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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

The Council met at 14:11.

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

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

APPROPRIATION BILL

(Policy debate)

VOTE No 13 - Public Works and Infrastructure and Vote No 33 - Human Settlements:

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: House
Chairperson, what a great pleasure and honour it is, to be in the NCOP today. It is the first time that I have been on the

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floor of the NCOP and not observing from the gallery. Let me welcome the Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, the hon Zikalala, the Minister of Human Settlements, the hon Kubayi, the Chairperson of the Select Committee, hon Richard Badenhorst, hon members of the National Council of Provinces, the Director-General for Public Works and Infrastructure and all members.

Today we meet just six days after President Cyril Ramaphosa opened the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. We emphasised that the Government of National Unity, GNU, where it must plan to unleash a wave of infrastructure investment in South Africa. We as the department are ready to play our role in doing so and to give concrete meaning to the president's vision where he said:

From our largest metros to our deepest rural areas, we have a clear intention to turn our country into a construction site as roads, bridges, houses, schools, hospitals and clinics are built and as broadband fibre is laid, and new power lines are installed.

I appeal to each and every one of you to join myself, in the department, in this journey as we work to turn South Africa

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into a construction site to improve the lives of all who live here. We are delighted with the magnificent and positive response we are receiving from our partners in the built environment industry and stakeholders as we embark on this path of rebuilding South Africa and to facilitate the resurgence of our economy through infrastructure-led development.

We must become obsessed with infrastructure-led growth that will create jobs throughout our country. House chairperson, we duly recognise the fact that we cannot stand alone in pursuing this vision of growing our economy through infrastructure development. Provinces and municipalities will be the pivot upon which this infrastructure revolution evolves. This is an ambitious undertaking that will require an all-hands-on deck approach, especially from our provinces and local government representatives.

This is why I plan to work with local government and provinces to develop and co-ordinate a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure development throughout the country. In my capacity as Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, I am committed to ensuring the department is transparent so that we

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build public trust that holds us accountable to deliver. This undertaking will be a guiding light in every decision we make.

As the Minister responsible for the department, I want to bring a new hope to our country that will see our department playing a leading role in growing an inclusive South African economy through infrastructure growth, one where infrastructure development becomes a top priority by putting in place measures that will increase the ratio of gross fixed capital formation as referenced to GDP from 14% to 30%.

We will work tirelessly to rebuild and build new public private partnerships to roll out energy, communication, infrastructure, water and transport infrastructure. We will be amplifying the sustainable development goals and use them as an impact to leverage private sector investment through procurement. We must make sure that we get more value for our money when the state procures goods and services that actually benefit local communities and not just a select few. And we must ramp up maintenance and utilisation of the state asset portfolio. We are also going to work hard to reposition the portfolio, to assume its role as a strategic catalyst for job creation and poverty alleviation, and we will do so by

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building a professional, capable and ethical department that creates the conditions for enterprises to flourish.

We are also going to build a new culture that is based on excellence, transparency and succession planning throughout the department. This will be evidence backed by research to ensure that we make the very best decisions possible. We are going to eliminate red tape and support the growth of small businesses. We want to desperately invest in new research, technology and innovation to improve business systems and project management. We will work to develop an appropriate skills pipeline that will meet the demands of the ever-building South African built environment.

We will be relentless in rooting out corruption, criminality and sabotage in the construction centre. We want to call on all South Africans and stakeholders in the construction and property sectors to join us to build South Africa together by turning it into a construction site. We intend to add urgency to the pace of infrastructure delivery by innovating and inviting new ideas to achieve what needs to be done.

The success of our country lies in us working together, using our collective strength to build a country that we are all

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shareholders of. We will be embarking on a new path to build these partnerships with stakeholders, with the private sector, with business to find and get behind new bankable infrastructure projects. House Chair, with relentless determination, we attend to get more cranes in our skyline by creating an enabling environment for the private sector to invest in.

In turning South Africa into a construction site, we must address the challenges that impede the implementation of the goals, which include disruption and hijacking of construction sites, projects not being completed on time and within its budget, corruption and poor project management, construction industry safety standards not being adhered to and strengthening the professionalism of our department.

Hon members, infrastructure serves as the foundation of our nation's economy by providing the necessary physical and social systems for sustained growth and development. Through infrastructure networks, we can improve productivity, attract investment and enhance the overall well-being of every person who calls this country home. Transformation and jobs can only come from economic growth, and that is why we must support every entity that can help us achieve this target, they are

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not mutually exclusive. In this regard, Infrastructure South Africa is expected to lead in creating a conducive environment for increased private sector. Infrastructure South Africa, Isa will receive extra special attention from myself, as it is a special purpose vehicle that will focus on ensuring that we have well-packaged projects that are financially viable, that are catalytic in nature and are delivered on time with all stakeholders meeting their commitments.

I am absolutely committed to see Isa become the focal point of infrastructure planning in our country. We can no longer afford a fragmented approach to infrastructure delivery, which has only delivered in different results over time. To this to this end, I have engaged the President and Cabinet for Isa to play a bigger role, as well as highlighting the need to broaden our funding models for infrastructure development. I will be having further meetings with both the Minister of Finance and Treasury very soon to look at how better we can work together.

House Chairperson, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure is the biggest landlord in South Africa. However, there is no accurate picture on what we own as a department. We have committed ourselves to ensuring, in the

medium term, we will develop a comprehensive asset register for the government and the owners of these assets, the people of our country, and we will make it public in the interests of transparency. We have pledged to address the mismanagement and underutilisation of government assets.

There is an urgent need to establish a systematic approach to asset management through a credible and integrated register. Such a register will aid us in making informed decisions regarding asset lifecycle management, from acquisition to maintenance to either repurposing or disposing of assets via lease or sale. We must be in a position to track all of our assets to prevent loss or theft and maintain compliance with financial reporting standards.

House Chairperson, as I have said publicly, we must ensure that our public assets are used for public good and this is a non-negotiable, going forward. The total value of our properties under the custodianship of our department is estimated to be R154 billion. We need to ensure this value is correct so that we can leverage state assets to fund maintenance and building projects.

Research has been initiated with a view to commence survey and registration of identified unalienated land, including islands in the rest of the country, with the assistance of the Chief Surveyor General. This will include the department paying its rates and taxes that it owes to municipality to municipalities in terms of the Municipal Properties Rates Act. The department has successfully invested over 25 000 properties against its target of 27 300, translating into a 92% progress investing. We plan to invest a further 420 properties in this financial year, but we must speed up the completion of the investing project to ensure it is completed in the shortest possible time.

House Chairperson, the leasing portfolio has grown significantly in the past due to a lack of available suitable government properties. These other departments have increasingly opted for leased properties, leading to a budget exceeding R5 billion and leases per year. This is unsustainable, and the department's goal is to reduce the department's leasing portfolio. I want to see government departments leasing government buildings in CBDs, not just those in upmarket areas with sea views. We must use our buildings to lead inner city regeneration and it is against this backdrop that we have made a call for the prioritisation

of available state properties for the accommodation of offices and accommodation for government departments.

Similarly, I want to work with the public to ensure that we are able to identify buildings and land that are threat to public health and safety. This will allow us to either intervene or look to partners in other spheres of government who may want to take this asset over for public good uses. I know the Minister of Human Settlements is desperate to see me about accessing some land for her and we will likely be giving it over to them in due course. The department has developed a property optimization strategy which has been approved by the Sixth Administration. And we will seek to take this forward as a viable and efficient vehicle to deliver a comprehensive value creation through state immovable asset portfolios.

