appear in a video clip fighting for the people. Too often, poor planning and last-minute arrangements result in weak engagements.

No members. Parliament must change. Parliament must make it excruciatingly uncomfortable for underperforming departments to come and tell us why the money we gave them has not resulted in better outcomes for the people of South Africa.

Imagine a Parliament where recommendations do not disappear into filing cabinets. Imagine oversight visits that result in repaired infrastructure, instead of photographs and reports. Imagine committees able to see in real time whether conditional grants are actually reaching projects on the ground. Imagine annual reports that measure outcomes, not excuses. Imagine departments dreading appearances before committees because Parliament has done its homework.

Committees are the engine room of Parliament, but the engine needs some grease to keep it operating. Sufficient time must be given to interrogate the issues. Proper reports with honest reflections. MPs must be trained to properly get to the bottom of failures. Recommendations must be followed through. But it starts with Parliament itself.

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Parliament is not merely an office complex. It is the physical embodiment of constitutional democracy. Our institution should be a place of prestige, yet we are left to work in a place where respect is dwindling. Vacancies in critical posts are left for months. Offices promised for November are still not in use by May. Old broom sticks are used to jam doors close in the Marx Building. Garbage litters our precinct. The WiFi does not work. Weeds grow in wall cavities inside the NCOP building. Our gallery has been closed for a year. Our precinct is decaying. Proper leadership is needed, politically and administratively.

If South Africans are to believe again that government can work for them, then Parliament must first prove that it is willing to work properly itself. We need a Parliament with teeth, a Parliament with memory, a Parliament that follows the money, follows the promises, follows the failures and follows up. Let us support the budget and put it to good work. I thank you.

Mr D L MOELA (Mpumalanga): House Chairperson, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces and all members present here today, please kindly receive my gracious greetings. This Vote, hon Chair, is particularly equally important as others

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as it promotes and accedes to our democratic values and the founding principles of our democracy.

As Parliament that is democratically elected by the electorate, we are their agents and they're our principals. The people of South Africa expect from us that at all material times we act in a more transparent manner largely driven by their aspirations, needs and preoccupation. In essence, the people of South Africa are central to our democracy as it meant to serve them holistically.

Hon Chair, part of the reasons why this democratic government resolved post1994 to establish a bicameral Parliament is a clear demonstration of the mammoth responsibility bestowed to hon members. This decision to have two Houses departs from our historical reality where certain population groups were pushed on the periphery or deliberately disengaged from participating in decisions that affect their lives.

Therefore, House Chair, the existence and focus of our Parliament cannot be repudiated in advancing democracy, considering the cause of the country's past inequalities, nonrecognition of nonwhite rights and the entire question of citizenship. Today, I can categorically state and without any

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prospects of contradiction that all South Africans despite race, locations, socioeconomic variations are involved in the decision-making processes with Members of Parliament whom they have democratically elected.

What I have just highlighted are the founding values of our constitutional democracy. As the representative of the people, Parliament advances and accedes to the constitutional democracy on various aspects often intertwined. The fact that we are constitutionally mandated to discharge our obligations is a confirmation that the central beneficiaries are the people of South Africa.

At all material times, we must be transparent on our work, and in this instance, legislative oversight and accountability are rooted in the relationship between the executive and the Parliament. The relationship between the two branches of government is founded on the background of the South African model of the separation of powers.

The constitutional value of transparency requires government officials to disclose information in their decision-making processes to answer to the public for their actions when exercising state power. The conduct of the executive must be

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transparent to ensure that the public is aware of decision-making processes that affect them. Legislative oversight is one of the most important functions of good governance and Parliament bears this responsibility because of its constitutional obligation to do so, which entails the watchful and structured scrutiny of the executive in respect of the implementation and adherence to the law, and the application and proper use of the state budget.

To achieve accountability, section 55 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa empowers the National Assembly to maintain oversight over all organs of state, and section 92 enables Parliament to hold the executive accountable.

Legislative oversight can be achieved through the employment of various oversight tools. Some of the popular tools include Budget Votes, Question and Answer sessions in Parliament, Members' Statements, Notices of Motion, Plenary Hearing sessions and, of course, constituency work.

Hon House Chairperson, during the advent of our democracy, we took a conscious stance to ensure that we chart a trajectory where all people of South Africa are involved in government matters. Hence, the Constitution bestowed such authority upon Parliament to ensure public involvement and participation. The

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promulgation of legislative frameworks that must resolve societal challenges from an economic and social point of view is significant for a healthy and vibrant democracy.