Furthermore, it seeks to attract direct private sector investment in our portfolio at a projected R10 billion during the Seventh Administration. We will also look at the commercialisation of our spaces, which include advertising, parking and conferencing facilities. In addition, there will be a greater focused approach on itemized billing through the user-charge model, disposable disposal of obsolete assets and lease of assets underutilized by the state. This will allow us

to generate much needed revenue for our department. We will also continue to renegotiate high rental rates with those remaining lease properties to achieve more favourable terms over the medium and long term.

House Chair, the department will strengthen social facilitation and improve communication with stakeholders and communities on infrastructure projects. These are important for managing community expectations and for community buying. Equally, the department will work closely with law enforcement to bring an end to work stoppages or disruptions at construction sites. I want to be very clear on this point. Anyone who seeks to hold back infrastructure projects must be treated as an enemy of the state. There is no room for negotiations or delays to our projects any further.

House Chairperson, it is unthinkable that in 2024 we still have pit toilets in our schools. This remains a risk to the lives of our children and I cannot, in good consciousness, allow this danger to continue without urgent intervention. In this regard, I have engaged the Minister of Basic Education, the hon Siviwe Gwarube and we have agreed in principle that we need to collectively declare a war on pit toilets. We stand ready to support and work together with the Department of

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Basic Education to eradicate them. We will be meeting with Treasury and MECs in public works and education on how these toilets will be eradicated from our schools once and for all. It is unacceptable that funds are returned to Treasury by provinces that have been allocated for the eradication of pit toilets.

House Chairperson, we will continue implementing measures to detect, prevent and prosecute corruption in our department. In 2023, the department completed phase one of its lifestyle audits into senior management with the assistance of the Specialised Investigation Unit, SIU. Forty-eight senior managers completed the exercise and the outcomes have been shared with them. Most managers have been found to be low risk. In 2024 I have requested the director-general to initiate phase two of the assessment, focusing on high-risk areas within the department with around 380 officials being involved in this phase, which is projected to span over 24 months and sooner, if possible. The SIU is assisting us in this effort and these audits are essential management tools to prevent fraud and corruption in the public service.

House Chairperson, our budget vote allocation over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, METF is R23,8 billion with

R7,6 billion being budgeted for the next financial year. The focus of this budget is this amount of R7,6 billion. The budget will be spent towards creating work opportunities by leading and co-ordinating the Extended Public Work Programme, EPWP programme by providing policy and sector oversight, building state capacity to facilitate skills development and strengthen the skills pipeline and providing direct support to sponsors of priority public infrastructure projects. These areas of focus contribute towards the realisation of the National Development Plan, NDP's vision of facilitating job creation and improving public infrastructure, specifically priority three as well as building a capable and ethical state.

The EPWP programme has a total budget of R2,2 billion in the financial year, which unfortunately has received a R700 million cut. The decrease in this budget was due to the baseline reduction implemented under the transfer for provinces, municipalities and non-state sector programme. The baseline cut has resulted in the review of work opportunities to be created over the medium term.

However, House Chairperson, I think it is time that we start to consider what a reimagined EPWP programme looks like. That

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is skills outcome based and which leads to South Africans climbing up the opportunity ladder rather than being stuck in the programme for years on end. House Chairperson, it must be noted that the 56 414 state properties are currently occupied by government departments at an average R26 per square metre, while more than 2000 privately owned properties that are occupied by government departments at an average of R120 per square meter. Therefore, there is a funding shortfall of R7 billion for the property management trading entity to provide suitable accommodation to government departments. The entity will focus on developing presence to support efficiency and integrated government planning by grouping departments that provide similar services to make service delivery more efficient.

Also, House Chairperson, this morning, I met with the DG and officials and we will look to implement the earlier Cabinet decision to make the Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE a stand-alone property entity that can then assess what it will do with its assets going forward.

House Chairperson, in terms of monies owed to our department, that total amount for invoice financial services is now R20 billion, of which R16,7 billion has been recovered from

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client departments. As some user departments do not pay invoices issued, it affects our ability to provide quality services and settle invoices. The department has been engaging National Treasury and affected departments to improve debt collection and as the executive authority, I will be engaging affected Ministers of offending departments to ensure that they pay us what is rightfully ours, or else we may have to consider other options which may not be to everyone's liking.

Furthermore, we will be engaging the Auditor-General of South Africa to request that departments that do not pay us have ordered disclaimers made against them. House Chairperson, this strategic framework and budget policy before you, lays the foundation for the Seventh Administration under the Government of National Unity to build a South Africa that we are all proud of and one which is a construction site. We commit to work and use the mandate of the department to deliver the South Africa of our dreams. We must be the generation that builds this country but, we cannot do it alone. That is why, I will be looking to establish a number of stakeholder forums and advisory committees to my office, which will allow South Africans to share their ideas on how we can use public assets for public goods. I look forward to your continued guided and

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wise counsel as the NCOP. Let us build South Africa together.

I thank you.

The MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: Chairperson of the NCOP, let me acknowledge the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, hon Macpherson, Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, hon Zikalala, MECs of Human Settlements present and those who have joined us virtually, chairperson of the select committee, hon Kaunda, Members of the National Council of Provinces and delegates, the Director-General of the department who has joined us, Dr Moemi, and all the deputy directors-general, good afternoon, hon members.

Building communities in which families thrive economically, enjoy safety and comfort and can create social bonds that enable them to raise children, is central to the work that we do in Human Settlements. It is for this reason that our policy, with the benefit of practice and experience, shifted away from the provision of houses, to creating sustainable human settlements. In this regard, we echo the words of one of the African continental liberation giants, President Julius Mwalimu Nyerere of Tanzania, who said:

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A house should not be built so close to another that a chicken from one can lay an egg in the neighbour's yard, nor so far away that a child cannot shout to the yard of his neighbour.

The past 30 years have taught our sector several lessons about what should and should not be done in creating sustainable human settlements, for example, we have learned that uprooting people from a place where they have lived for a long period of time to a new settlement in most cases, where they are not able to find work is not working. Human beings are social beings, and it is only in a place where they have social bonds with people they know and trust that they can settle in peace. I say this to make the point that we will utilise the lessons we have learned in the past 30 years to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the human settlement delivery system.

The improvement of the delivery system will require us to look closely at the factors internal to the system and the factors that are within our control. These include improved the capacity of both people and systems in the department and its entities; functional intergovernmental collaboration; effective grant and funding framework; and increasing the footprint of technological innovation in the sector so that we can reach everyone.

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The demand market will continue to change, and only digital systems will help us to understand its evolution so that we can reorganise the supply market to be responsive to the demand. Hence, digitisation of our systems is our foremost priority in the Seventh Administration so that citizens can transparently see where they are in the queue for beneficiaries of Breaking New Ground, BNG, houses and all other services.

Due to the sluggish economic performance of our fiscus and the constraints that led to budget cuts in the sector, we are experiencing R14 billion cut in the next three years. This means we are having to learn to do more with less, but more importantly, find partners that can help us deliver on our mandate.

For the financial year 2024-25, we have a total budget of R33,1 billion, of which 96% or R31,6 billion is allocated towards transfer payments. Transfer payments consist of conditional grant allocations of R30,1 billion, transfers to entities amounting to R1,5 billion, and other transfers that make up about R10 million. The Emergency Housing Fund budget, at the beginning of the financial year is sitting at R496,7 million, constitutes 1% of the total budget. I must say

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that with the disasters we have been experiencing, this is proving to be not sufficient.