Therefore, Parliament is very important in the whole architectural structure of the South African government on the basis that it functions to provide appropriate legislative frameworks for agreed policies and objectives in conformity with the national Constitution.

We are a Parliament of the people. The notion of public participation starts with the electoral system to establish a Parliament. Therefore, Members of Parliament must understand their role, as delegated, within the context of our parliamentary democracy.

We are bound by our democratic ideals which are the fundamental values that underpin our democracy. In advancing this ideal, we must prioritise individual autonomy, liberty, equality, and popular sovereignty, which are our moral compass that government reflects the will of the people and that fundamental human rights are protected.

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In the process of law making, the views and inputs of the public are of paramount importance. This is mainly because such laws are meant to benefit them within the parameters of our Constitution. Laws cannot be legitimate if the views of people are not heard. Equally, we are expected from time to time to interact with our constituents to listen to them and act accordingly. Hence, the establishment of our parliamentary constituency offices, which are an extension of Parliament, brings it closer to the people, which the NCOP is doing very well in terms of its permanency precinct in Cape Town.

Lastly, the significance of this Vote seeks to sustain our democracy without sufficient appropriation of resources. It will be difficult to execute our responsibility, and in our view, it is important that everyone understands the significance and the role of Parliament as Steve Biko once said: "A community is easily divided when their perception of the same thing is different." Having said that, we want to take this opportunity and indicate that we support the budget. Thank you very much for the opportunity. We really appreciate.

Mr R I ALLEN (Western Cape): Hon House Chair of the session, it's Regan Allen, I serve as the deputy speaker in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. It is indeed an honour to be here,

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and to be standing and to partake in this particular debate. So, let me say firstly, that as we gather for this debate, it's a vote for an institution that exists not for its own sake, but as a vehicle for the aspirations of millions of South Africans. As the representatives of the people, we must constantly remind ourselves of a fundamental truth. We do not hold power inherently; we hold power on lease from the citizens who stood in long queues to cast their ballots. Every seat in this particular Chamber and every provincial legislature represents a sacred trust.

We are elected by the people to serve the people, and any legislative process that forgets this truth, loses its democratic legitimacy. The National Council of Provinces occupies a unique and vital position in our constitutional architecture, it was designed to ensure that the diverse voices of our nine provinces are not grounded by a centralised national executive, it is meant to be a dynamic pipeline through which local provincial realities flow directly into the national lawmaking and oversight processes. When the NCOP functions correctly, it guarantees that citizens living in rural towns or in an urban township - I grew up with a speech impediment all the way from Mitchel's Plain, so please forgive me if that speech impediment starts to creep in.

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Unfortunately, we often see a widening gap between constitutional ideal and the daily realities of legislative practices. The NCOP must never become a mere rubber stamp for the executive branch of government; it must remain a fierce guardian of provincial autonomy and rigorous arena for oversight. Through oversight, it means interrogation; it means ensuring that every rand under Vote 2 is spent on expanding democracy, rather than contradicting it through rush processes and superficial consultations. In the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, for example, we tabled our budget and we have anchored our budget into five key strategic priorities that will ultimately guide our planning, our resource allocation as well as our delivery.

Each of our priorities is directly linked to a specific outcome, and outcomes that strengthen public trust, improve institutional effectiveness, but also enhance public participation to ultimately deepen democracy in the Western Cape. We have consistently strived to show what a truly participate religious nature looks like. We believe that public involvement cannot be treated as a perfunctory or as something that it just really active for the sake of looking active. But we have tried to ensure that we exercise each and every legal requirement. It must be an active and ongoing

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conversation with the public. One of the shining examples of this commitment is the establishment of the Western Cape Youth Parliament that particularly, it's an initiative which is structured and it's an institutionalised platform where young people from all walks of life across the Western Cape come together to debate pressing issues.

They debate about the economy, safety and local governance. Most importantly, the resolutions adopted by Youth Parliament do not gather dust on a shelf; they are formally channelled directly into the relevant standing committees for consideration and action. This is how we build and believe to build a civic pipeline by showing the next generation that their voices can genuinely shape the legislative agenda. When we look at the national sphere, however, we see a deeply concerning trend that threatens to undermine the very foundation of public participation and the ongoing legal battle.

Earlier on, the hon Badenhorst spoke about the Gender Commission and what came out in the Zondo commission. We also cannot forget what happened in this particular House and in the NA in the year 2023, which dealt directly with the National Health Insurance, NHI, and that particular ongoing

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legal battle at the Constitutional Court, regarding the National Health Insurance Act, it is a stock and historic warning. The Western Cape government has taken the necessary steps to challenge this legislation because the path taken to pass it represents a total breakdown of constitutional duty.

The core of the challenge is not about the abstract merits of universal health care which will support in principle. However, it is a blatant failure of Parliament and the NCOP to ultimately facilitate meaningful public participation as explicitly demanded by sections 59 and 72 of our Constitution. During that particular process of the National Health Insurance Bill, the legislative time frame was heavily compressed, and eight-week window was forced through, making it completely impossible to conduct deep and reasonable public engagement across expensive geographic regions.

Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of substantive written submissions from citizens, health care professionals and provincial stakeholders were effectively sidelined and ignored. They were ignored to such an extent in order to rush the legislation through the archives of Parliament. That was an insult to the electorate. We cannot claim to govern in the name of the people while actively silencing the warnings and

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the insights. The landmark Doctors of Life judgment have established long ago that the legislation carries massive social and economic consequences, and that threshold for reasonable public participation rises significantly.

The National Parliament failed that test, and lamentably with a health care bill, it chose to tick box exercise over genuine listening, and that is why we have been forced to seek intervention from the highest court in the land. We cannot stand or support a culture that threatens the public as an afterthought. Through Budget Vote No 2, we have an opportunity, ultimately, to strengthen our democratic institution, to expand the reach of our committees and to ensure that no citizens is left out of the lawmaking process.

The Western Cape Provincial Parliament will continue to defend constitutional rights of our people to be heard, to be respected and to be included. Let us restore the proper link between our provincial legislatures and this Council; let us ensure that public participation is treated with a gravity deserves, and for our legitimacy to always come from voters and we must never there to fail them. It would be remiss of me not to also mention, colleagues, over the last 18 months, as the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, we have seen first-

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hand how in this dispensation we have benefited from the chairperson of committees not only here in the NCOP but also in the NA by ensuring that the chairs of chairs across our country, can ultimately, engage meaningfully.

We recently discussed a framework for our planning in order to lead us to a place of better planning, so that the resources can be better spent. So, I would want to thank the chair of the committees and for the role that he has played, and we are looking forward to continuing valuable working relationships. Thank you so much. I have one minute and 26 seconds remaining, so, before I'm accused of not taking all my time, let me also say thank you to the work that you do, it is so vital and the work of the officials in this House towards ensuring that we have a participatory Parliament that ultimately reaches all of our towns, townships and rural areas across South Africa. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fenies): Hon Allan, thank you very much, and sorry for the mistake in the first place. But maybe I am predicting, and you must receive. So, greetings to the hon Chairperson, Deputy Chair, Chief Whip as well as all the other hon members. I was so overwhelmed, hon Radebe, that

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I even forgot to greet. So, we will now move over to the virtual platform, hon Breedts, she has five minutes.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Thank you very much to hon Allen, and sorry for the mistake in the first place. Maybe, I am predicting. And you must receive. Greetings to the hon Chairperson, Deputy Chair, Chief Whip, as well as all the other hon members. I was so overwhelmed, hon Radebe that I forgot to even greet.

Afrikaans:

Me T BREEDT: Agb Voorsitter, agb komiteevoorsitter, dit is goed om u daar op die Stoel te sien vandag. Baie sterkte met u werk.

English:

Today we debate the budget of Parliament – the very institution entrusted with protecting democracy, overseeing the executive, while safeguarding the interests of the people of South Africa. It is therefore deeply concerning that the information before us is so limited in detail.

The Estimates of National Expenditure, ENE, gives us broad figures, but very little substance. There is limited

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information on spending patterns, programme performance and even the rebuilding of Parliament after the devastating fire. That creates a serious challenge for proper oversight. If Parliament expects transparency from every department and state entity, then Parliament itself must also be willing to be transparent.

Afrikaans:

Die VF Plus glo dat geen instelling verhewe is bo aanspreeklikheid nie, nie die uitvoerende gesag nie, nie staatsentiteite nie, en beslis ook nie die Parlement self nie. Wanneer belastingbetalers sukkel om kop bo water te hou, het hulle die reg om te weet hoe elke rand bestee word.