Furthermore, we have allocated R4,5 billion towards the Informal Settlement Upgrading Partnership grant and R8,7 billion towards the Urban Settlements Development grant for the metros. For the provinces on Human Settlements Development grant, it is R13,7 billion. Also, for the provinces in terms of our Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership grant, it is the total of R3,3 billion to ensure the fast-tracking of the delivery but we will have to ensure that there is value for money but utilize the money correctly and that there is spending across.

Our priorities as we have outlined previously in terms of the Medium-Term Strategic Framework, MTSF, that is coming to an end, 2019-2024, because this budget falls within that period and we will come back, Chairperson, to present our Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement, MTBP, priorities later once the President has approved for the entire government.

As we conclude the financial year of the previous Administration, our priorities have been outlined as that of upgrading of informal settlements, eradication of mud houses,

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increased delivery of affordable housing through First Home Finance, increased delivery of rental stock through social housing, acquisition of well-located land for human settlements development, but more importantly, utilizing state land effectively for us to be able to deliver on our programmes. We will ensure that we implement several catalytic human settlement development projects, but most importantly as well, ensuring that we provide title deeds as part of security of tenure for families.

Hon members, it is not an exaggeration to point out that the dysfunctionality of governance at local government level has undermined service delivery and performance of our sector. In addition to delays in planning processes, the unstable coalition arrangements at municipal level have crippled the provision of bulk infrastructure and delivery of housing and human settlements. The surest way to increase the footprint of the private and public participation is by improving governance and capacity at local government level. We will work closely with the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to improve local government performance and utilise the District Development Model, DDM, to ensure that there is alignment of planning in the three spheres of government. We will prioritise rezoning of land and

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the development of integrated implementation programmes for the Priority Development Areas. We can only be able to do more when we work together.

Hon members, in the previous financial year, 2023-024, we committed to providing affordable houses and serviced sites. We managed to deliver 19 979 sites across the country with the Eastern Cape being the highest with 5 533. Regarding the Breaking New Ground or RDP houses, in the last financial year, we delivered 42 771 units, with KwaZulu-Natal having delivered 10 724.

For the current financial year, 2024-25, our target is to deliver less because of the budget cuts. We will deliver 20 925 top structures, these are BNGs, and 35 335 service sites to enable and encourage beneficiaries to build houses for themselves because many of them even during the Presidential Imbizo highlighted the importance of this service. As government, we provided.

The Eastern Cape, Gauteng, followed by Mpumalanga will deliver 6 624, 5 472, and 3 149 serviced sites respectively in this financial year. In terms of top structures, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, followed by Gauteng will deliver 7 516, 6 654,

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and 5 923 respectively, with Limpopo not far behind them, delivering 5 069 units.

Regarding the Rental Housing Programme, in the past year, the sector committed to delivering 3 200 Social Housing units and we were able to achieve 3 066, which is 96% of our target. This has been done across because of the pipeline that we see in the Social Housing Regulatory Authority, SHRA. Working with the department, the SHRA, and the Western Cape Province, we were able to gazette restructuring zones within the City of Cape and Swartland Municipality in a bid to increase more affordable rental opportunities within those areas. This week, we will be approving the KwaZulu-Natal one which has been finalized.

We are currently processing requests to declare additional restructuring zones. We have, I said, KwaZulu-Natal which is done. We will be signing off this weekend and gazetting. Eastern Cape is in the pipeline especially about the following municipalities: Buffalo City, Intsika Yethu, Enoch Mgijima, Mzimvubu, and KwaDukuza. We are also engaging several municipalities in Limpopo and Emfuleni Municipality in Guateng to ensure that we can do the restructuring and deliver social housing within the restructured zones as part of our

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Integrated Development Plans and allow for more social housing as the need increases.

On the unblocking of blocked projects, during the last Budget Vote, we made an undertaking to prioritise projects that were blocked. I am happy to reveal that out of the 3 445 projects that were reported by provinces as blocked, we have managed to unblock and complete 3 150 of those houses. We will continue to prioritise such projects over the next few months so that we can be able to see more delivery and ensuring that we see people having keys in their hands especially those who are waiting for BNG or RDP houses.

We continue within this financial year with Free State and North West leading respectively with 41 and 30 projects. Members of the select committee will remember that I flagged in the committee that these are the two provinces regarding the delay on unblocking projects. So, we are moving, and we have included them. That will yield 1 505 units as we welcome and making sure that the beneficiaries get their services.

On informal settlements, we will continue to ensure that we the upgrade the informal settlements. Conversations have intensified with municipalities and provinces, especially

addressing the issues around Category C informal settlements. These are informal settlements which are situated in dangerous areas, whether in flood lights or the riverbanks or low high mast or high voltage electricity. We have agreed that we can't continue to be shocked when people are drowning, when people die, or we see these things and behave like storm Jesus. We must respond positively, aggressively, and decisively.

We have given all municipalities instruction that if they do not respond in ensuring that we relocate those people in danger, their business plans will not be signed. This morning, we had an engagement with the City of Joburg and the City of Cape Town because their business plans remain unsigned because these areas have not been addressed.

On the Informal Settlement Upgrading grant, a total of just over R265 million has been allocated for 13 projects, in both province and metros. We are also prioritizing the re-blocking. We have seen fires start raging in our communities and we are saying this can be stopped ... when we are in the informal settlements implement re-blocking and ensure that when one shack catches fire, it doesn't move to the next one. This is one of the areas that we have insisted in the business plans for this financial year.

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Hon members, as we move to removal of asbestos roof houses, you would remember that this is one of the areas that has been a thorny issue in our communities because of its implication on health. The status of the removal of asbestos roofs from housing units in Umlazi and KwaMashu townships is a serious concern to us. There are 13 389 units with asbestos roofs in Umlazi. To date, 1 045 units have been refurbished. KwaMashu township has 4 293 units with asbestos roofs, to date, 1 163 of those units have been refurbished. Accordingly, the province has undertaken seven projects totalling R81,5 million during this financial year to be able to conclude this work.

We have emphasized again in Free State that we will ensure that this continues. In the last financial year, the Free State has allocated money to be able to that work as well. As you know, part of our work is to recover the loss of money, and we are happy with the progress of the court case in relation to the asbestos matter.

On eradication of mud houses, we have agreed that this is also a priority. Seven provinces have played a vital role in ensuring that the mud houses are eradicated, In the last financial year, we managed to eradicate 30 618 mud houses. This is testament that if we all put our shoulders to the

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wheel, nothing is impossible to achieve. During this financial year, we plan to implement 670 projects across the country with a total budget of R2,5 billion to be able to eradicate mud houses. The priority on this will be on the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, both which are prone to frequent natural disasters. In Eastern Cape, we are planning to eradicate 3 222 and in KwaZulu-Natal, 5 525 mud houses.

Hon members, as I conclude, as the Human Settlements Department, we understand that there is nothing as deeply personal as the house in which one lives, but more importantly, the society that the person lives in. A house is a space in which people begin the journey of building their lives to become productive members of society. The provision of sustainable human settlements can be sustained and can be an area that contributes to a better society. When we substantially alter the social and economic outcomes of communities for the better, we will ensure that where people stay, there are houses, water, electricity, sanitation, roads, schools, and clinics for them to be able to access services, but more importantly, closer to economic opportunities.

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UTata Madiba made this observation 29 years ago in his closing address, at the United Nations Habitat II African Housing Ministers Conference in Kempton Park, when he said:

Housing is not neutral. Our own country has in the past known only too well how the provision and non-provision of housing can be used as a form of social and political control. Here and elsewhere, it has often been the means of dealing with the urban and rural poor - to hide them, evict them, harass them, and trample on their self-esteem. As such, a successful housing programme can at one and the same time become a force for economic and social liberation.