Volgens die begrotingsdokument word meer as R3,5 miljard oor die mediumtermyn aan die Parlement toegeken. Dit sluit administrasie, wetgewende werk en ondersteuning aan lede in. Maar die publiek verwag meer as net syfers op papier. Hulle verwag sigbare waarde vir geld.

Hulle wil weet hoe die herbou van die Parlement vorder. Hulle wil weet of projekte betyds en binne begroting afgehandel gaan word. Hulle wil weet of daar behoorlike beheermaatreëls bestaan om vermorsing en wanbestuur te voorkom.

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English:

Parliament cannot effectively oversee the rest of government while avoiding proper scrutiny of its own affairs. Oversight must begin here, in this House. If we want South Africans to trust democratic institutions again, then Parliament must lead by example.

Afrikaans:

Die werklikheid is dat openbare vertroue onder druk is. Suid-Afrikaners kyk na stygende lewenskoste, swak dienslewering, infrastruktuur wat agteruitgaan en 'n ekonomie wat sukkel om werk te skep. In daardie omstandighede raak mense toenemend skepties, wanneer hulle voel dat regeringsinstellings nie verantwoordbaar optree nie.

Die VF Plus glo in 'n kleiner, meer doeltreffende staat, wat belastinggeld met dieselfde verantwoordelikheid hanteer as wat gesinne hul eie huishoudelike begrotings bestuur. Elke rand wat verlore gaan deur swak beheer of ondoeltreffendheid, is 'n rand wat nie na veiligheid, ekonomiese groei of dienslewering terugvloei nie.

English:

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This debate is therefore about more than a budget allocation. It is about credibility. It is about accountability. And it is about whether Parliament is prepared to hold itself to the same standards it demands from others. The FF Plus supports a Parliament that takes its constitutional responsibility seriously, not as a rubber stamp for the executive, but as a true watchdog for the people of South Africa.

Afrikaans:

Ons sal daarom aanhou vrae vra. Ons sal aanhou aandring op sterker finansiële beheer, beter openbare verslagdoening en groter deursigtigheid oor hoe die Parlement sy geld bestee. Hierdie instelling behoort nie aan politici nie. Dit behoort aan die mense van Suid-Afrika.

English:

And that is why we say today, it is our time.

Afrikaans:

Dis ons tyd. Dis tyd vir verantwoordbaarheid, tyd vir deursigtigheid, tyd vir 'n Parlement wat weer die vertroue van die publiek verdien. Dankie.

Mr M M PETER: Hon Chair, ...

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IsiXhosa:

... ndivumele ndicele ezinkosini zephondo laseMpuma Koloni kuquka nabemi boMzantsi Afrika jikelele ukuba ndintingele eNgilani.

English:

The National Council of Provinces carries a significant mandate in ensuring that provincial interests are considered in the national legislative process, through participation in the national legislative process and providing a forum for public consideration of issues affecting provinces. We have also been entrusted to promote the principles of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations.

To achieve that mandate, we must do the work collectively to represent the South African provinces in Parliament. According to the allocation to the oversight committees of Parliament, as in the 2026-27 budget of NCOP, the allocation to committees will increase by 17% to R3,5 million each. This is a crucial fund to conduct oversight. However, committees produce reports and recommendations but fail to enforce the deadlines for implementation of the recommendations and regular evaluation.

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When we identify challenges, more particularly in municipalities, we must follow up to ensure that such challenges are resolved and that basic services are delivered to our people accordingly. For us to do our job correctly and serve the needs of our respective provinces, we must acknowledge that the people are the source of power and the authority and the power we exercise belong to the people, to intensify our public engagement and strengthen Parliament constituency work.

Taking Parliament to the people should be done regularly to gain first-hand experience. In identifying emerging challenges in municipalities and provide recommendations, including encouraging legislative reforms, it is important to note that, without adequate contact with the people and different sectors, we will run the risk of being alienated from a challenge impacting our constituencies.

IsiXhosa:

Xa ndibuyela kooFaku, umcelimngeni otshisa ibunzi kubekelwa bucala kweelwimi zikaNtu. Nangona uMgaqosiseko weli lizwe ukhuthaza ukulingana kweelwimi, le mithetho siyiphumezayo namhlanje iqulunkqwe ngolwimi lwasemzini. Sinomcelimngeni kule Ndlu wokuba zonke iilwimi zilingane. Mandiwudandalazise lo mba

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kuSihlalo weBhunga lamaPhondo leSizwe nakuSihlalo obambeleyo ukuba olu hlahlomali siluphumeza ngenxa yoncumo lwakho nobubele onabo kule Ndlu. Sincoma indlela umcimbi owandlala ngawo nokungathathicala ukubonakalisa ukuba ungumntu omele urhulumente jikelele.

Ngaloo mazwi, siyi-UDM sithi siyaluphumeza olu hlahlomali nangona sikhwina. Sikhwina sisiya kuba xa singaluphumezi sakuba salela uluntu lwethu uphuhliso. Ngaloo mazwi i-UDM iyaluxhasa olu hlahlomali. Enkosi.

Mr M BILLY: Hon Acting Chair, fellow South Africans, as this debate draws to a close, we must remind ourselves why Parliament exists. But before I do that, let me start with the EFF and the MKP.

You reject the budget of Parliament, yet you expect this very Parliament to fund your work as Members of Parliament. You expect salaries, you expect flights, you expect committee travel, you expect Subsistence and Travel, S and T, you expect oversight visits and benchmarking trips, you expect to be fed during meetings, yet you reject the very budget that keeps this institution functioning. Quite bizarre.

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In fact, this is probably the one budget that all of us should support, because without it, none of us can perform our constitutional responsibilities.

Although, Chairperson, judging by recent developments, it appears some in the MKP may currently have a chief interest in extortion than in appropriations.

Hon members, all of us in this House must ask ourselves a simple question: What real impact have we made in the lives of the people who sent us here? How have we used Parliament, our committees and our oversight powers to change the trajectory of our communities? Because Parliament is not just a place for speeches, it is not a fashion show for suits and dresses, and it is certainly not a place to compete over who can quote the most philosophers or liberation slogans. Quite recently, the ANC has been using and abusing Amilcar Cabral, saying, Tell No Lies, Claim No Easy Victories. That is not what we are here for.

Chairperson, Parliament does not exist merely to adopt reports. We are here to defend the people of South Africa through accountability, oversight and constitutional governance. And the people we represent here are under immense

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pressure. Communities are battling with collapsing municipalities, failing infrastructure, rising crime, corruption, unemployment and poor public services.

Against this reality, Parliament must ask itself a difficult question: Are we making enough difference in the lives of ordinary South Africans? Because the true measure of Parliament is not how many meetings we hold, hon Mokwele, Limpopo. The true measure is whether government departments fear accountability and whether communities see results. That is the true measure of Parliament.

Hon Chairperson, oversight cannot become a box-ticking exercise. Oversight without consequence becomes a theatre.

Across KwaZulu-Natal and other provinces, we continue to encounter communities failed by government. We see police stations operating under unacceptable conditions, collapsing infrastructure and public institutions under severe strain.

Parliamentary oversight must not end in committee rooms, hon members, it must expose failures, it must force intervention, it must protect public money and it must improve service

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delivery. And where oversight is strong, results follow. Where oversight is weak, corruption and dysfunction flourish.

Hon members, Parliament itself must also lead by example. As my colleague, hon Badenhorst, has said, if we demand transparency from departments and entities, then Parliament itself must remain transparent, accessible and accountable.

South Africans deserve meaningful access to parliamentary proceedings. Public participation cannot be treated as a secondary issue in a constitutional democracy.

And yes, Parliament must also explain how the Secretary to Parliament managed to secure such a significant salary increase while South Africans are suffering economically while the ANC and MKP protect him.

This budget, therefore, cannot merely sustain administration, it must strengthen accountability, it must strengthen oversight and it must strengthen public trust. And as members of the NCOP, we carry an additional responsibility ... hon Mananiso, listen ... we are the voice of provinces and communities. The NCOP cannot become disconnected from the lived realities of our people. We must remain rooted in the

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struggles of rural communities, failing municipalities, collapsing infrastructure and communities demanding dignity.

So, hon members, the strength of Parliament will never be found in buildings and budgets alone. Its strength lies in whether it protects democracy, defends accountability and delivers hope to the people of South Africa.

And let me end with this: We are not defenders of Ministers, we are not defenders of political parties, we are not defenders of government failure, we are defenders of the people of South Africa ... [Interjections.] ... listen ... we must never use Parliament to defend the indefensible. So, let us work ... let us do the work the people sent us to do here.

The DA will continue fighting for a Parliament that works for the people, not the one that merely watches government failures from a distance ... listen, hon Mananiso ... I thank you.