The location of a new settlement, relative to economic opportunities and social amenities, can be the determinant factor on whether a community breaks out of the vicious cycle of poverty, or forever remains condemned to inconsequential existence. Indeed, there shall be houses, security and comfort. I thank you.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister MacPherson, hon Minister Kubayi, hon Deputy Minister Zikalala, hon members, fellow South Africans, good day, the select committee considered the 2024-25 Annual Performance Plan, APP, of the

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Department of Public Works and Infrastructure on 17 July 2024. In preparation of this report, the department briefed the committee on its 2024-25 Annual Performance Plan and 2024-25 estimates of public expenditure, as well as the Property Management Trading Entity also known as PMTE. Amongst the key mandates of the department is the co-ordination of the shared competency between national and provincial governments in respect of the immovable asset register, construction and property management and the implementation of the government Immovable Asset Management Act 19 of 2007. The core business of the property management is ring-fenced under the PMTE and amongst its key mandates is to plan for project delivery through project implementation planning, procurement of professionals, design, development and appointment of contractors and project management and delivery of construction projects.

Infrastructure South Africa, ISA, serves as the central co-ordinating body for national priority infrastructure projects and oversees the implementation of officially announced strategic integrated projects. ISA has been allocated R600 million over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework to assist in the preparation of projects to ensure their financial viability and feasibility. Current SIP projects

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relate to the following portfolio of the select committee, amongst others, Salvokop Precinct Project in the Gauteng Province, the project is a government precinct at its core and is located in the Pretoria inner city. The project is to be integrated into community infrastructure as part of the Tshwane Inner City. The project is to be integrated into community infrastructure as part of the Tshwane Inner City Regeneration programme. Also, the redevelopment of ports of entry project. The project aims to reduce delays experienced by passengers and vehicles at six inland borders that South Africa shares with its neighbouring countries.

In the Minister's opening remarks, and he reminded us today - emphasis was placed on the imperative to optimise the use of public assets and social infrastructure, to increase the performance of the construction industry and for the cash generating capacity of the department to increase. These imperatives were translated into the intention of turning South Africa into a construction site. The intention of turning South Africa into a construction site was subsequently also included in the opening of Parliament addressed by the President, where it was stated that infrastructure investment will be increased to encourage and enable the involvement of businesses and deliver social infrastructure.

This select committee fully lends its support to the vision as set out by the Minister and the President. Aligning in 2024-25 budget allocations to the Annual Performance Plan indicators, the department reported that it will reduce its transfers and subsidies budget by R4,8 billion, its goods and services budget by R176,7 million and its payments for capital assets budget by R3,8 million. This is to accommodate the Cabinet approved reductions of some R5 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period.

To absorb the reductions, the department has stopped, suspended or delayed certain projects. In terms of economic classification, 81,8% some R19,8 billion of the departmental budget is allowed to transfer, subsidies, and the Expanded Public Works Programme, the EPWP, transfers. This reflects the fact that the various public entities reporting to the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure and provincial and local government play a key role in the attainment of the strategic outcomes of the department.

The department generates revenue through the PMTE, by letting properties and official quarters and the sale of land and buildings. It is projected that the department will collect revenue to the total value of some R17,6 billion for 2024-25.

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The PMTE focus over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period, will be on developing precincts to support efficient and integrated government planning by grouping departments that provide similar services and refurbishing and maintaining government buildings in its portfolio.

Precincts development in the following precincts have been prioritised in the 2024-25 Annual Performance Plan: Pietermaritzburg, that is in the Msunduzi Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal; Stanger Precinct, in KwaDukuza Local Municipality in Kwazulu-Natal; Kunye Precinct that is the City of Johannesburg in Gauteng; Kokstad Justice Precinct, the Greater Kokstad Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal; Polokwane Precinct, the City of Polokwane Municipality in Limpopo; Carolina Precinct Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality in Mpumalanga; Howick Precinct in uMngeni Municipality in Kwazulu-Natal; and King Williamstown Qonce in the Buffalo City Municipality in the Eastern Cape.

Our observations and key findings, the Minister introduced the initiative to declare war on pit latrines in schools. The initiative will be led jointly with the Minister of Basic Education and will be an attacking incorporation with provincial departments. The PMTE has budgeted an expenditure

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of R56,3 billion over the medium-term, which includes R5,6 billion allocated for Ad hoc building maintenance. At a further cost of R12,7 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period, the entity will carry out refurbishment, repair and capital projects for 24 departments, including correctional centers, police stations, courts and office buildings. Due to the nature of services and the mandates of the departments such as Correctional Services and the national Defence Force, the maintenance and refurbishment of such facilities cannot be undertaken in partnership with the private sector.

The department reported that it has a R23 billion maintenance backlog. Given their constrained budget, the department is making a policy shift towards attracting capacity and skills from the private sector to work in partnership with government to improve the condition of specific facilities through the Renovate Operate and Transfer Programme and the Build Operate and Transfer Programme.

In its assessment of the 2022-23 Annual Report, the Auditor-General questioned the credibility of the EPWP performance information. The select committee thus inquired which measures the department will put in place to address this concern. In

addition, concern must also be raised about potential corruption and abuse of the programme, and that limited skills transfers take place. The Deputy Minister indicated that relevant measures included transparency and recruitment, co-ordination and implementation and an exit strategy for participants, which is aimed at upskilling participants.

The delay on the part of the organs of state and paying outstanding debts and service charges to the PMTE affects the financial viability of this entity and is a risk to its revenue optimisation strategy. The committee and department shared the assessment that there is a need to improve the payment rights of the PMTE. The department was requested to give an indication of the amounts actually owed to PMTE, and it was informed that the government departments owe the PMTE in the region of some R13 billion, with the Department of Correctional Services and the Department of Defence in the region of R4 billion in arrears each.

The department was requested to indicate to which extent the appointment of contractors is monitored to ensure that the same enterprises did not continually benefit from the award of contracts. The Deputy Minister referred for the legislative reforms that will be introduced through the Public Procurement

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Bill, including a focus in localisation in the award of contracts.

The select committee and the Department agreed on the need for a co-ordinated social infrastructure planning. Chairperson, an example was made of a school constructed in the Coffee Bay area in the Eastern Cape, where children cannot attend during the times of heavy rains as there is no bridge to allow them to cross the river en route to school. In response, the Minister stated that there is a need for a nationally co-ordinated infrastructure planning across all spheres of government, including local government because often municipalities do not plan to extend the capacity of its bulk infrastructure.

Therefore, hon Chairperson, this committee recommends that considered steps are taken towards improving low payment rates, including engaging with the Auditor-General to include payment of PMTE areas as an audit focus for organs of state. Provide an update report on the provision of suitable provincial accommodation to the Public Service Commission, the PSC. This is a legacy issue which the PSC had raised during the Sixth administration. Provide an update report on Telkom Towers which was purchased at a cost of some R694 million in

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2016 whereas in early 2024 only one of the nine buildings forming part of the complex had been completed. The department previously reported that the project involved collapsing 15 SA Police Service, the SAPS leases and in the process challenges outside the control of the department had arisen.