Mr B A RADEBE: Hon Chairperson of this session, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Deputy Chairperson, permanent and special delegates of the NCOP, representatives

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of organised local government, management and parliamentary support staff, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen ...

Sesotho:

... dumelang.

IsiZulu:

Sanibonani. Anginamona, anginanzondo, kuphela ngidumisa i-ANC. I-ANC iyasiseka lesi sabelomali ngoba nakhu ezokwenza; ...

English:

Today, as we debate Parliament Budget Vote 2 and the critical policy imperatives that guide our path, we do so at a moment etched deeply in the consciousness of our continent. This debate takes place in a month that carries a profound resonance for all of us. It is taking place during the Africa Month, the epoch in which Africa Day was conceived in 1963, when the leaders of our continent gathered in Addis Ababa to ignite the flame of unity, hope, and progress.

As we debate the budget and priorities of this Parliament, we are called upon to remember that our actions reverberate far beyond these Chambers. They echo across Africa's mountains, rivers, townships, and cities.

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Hon members, our Parliament stands not only as the custodian of our people's will, but as a beacon for Africa's collective destiny. We are leaders in a continent striving for peace, prosperity, and dignity.

History compels us to act with vision. As we mark this legacy and the living spirit of Africa Day, I invoke the words of our beloved Tata Nelson Mandela, who once said:

"I am because we are. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what I ought to be."

These words remind us that South Africa's destiny is bound to the continent's destiny. The policy choices we make today on international cooperation, peace and security, and trade and innovation must bear the fingerprint of African unity and self-determination.

Our international relations programme must be robust, expanding parliamentary diplomacy, supporting the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, and lending the weight to Africa's call for reform of global governance.

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This Budget Vote of Parliament is not simply a transaction of numbers. It is a statement of intent. It is about positioning Parliament to be an active force in shaping the future of Africa in a world marked by shifting geopolitics, new alliances, and persistent challenges. Parliament must wield its budget and influence to ensure that South Africa is at the forefront of shaping equitable world order.

We must be the architects of our own narrative, refusing to be defined by others. On Parliament's international work, hon delegates, Parliament's engagement in international relations is informed by South Africa's foreign policy and parliamentary diplomacy imperatives.

In turn, this is an expression of the democratic values of our country entrenched in our Constitution. The vision of our Parliament is to create a better Africa and a better world. Engagement in international relations is important in achieving our country's goal of improving the equality of lives of South Africans.

Our participation in parliamentary platforms includes advanced motions and resolutions of key issues on our national agenda: human rights, democratic advancements, health, women

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development and empowerment, and gender equality. We also employ alternative methods of engagement.

These include knowledge sharing on processes and procedures, legislative and policy alignment with country groupings, and promoting the democratic electoral system throughout our election observer mission.

During 2025, in the first and second quarter, as well as the first and second quarter of 2026, this Parliament continued its work on regional, continental, and multilateral institutions. It further adopted the following agreements.

One, Protocol to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on Competition Policy; and Protocol to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on Women and Youth Trade. It also ratified the agreement on the establishment of the Africa Export-Import Bank and the government of the Republic of South Africa.

Hon Chairperson, I wish to take a moment to reflect the subject of international agreements as their integral component of the strategic priorities identified by the Seventh Parliament. Consequently, Parliament has the

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responsibility to not only ratify but also to vigilantly monitor the implementation and impact of these international agreements.

In this regard, our oversight function requires that we carefully assess whether these agreements are advancing our national interests, upholding the rights and well-being of our citizens, and contributing positively to our developmental aspirations.

Parliament's international relations must address both cross-cutting development themes as well as implementation modalities. Furthermore, in keeping with our government's foreign policy, the Seventh Parliament will focus substantively on the consideration of the Africa Agenda 2063.

That is why one of the strategic priorities of Parliament is to improve international engagement and shape the Global Agenda and improve monitoring of international agreements.

In this regard, we will continue growing our substantive engagements and participation with key regional and continental and international structures, including Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Pan-African

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Parliament, the Southern African Development Community, SADC Parliamentary Forum, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU.

In September this year, South African Parliament will host the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. The hosting of the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference presents a remarkable opportunity for our Parliament to establish a meaningful and enduring legacy for the Seventh Parliament.

It will position our Parliament as the leader on the global stage and set a high standard for the future parliamentary sessions. As I said, Parliament will shape the Global Agenda.