Design a programme focus on township infrastructure development, with a strong linkage to economic infrastructure. In the investigation to fraud, corruption and maladministration that would be taken in the department, that it should not limit its focus to the award of infrastructure contracts only. It is recommended that it should be extended to collusion in the prices of material, such as cement and steel, used in the construction industry. Provide a progress report on the status of the Independent Development trust business plan which was aimed at ensuring that the IDT becomes self-sufficient.

In 2024 the department reported that it had transferred R70,3 million to the IDT as it is Schedule 2 entity but is the implementing agency of the department. It must provide a report on the occupancy rate of state-owned buildings over the past three years, for the select committee to determine the level of progress in this regard. Provide a progress report on

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the finalisation of the land audit and provide a progress report on its engagements with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Deeds Office. This was aimed at ensuring that the Deeds office's records could be reconciled with the asset register timeously.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair, this committee recommends that the Council approve the budget of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. Let me just add, hon Chairperson, allow me to congratulate this Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure with the amount of vigor and enthusiasm, he has tackled his task in this new role, as Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure. I think the bob and the boulder might have his nemesis. Thank you very much, also to the diligent support and timeous submission and assistance of our committee staff in assisting the committee in compiling this report. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Mr T M KAUNDA: Hon House Chair, Deputy House Chairpersons, Chief Whip of the NCOP, hon Minister Kubayi responsible for Human Settlement, hon Macpherson responsible for Public Works and Infrastructure, and Deputy Minister Zikalala, hon members present as well as those who are following us on social networks, MECs who are part of this meeting, good afternoon.

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The Select Committee on Co-operative Governance and Public Administration, Traditional Affairs, Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation, having considered Budget Vote 33 of the Department of Settlement, strategic plans for the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, period and the 2024-25 annual performance plan, APP, report to the National Council of Provinces as follows.

On the legislative framework, the National Treasury regulations provide the basis for the development and submission of strategic plans and related quarterly performance reporting.

The revised framework on strategic plans and annual performance plans requires departments to institutionalise planning, budgeting, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and align the planning process and all the planning documents: strategic plans, annual performance plans and annual operational plans, AOPs, with the Medium-Term Strategic Framework, MTSF. And to describe outputs that are their direct responsibility in their list of programmes/sub-programmes. Any outputs from implementing agencies should be reflected in an annexure to the APP.

The Money Bills Amendment Procedures and Related Matters Act of 2009 empowers Parliament to recommend, reject or amend budgets of national departments and organs of state.

The Act also enjoins committees of Parliament to compile and adopt budget vote reports based on interactions with the relevant departments and entities reporting to them on their strategic plans, annual performance plans and budgets.

As part of ensuring executive accountability and performing parliamentary oversight, the select committee had interactive briefing session on 22 July 2024 with the Department of Human Settlement.

The purpose of the briefing session was to provide an opportunity to the department to present its departmental 2024-25 strategic plan, 2024-25 annual performance plan and the 2024 medium-term estimate framework to the members of the select committee for consideration prior to budget votes policy debates scheduled, which is taking place now.

So, with all this, firstly, the committee express its congratulatory remarks to the hon Minister of Human Settlement, hon Minister Kubayi, for her reappointment in this

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department and congratulated her for the work she has done in the previous administration and we wish her everything of the best in this 7th Administration.

We received the briefing, and the committee had these following observations to make on what was presented.

Firstly, Programme 1 on Administration. We commended the department for filling the senior management vacancies, directors-general, especially, those which are critical in the department. There were only to wish what the Minister and the department were still working on to finalise.

We also commend the department for the work done in different provinces, especially on the building of houses, that we've been observing on the ground.

Programme 2 on Integrated Human Settlement Planning and Development Programme that was also shared with us, the Informal Settlements Upgrading Programme, Rental and Social Housing Programme which was highly commended since more people in the country require rental stock as well, those who can afford to build houses ... but to relocate for particular purposes to different cities.

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Programme 5: Affordable Housing Programme which was also considered.

We then considered the 2024 Medium Term Estimated Framework Allocation.

With all this being considered, the committee raised the following observations:

Firstly, the select committee has observed that the 2024-25 annual performance of the Department of Human Settlement has been aligned with the National Development Plan, 2024-29 Medium Term Strategic Framework: Medium Term Development Plan, Strategic Plan and Medium-Term Estimate Framework.

Secondly, the select committee has also noted that the Department of Human Settlement has revised its 2024-29 Medium Term Strategic Framework priorities to, by firstly, prioritising building a capable, ethical and developmental state and secondly, spatial integration, human settlements and local government.

Thirdly, the select committee has noted and welcomed the Ministerial openness in her political remarks that the

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Department of Human Settlement is still experiencing challenges regarding completion of registration of tittle deeds, which committees are really pushing and persuading government to supply. The select committee has, therefore, noted and welcomed the departmental commitment its 2024-25 annual target to conduct benchmarking study on tittle deeds pricing system and completion of backlogs of issuing of title deeds across the provinces and municipalities.

Fourthly, while welcoming the 2024-25 annual performance plan of the Department of Human Settlement, the select committee has, however, noted with great concern the reduction of budget which might have a negative impact on the performance of the national department, public entities, provincial grants and municipality grants during the 2024-25 and 2025-26 respectively.

Fifth, the budget cut of R14 billion in these three budgeted financial years is going to have a big impact on service delivery.

Sixth, the select committee has further noted with concerns the challenges related to blocked projects, eradication of mud houses, asbestos roofings, crimes committed by constriction

mafias, selling of Reconstruction and Development Programme, RDP, houses and title deeds challenges in the rural areas.

To deal with construction mafias, the select committee called upon the hon Minister of Human Settlement to classify the actions of the perpetrators of this criminality and ensure that she works with all law enforcement agencies to effect arrests and prosecutions of the offenders.

Seventh, the select committee further urged the Minister of the department to ensure de-politization of the provision of houses to citizens without consideration of our communities' political affiliations.

Lastly, due to time constrains in engaging during the briefing session on 2024-25 departmental annual performance plan, the select committee has noted and welcomed the commitment made by the hon Minister to provide Members of the select committee with written responses on questions related to costs of the usage of consultants in previous years, provincial breakdown and lists of blocked projects, monitoring of conditional grants.

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Hon House Chair, we can confirm that we received this report in writing ... these responses in writing yesterday evening after we had met in the afternoon.

We commend you, Minister, for that swift response.

On the recommendations that the select committee have made. The Select Committee on Co-operative Governance and Public Administration have considered the 2024-25 annual performance plan of the Department of Human Settlements and recommends the following:

Firstly, the National Council of Provinces approve the 2024-25 annual performance plan and Budget Vote 33 of the Department of Human Settlements and notes the budget reduction which will negatively impact on the performance of the department, public entities and allocation of provincial and municipal grants.

Secondly, the Minister of the department should develop action plan and strategies to deal with construction mafias across the provinces and work with all stakeholders to ensure that we root out the scourge.

Thirdly, the Department of Human Settlement to provide the select committee with a breakdown list of the provinces and metros, municipalities that will be provided with support in upgrading of informal settlements, eradication of asbestos, mud houses, backlogs of title deeds and catalytic projects as well as blocked projects, which we have received.

Fourthly, as part of ensuring executive accountability, the Department of Human Settlement should provide quarterly reports to the National Council of Provinces on the progress and challenges relating to the achievement of the performance indicators contained in the 2024-25 annual performance plan and MTEF budget allocations.

Fifth, the department should consider instituting forensic investigation on catalytic housing incomplete projects in Matlosana and Bataung Local Municipalities in North West including the allegations of corruption and maladministration. The completed forensic investigation report should be tabled to the National Council of Provinces.