This very Parliament of the Republic of South Africa deserves to be appreciated for its visionary leadership in spearheading the transformation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, CPA, into an internationally recognised parliamentary organisation. For more than 100 years, it was a charity organisation which was registered in London. But this year, it's going to become an international parliamentary organisation.

When we host the sixth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in September, in Cape Town, the Commonwealth Parliamentary

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Association will have undergone a transformative evolution transitioning from its long standing as a charity organisation to that of an international parliamentary equipped with diplomatic privileges. That's what this Parliament is doing. It is revolutionary and visionary.

Hon members, last year our Parliament successfully convened the 11th G20 Parliamentary Speakers Summit welcoming parliamentary leaders from G20 nations and invited countries. The 11th P20 Summit marked a transformative moment signalling the shift in the role of parliaments from traditional deliberative bodies to engines of global change.

South Africa's leadership was instrumental in emphasising that solidarity, equality, and sustainability are not just aspirational ideas, but urgent imperatives demanding immediate legislative action and sustained international cooperation. This summit's focus areas included the disaster resilience, just energy transition, financing, debt, sustainability, sustainability, critical minerals governance, and youth and women empowerment.

Hon members, the summit culminated in a successful adoption of a joint declaration by consensus. The adoption of ...

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[Inaudible.] ... with the P20 Summit will be referred to the relevant parliamentary committees for a comprehensive consideration on policy alignment and coordination.

Hon members, what is also very important on my portfolio is that I deal with member support. The portfolio of member support stands as a cornerstone in empowering our esteemed members to fulfil their constitutional duties with excellence, integrity, and dedication.

The work of ensuring that every member is equipped and trained, supported to discharge their roles effectively and efficiently, is not merely administrative it is a vital enabler of democratic governance and service to the nation.

Our collective commitment to robust member support signifies our determination to uphold the highest standards of parliamentary performance and accountability. Central to the delivery of this mandate is the Members' Support Forum, an esteemed advisory body to the Executive Authority on all matters relating to member support.

As I'm standing here, I can proudly say that since the inception of the Seventh Parliament, we've got 85 bursars who

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are parliamentarians. Those bursars are fully funded by the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. This support has enabled our members to pursue qualifications across a wide range of levels and across the political parties including 32 undergraduate degrees, 23 masters degrees, seven doctorate and Doctor of Philosophy, PhD students, as well as honours, postgraduate diplomas, diploma certificates, and foundational qualifications.

This spread of qualification demonstrates a diverse and inclusive approach to capacity building, supporting members at different stages of their educational and developmental journeys. Importantly, this aligns with the capacity building policy, which recognises that members require continuous development opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills, competencies in line with their constitutional responsibilities.

Hon Ryder, this Parliament definitely has visionary leadership in the administrative sector, even political. But what is important here, hon Ryder, as my counter chairperson, I think that you must really listen to the Deputy Speaker of the Western Cape legislature.

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He was very appreciative of the work done by this House. I think that every member of this House must appreciate what the Deputy Speaker of the Western Cape, the hon Allen has said about this House. He was very appreciative of this House.

Secondly, I'll also go to what the hon Billy and the hon Badenhorst were raising. They raised concerns about the Secretary to Parliament's, STP's salary and appointment. I think that they were not provided with the full details. One of the fundamental principles we must hold as Parliament is to respect the laws of the country. The Constitution of the country has got Chapter 9 institutions and as parliamentarians, we are expected to abide by the decisions of those institutions unless we take them for review before courts.

As we are seated here today, both this House and the National Assembly adopted Parliament's annual statements. In those annual statements, the supreme auditing body of the country, the Auditor-General found no irregularities in either the appointment of the Secretary to Parliament or the salary which was apportioned to the Secretary. Who are we to challenge the

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Auditor-General without going to court? I believe we should accept that he was duly appointed and deserves this position.

As the hon Badenhorst was saying that the Secretary to Parliament has more than President, it is true. It is not only the Secretary to Parliament in the public sector who earns more than the President. The head of Development Bank of South Africa earns R15,5 million per annum, the SA Revenue Service, SARS Commissioner earns R10,7 million far more than the President. [Interjections]

Ms J S MANANISO: Chairperson?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Yes?

Ms J S MANANISO: I would like to stand on Rule 47 and 48.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Hon Radebe, could you please take your seat? Hon Mananiso?

Ms J S MANANISO: Yes, Chair, the Rule indicates that delegates may not converse loud when other members are on the podium. So, the hon Badenhorst has been doing it repeatedly and it's not heckling.

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Hon Badenhorst, just a second just a second while she is proceeding with the order. Thank you very much, hon. I will request the members to heckle but not that loud. Thank you very much.

Mr B A RADEBE: Thank you, hon Chairperson. As I have indicated, there are many individuals in the public sector who earn far more than the President, yet we don't see those individuals being subjected to being demeaned the same way as the STP. I believe that, as this House, we must respect the processes which were followed.

The Auditor-General has approved Parliament's financial statements and there was nothing amiss about the STP's salary and his appointment. We cannot we cannot debate that now

Secondly, I would like to respond to the hon Mhlongo of the of the MKP who suggested that this Parliament is not doing its job properly because the rebuilding of Parliament is behind schedule. Yes, the project may be behind schedule, you know why, because Parliament is a heritage site and you cannot just bring a contractor and commence construction.

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What is happening here is that every step of the construction process must be approved by the South African Heritage Resources Agency. They do it in their own time. However, what is critical here is that there's nothing amiss. There's not even single cent that is unaccounted for as matters stand today.

It is unfortunate that the hon Gericke has left the House. If you have a proper look through the budget; you would have seen that for the first time in the history of this Parliament the budget allocated to NCOP committees is higher than that of the National Assembly committees.

You must appreciate that there's Visionary leadership here. We had to fight very hard to ensure that we get an extra slice. When you speak about the consolidated fund, it has increased by 100%. That's visionary leadership. I think that we must be appreciative of what we have before we lose it.

Sesotho:

Ke a leboha.

IsiZulu:

Ngiyabonga.

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Afrikaans:

Baie dankie.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Ms R M Mtshweni-Tsipane): Hon Chairperson, thank you very much for the opportunity. Let me start off by thanking all the participants in the debate on the work of Parliament to deepen accountability, public participation and quality of our laws. Our democratic Parliament stands firmly grounded in the founding principle of our Constitution. This principle calls upon us to be accountable, responsive and open in all we do.

Transparency, hon delegates, is no longer an option, but it is a fundamental obligation. Hence, we have established, hon Badenhorst, the Joint Standing Committee on Financial Management of Parliament, JSCFMP, which you are serving in. The matters that have been raised here, have been ventilated in that committee. Accordingly, decisions were taken. As Executive Authority, EA, we have to adhere to the decisions and continuously report to the committee.

This commitment is further reinforced through the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, FMPPLA. Through this Act, Parliament ensures openness in its

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planning, budgeting and implementation processes. Just last week, we were held up in that committee, precisely discussing these three fundamental issues that I have just raised. It also enables consistent monitoring of expenditure, thereby promoting responsible use of public resources.

The Deputy Speaker of the Western Cape spoke so passionately about the National Health Insurance, NHI, legislative processes. Having listened to him, one would think that their voice was silenced. I want to remind the Deputy Speaker that Western Cape legislature missed the submission deadline on the NHI. You submitted your negotiation and final mandate on the 24th and 27th of November 2023, respectively. The committee, once again, convened to deliberate on the late mandate submitted by the Western Cape legislature because this House values every input and would not have suppressed the voice of the people in the process that impacts their lives.

Once again, hon members, we really want to thank you for the valuable inputs that you have made in this debate. They strengthen the work that we are doing as a collective. We remain accountable, as Parliament, to the people of South Africa and to your good selves. Therefore, it would be

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important that from time to time, we account for the work that we are doing as the EA of this institution.

There shouldn't be any favour that you are doing us. I've not heard of any party, when we meet in the joint standing committee, that favours a particular political party. We are being lashed very harshly by all parties, and we comply, not by choice but because we are obligated by the Constitution and the Act that regulates the work of Parliament. Having said that, hon Badenhorst, we are once again going to meet in the JSCFMP where we give a detailed account as to how we have spent the funds that have been appropriated by Parliament to these two respective Houses.

I thank you once again, hon members. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. We really appreciate your input.

Debate concluded.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Thank you very much hon Chairperson, we really appreciate your input ...

[Interjections.]. Just because it's the Chair, I will allow it.

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I would like to thank all the permanent delegates, MECs, special delegates as well as SA Local Government Association, Salga, representatives for availing themselves for the sitting. Hon delegates, this concludes the business of the day.

The Council adjourned at 17:07.