Sixth, the select committee should, as part of ensuring executive accountability and performing its own robust oversight, we should align our 2024 parliamentary programme

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with the outputs and performance indicators contained in 2024-25 annual performance plan of the Department of Human Settlement.

Lastly, the select committee should, during the 2024 financial period, conduct proactive oversight visits to selected provinces and Metros in order to monitor the implementation and completion of the housing projects, the titled deeds, eradication of mud houses in the local municipalities.

The committee also supported the perspective of the Minister of Human Settlement, especially when the relocations are conducted, that people should not be relocated and be moved away from their workplaces and the economic corridors, so that they'll continue to live better life.

With these recommendations we wish to table them to the NCOP for its consideration. I thank you, hon Chair.

Mr B S MABEBO: Hon House Chairperson, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, traditional leaders, and religious leaders fellow South Africans, as the African National Congress, we are pursuing a national democratic revolution as a political strategy ... [Interjections.] ...

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THE CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP (Mr K M Mmoiemang): Hon Chair, I rise on a point of order. It is a mild point of order read in conjunction with Rule 6. There has been consistent and constant referral to the National Chairperson of the Council of Province as the "House Chair." And it is only correct to have that aspect corrected because the rules make provision for the National Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, and other presiding officers, which are the two-House Chairpersons for Committees and House Chairperson for Members' Support. I just wanted to at least clarify that, but we are learning, hon Chairperson. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, Chief Whip of the Council for your clarity. I am sure as times goes by all of us, we will learn to address each other in the manner that is appropriate. You may proceed, hon member.

Mr B S MABEBO: ... Thank you. As the African National Congress, we are pursuing a national democratic revolution as a political strategy to achieve the Freedom Charter's objectives. It was our forebears, in the course of our national liberation struggle, who decided to craft the Freedom Charter, as a guide and vision for a post-apartheid democratic society.

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Since the 1994, political and democratic breakthrough, the ANC-led government has led a protracted struggle through the implementation of transformative socioeconomic policies to realise the vision of the Freedom Charter, in this case, "the right to adequate shelter," defending and deepening the democratic gains in the human settlement sector.

Hon Chairperson, it is a mischievous reactionary and outright political opportunism of some who stand here and claim that the ANC-led government has done nothing to transform the lives of our people in the past 30 years. South Africa is one of the few countries in both the developing and developed world that have made access to adequate shelter a constitutional right. And it is incumbent upon the democratic state to take reasonable a step to realise this right.

As the African National Congress, we strive to fulfil the objectives of the Freedom Charter. Over the past 30 years, the ANC-led government has embarked on a massive housing programme that is unparalleled in the world. More than 3,5 million houses have been built and distributed to needy members of our society. Today, most South Africans take this important achievement for granted, demonstrating that their right to a roof over their heads has made our society possible and as the

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Freedom Charter dictates: "There shall be houses, security and comfort for all."

Hon members, it is the ANC-led government that has also ensured that the beneficiaries of government subsidised housing receive their title deeds as a proof of ownership and guarantee that they will never be forcefully removed from their home, as it was done under the colonialism and apartheid period. We might not be where we want to be in terms of issuing title deeds, but it is a work in progress. We urge the Minister and her team to accelerate the issuance of title deeds.

The Human Settlement Budget Vote and Policy Statement presented by Minister Kubayi demonstrates both continuity and change within the human settlement sector. We are confident that these measures are progressing towards the progressive realisation of the right to shelter, and as the ANC, we fully support them. The importance of transforming housing into human settlement is paramount.

Most of those government subsidised housing projects were built in areas away from economic and social opportunities and were without social amenities like education and health

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facilities and most importantly, were perpetuating colonial and apartheid spatial planning.

Hon members, having recognised the issue, our ANC-led government seeks to transform the housing sector into human settlement sector to ensure that any housing project not only dismantle apartheid and colonial special planning, but also have all the necessary features making life easy, such as reliable and affordable public transport economic opportunities, education, health, sports and recreational facilities.

We applaud our ANC-led government commitment of realising specially integrated human settlements by implementing housing projects that are mixed-use development, accommodating the various income groups. Minister Kubayi, in her Budget Vote and Policy Statement announced that her department will persist in completing the declared 136 priority development areas, where provinces and municipalities will implement the Department Human Settlement Housing programme, such as the mixed-use development in informal settlement, upgrading social housing and affordable housing. Accelerate the process of acquiring land, expropriating neglected buildings, and releasing those for the purpose of building human settlements.

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Hon Chairperson, the land question in our country, above all other questions, is what gave birth to the national liberation struggle. And its resolution is a matter that our country cannot further postpone. To create a spatial integrated human settlement, the government has to acquire a well-located land and make it available for human settlement in the form of various housing programmes, especially the Breaking New Ground, BNG, and service site.

As the African National Congress, we welcome the commitment by the department to release the state-owned land for purposes of human settlement, and the target has the potential to make a possible 64 000 housing opportunities as announced by Minister Kubayi. During this financial year, the Housing Development Agency, the departmental entity responsible for acquiring and rezoning land for democratic government is going to acquire an additional 1000 hectares, of which 700 hectares will be rezoned and developed for human settlement.

Hon members, as much as we welcome the decision to acquire and transfer state-owned land for human settlement, we wish to urge the Minister to use the existing legislation to expropriate privately owned land as provided for by section (9), (3) of the Housing Act.

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The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform 2017 Land Audit report illustrate that either a company and trust or individual who owns these companies and trust, currently own majority of well-located land, that the government can acquire to dismantle colonial and apartheid special planning and truly build spatially integrated human settlement. Therefore, we are calling upon the democratic government to take steps to address the land question in our country.

We further wish to commend Minister Kubayi for her commitment to acquire both abundant and neglected government and private buildings in the central building district or the inner city of our major cities and have them repurposed for affordable housing for our people. Already, the department has taken steps in this in this regard, as illustrated by the accusation of the South African Broadcasting, SABC,'s Rockland Villas in Sea Point for the development of our affordable housing. Expanding access to housing security, comfort for a better life for all.

Hon Chairperson, the African National Congress affirms that the Budget Vote and Policy Statement speech persists in broadening housing accessibility, fostering security and

comfort. And achieving a superior quality of life for every South African citizen.

The ANC-led democratic government continues to prioritise housing provisions for the working class and the poor in our society, especially women, youth and people living with disabilities. For the current financial year, the Department of Human Settlement is going to build and deliver 39 100 BNG housing unit and 35 876 service stands and issue 11 584 title deeds to our people.

In addition, the department has planned to deliver 2 699 social housing units through its entity, Social Housing Regulatory Agency, SHRA, and address the bottlenecks that hinders the full implementation of the upgrading of informal settlement programmes by various provinces and municipality. Finalising the White Paper on Human Settlement and the review of Human Housing Act and housing code.

Hon Chairperson, during the previous government, the department released the White Paper on Human Settlement for public comment. The Minister went beyond the statutory requirements to extend public comment, she also actively engaged with various stakeholders to capture their views and

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ensure that the outcome of the White Paper accurately reflected the diversity of views in our country. For this, we applaud her.

As the African National Congress, we are convinced that the proposed White Paper on Human Settlement is a clear response to the Vision 2030 of the National Development Plan to create a spatially equitable, integrated, balanced and sustainable human settlement. The White Paper also calls for the Ministry to review the following issues... [Time Expired.]

Dr I S SCHEURKOGEL: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, good day. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has the potential to ensure that the most basic services are delivered to all South Africans throughout the mandate to deliver and maintain infrastructure. However, the department has historically failed within various divisions to facilitate the development and the and the progress to public entities and infrastructure to ensure basic basic services to South Africans.

Minister, I want to highlight just one example or one town where the department which you now lead has failed in the previous administration to deliver services and resulted in

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criminal charges that have been laid by the current DA Chief Whip. In Odendaalsrus, in the Free State the SA Police Service, SAPS, station renovations have been standing still since 2020, there is currently no holding facilities and all neighbouring towns are at full capacity, at times this station has no water and no electricity due to theft within the precinct property. The newly built buildings are being vandalised regularly since the project stopped because there is no security on the precinct.

Then right across the police station is the magistrate court, the basement is used as a holding cell for convicted individuals awaiting their hearings. This basement is flooded on a regular basis with sewage and water, even damaging documents and hindering officials from performing their duties. Therefore, it creates a security risk to the community and SAPS officers.

However, Minister it does not end there, in the same Odendaalsrus, the correctional services facility is flooded with sewage because the sewage system is not maintained, resulting in sewage running into fields where people reside.

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Minister your commitment to turning South Africa into a construction site will turn our critical infrastructure and public facilities into job creation hubs which will attract investment and restore South Africa as the leader and the guiding light of Africa.

Chairperson, I acknowledge that the budget presented by the Minister today is an inherited one, but regardless of the reduced budget we have progressively identified one pivotal entity in your department in our select committee which will give you the key to this department's success, and that is the Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE.

This unit should be thoroughly audited, investigated and all properties not being properly used should be reprioritised to generate revenue to serve the growing need of our growing population.

Furthermore, we support your position that no new buildings should be purchased or leased for government employees or departments. Within the 80 000 properties, we have enough capacity to serve government departments to efficiently deliver their mandate and increase revenue collection for the department.

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Minister, the Auditor-General questioned the credibility of the Expanded Public Works Program, EPWP, which is plagued with corruption and mismanagement of the programme. The skills transfer is one of the main concerns a re-evaluation should focus on. Participants should leave the programme with skills and tools to improve their socioeconomic statuses and the only take away from EPWP should not be just the monthly stipends, they receive. It cannot be a job for votes or an expanded programme for SA Social Security Agency, Sassa.

I do not need to remind the House that without the provision of water, electricity, road networks and the access to basic services that we cannot grow the local economy and especially that of rural areas in South Africa. However, if you travel around South Africa, sewage is flooding our houses or running down the streets of South Africa. Water shedding or dry taps are rampant, power outages are daily features of ordinary South Africans due to public infrastructure not being maintained. Minister these problems should be our driving force as we start breaking new ground in this new administration.

Minister, this department touches the lives of every South African, we should be bold to acknowledge that we cannot do

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this on our own and we should foster a culture of partnerships with the private sector. For an example the Build and Transfer and Renovate, Bot, or the Operate and Transfer projects, Rot. Taiwan built their high-speed railway through a Bot project, now you can travel via train from the north of the county to south in one and half hour. Even China has been utilising Bot since 1980's. Through these Bot and Rot we can ensure community involvement is part and parcel in ensuring sustainability and success of these infrastructure projects.

Minister with all the initiatives that you have introduced, there is one project you committed to which touches the hearts of all South Africans, because it is a step that secures the future of our vibrant nation. Your joint commitment with the Minister of Basic Education towards the declaration of war on the eradication of pit latrine toilets in schools. Not only that this project ensures the safety of our youth, but it also sets the standard that other departments like human settlements to follow suit to ensure that those living in informal settlements are given the dignity which is enshrined in our Constitution.

Chairperson, in conclusion, we want to reiterate the following recommendations to the Minister to be implement and ensure the

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department serve the people of South Africa. The department must develop a revenue collection plan with Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE, through the Auditor-General to ensure that organs of state pay the department. The plan should incorporate consequence management for those that did not ensure collection was not implemented. A thorough audit on all the properties of the department to determine the losses the department has made on the properties and ensure that PMTE functions properly to generate funds to fill the gap of the budget reductions.

To ensure that the Independent Development Trust, IDT, business plan which has been completed is implemented and the R70,3 million that was transferred to the trust is utilised to benefit South Africans.

The department should implement a mechanism to ensure that same contractors on provincial and national supplier database are not appointed elsewhere, to ensure fair distribution of opportunities to capable businesses. Given the fact of the budget constraints of the department and the capacity, the Minister should implement more Bot and Rot projects.

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Ensure that the report of the Land Audit is finalised, to ensure that the emphasis to optimise the use of public assets and social infrastructure is increased, therefore through the construction industry, enough cash is generated to fund the joint commitment with the Minister of Basic Education to eradicate pit toilets in schools.

Minister, we hear your call to turn South Africa into a construction site, which will grow our economy and most importantly create jobs.

Chairperson, in closing on 29 May South Africans echoed the government of national unity core value that we are builders and not breakers, and united we will make this country a success. I thank you.

Mr N TWABU (Eastern Cape): Good afternoon hon House Chair. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to represent the Eastern Cape province in the debate for the two Budget Votes, which are Vote 13 and Vote 33. Let me start by greeting you, hon Ministers and Deputy Ministers present in the House and all hon members who are part of the House today.

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I am indeed honoured to address this august House, today, on behalf of my province, on the policy speeches for Budget Votes 13 and 33. Chair, before I get much into what I have prepared, I think I should really begin by welcoming the commitment made by the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure towards the eradication of pit latrine toilets in our schools, as a rural province that is greatly affected by this. I want to request him not to leave behind the Minister of Water and Sanitation because I don't believe that we will be able to do the work without ensuring that we upgrade the standard of water in these areas, for him to be able to provide us with flush toilets in these schools.

Hon Chairperson, both these Budget Votes are critical as they embody our commitment to building a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient South Africa. Such a commitment is anchored in the ideals expressed in the Freedom Charter and the National Development Plan. The people's Freedom Charter correctly envisions the South Africa we all want to live in, a nation not divided by race or skin colour.

Emerging out of the 2024 National and Provincial Elections, we are acutely aware that the people of South Africa have spoken. They have made their voices heard. Our people have eloquently

expressed their will through their votes, and their message is clear. They have entrusted us with the mandate to lead, to serve, and to deliver on the promises of a better life for all.

The Department of Public Works plays a crucial role in our national development. Through the strategic management of public infrastructure and assets, we aim to stimulate economic growth, create jobs and improve the quality of life for all South Africans. Our infrastructure projects are engines of economic growth. By investing in the construction and maintenance of public buildings, roads and other essential infrastructure, we are creating numerous job opportunities. We are particularly focused on empowering the youth, women, and persons with disabilities, ensuring that our development is inclusive and equitable.

In alignment with the National Development Plan, our department is committed to promoting sustainable development. This includes the use of green building practices, energy-efficient technologies and environmentally friendly materials. By doing so, we are not only protecting our natural resources, but also reducing the operational costs of public buildings, making them more efficient and sustainable in the long run.

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Proper management of public assets is vital for the efficient delivery of services. We are implementing robust systems to ensure the accurate tracking, maintenance and utilisation of government properties. This, includes the continuous updating of the Eastern Cape Asset Register to reflect current values and conditions, thereby enabling better planning and decision-making.

In responding to the commitment to strengthen infrastructure delivery in the province, the department is an implementing agent for the Departments of Health, Basic Education and other departments, for delivery of social infrastructure. The department implements capital and maintenance infrastructure projects to change the socioeconomic outlook of the province, through the designated three portfolios, which are: The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, DPWI; other departments portfolio; and Health and Basic Education portfolios.

The department focused on implementing cluster offices or precincts, to centralise access to services and to contribute on spatial transformation, by responding to the provision of office accommodation in a manner that transforms rural or small-town landscapes.

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Hon members, it is significant to also mention that all new buildings constructed by the Department comply with access, norms and standards for persons with disabilities. The department has completed the following three cluster offices, to the value of R390 million: Themba Kojana Office Park in Aliwal North - Joe Gqabi District Municipality; Thobile Bam Office Park in Mt Frere - Alfred Nzo District Municipality; and Bathandwa Nondo Office Park in Komani - Chris Hani District Municipality.

The department is also planning to finalise within the current financial year: The Mqanduli Cluster Offices in OR Tambo District Municipality; Makhanda Artisan Training Centre in Sarah Baartman District Municipality; Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform Office in Ngqamakhwe at Amathole District Municipality, and Emalahleni Service Office in Chris Hani District Municipality.

The Department of Human Settlements is at the forefront of our efforts to provide dignified living conditions for all South Africans. Guided by the overarching clarion call made by the Freedom Charter that, "There shall be houses, security and comfort". We are knitting together concrete programmes to deliver on the needs and aspirations of our people.

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The 2022 Census by Statistics South Africa, StatsSA, reported a remarkable 20,4% increase in households living in formal dwellings in the province over ten years period, reaching 83,6% in 2022. Access to piped water inside dwellings has also risen from 18,3% in 2001 to 49,5% in 2022, contributing to extended homeownership and increased productive assets for the people.

This is further affirmed by President Ramaphosa, in the 2024 State of the Nation Address, when he said, and I quote:

One of the most visible, impactful, and meaningful achievements in the first three decades of freedom has been in providing homes to the people. Today, nearly nine out of every 10 households live in a formal dwelling. Where there were once shacks and mud houses, there are now homes of brick and mortar.

However, despite substantial government-led investments, the demand for shelter and sustainable integrated human settlements continue to grow due to factors, such as, urban migration for economic opportunities and a growing population. These challenges are exacerbated by deep-seated issues of unemployment, inequality, and poverty, making the need for

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decent shelter and social infrastructure ever more pressing.

[Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon member, you have about half a minute to conclude!

Mr N TWABU (Eastern Cape): Thank you, Chair. The ongoing campaign involves rigorous oversight of both blocked and ongoing projects, engagements with various stakeholders, including communities and contractors, and the enhancement of departmental systems to prevent future occurrences. In conclusion, at the start of the 2022-23 financial year, the department faced the challenge of 87 stalled or blocked projects, translating to 23 975 housing units spread across all eight regions. Apparently ... [Time expired.] Okay, thanks Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. As I take the Chair, hon members, I think it is important to just explain. I think we have a number of new Presiding Officers, and we all have our own different styles. I will not be interrupting members who are standing here at the podium and have the benefit of the clock. So, I will not be warning you when your time is running out. I

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think it is appropriate that you will manage your own time when you are here in the House.

When members are debating virtually, they obviously don't have the benefit of having their own clock. So, where appropriate, we will give them a warning as their time is about to expire. Having said that, hon members, the next to take the debate further will be the hon M M Peter.

Mr M M PETER: Hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Ministers, Deputy Ministers ...

IsiXhosa:

... ndiyanibulisa.

English:

The UDM welcomes the report of Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. This report consists of promising plans of turning South Africa into a construction site to upgrade infrastructure. Improving the standard of living and promoting business across the country.

However, this department needs to fix certain challenges first, such as developing a highly advanced technology system,

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to monitor the database on public works. The department confirms that there are 1 260 hijacked and nonmaintained buildings. Some of these buildings are hijacked by foreign nationals who sell drugs and conduct many illegal activities. Also, these buildings lower the value of our towns.

It decreases tourism and drops the involvement of businesses. Therefore, the department needs to have an effective plan to reclaim the buildings back to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. About R5,6 billion allocation for ad hoc buildings maintenance should be used for maintenance and revival of the old buildings in small towns such as Mthatha, Gqeberha, and East London.

The department should also ensure maintenance of community halls, hospitals, police stations and ever vandalised post offices and public schools yearly. Children are drowning on pit latrines because the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure and Department of Basic Education has been failing to eradicate them.

Learners in rural areas are also unable to attend school during heavy rains due to lack of proper bridges. The UDM is also concerned with corruption on the Expanded Public Works

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Programme, EPWP. The department should ensure that it enforces accountability of funds and transparency in recruitment on the programme. Moreover, the lack of supervision in the EPWP needs to be addressed. For instance, EPWP employees are always seen sleeping on the side of the road during working hours.

IsiXhosa:

Okwesibini Mphathiswa tata uZikalala sicela nisijongele ezi zinto. Sicela ukuba nikhe nisijongele phaya eBizana eza ...

English:

... multi-purpose community centres.

IsiXhosa:

Siyazifuna iingxelo ngazo kuba asiva nto ngazo. Naphaya eTsomo kuthiwa yiminyaka isixhenxe ingagqitywa ...

English:

... the multi-purpose centre.

IsiXhosa:

Siyacela ke Mphathiswa wethu. Singena kwiGNU ukuba sikhonkothe apha ecaleni kwenu sinincedise Mphathiswa, hayi ukuba sivale amehlo. Asiboni ngxaki ngokuma ngaphandle kuba xa ume

ngaphandle kwiGNU ungumtwana okhalayo kodwa ongabonwayo.

Sikhalela ukuba nisibone Mphathiswa. Enkosi.

Mr M MAKESINI: House Chairperson, the EFF rejects the proposed Budget Vote of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for the 2024-25 financial year. We do so because there are no clear and believable plans which should make certain that there is the proper true ongoing exit of the EPWP people.

Sesotho:

Batho ba sebeletsang EPWP ba tlamehile hore ha ba kena, le bona e be borakgwebo, ba be le bokgoni, ba be le disetifikeiti; eseng hore ba ilo kuta bojwang ba be ba robala tseleng.

English:

Our focus today is on four critical issues. The public infrastructure, the impact of austerity measures, the imperative of the maintenance of lack of expansion of the infrastructure in the townships and rural areas of our country.

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The EFF stands firm in the belief that public infrastructure is a backbone of the striving economy and just society. We also believe it is true the well-planned execution of infrastructure projects that we can realise growth, job creation and better quality for life. This department is a custodian of all property in the country, but it still finds itself wanting and not being able to provide for instance on the basic infrastructure, on schools, clinic and hospitals so that we can stop to ...

IsiXhosa:

... ukuba abantwana bethu bawe batshone emingxunyeni kwizindlu zangasese njengoko kusenzeka eMpuma Kolon

English:

We therefore reject this budget as the instantly glaring issue and the failure that we have plagued our infrastructure development, in particular as it related to in Bushbuckridge, Mbombela, Emalahleni, Thaba Chweu, Emakhazeni and across the Nkangala municipalities, where the gravel roads affect our scholar transport to enter, especially in the rainy season to attend the school because ...

IsiZulu:

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... izimoto azikwazi ukuhamba emigwaqeni.

English:

In the Free State, we have a school called Tshehetso Primary School in Bothaville in Nala Local Municipality. This school started six years ago, Minister. To date, there's no finalisation. There is no hope for the people of Kgotsong in Bothaville. They were promised that the school will be opened in March 2024. The Deputy Minister was there last year.

In the Eastern Cape in Mqanduli at Tyelinzima Senior Secondary School. As I said that school was destroyed by floods last year. To date ...

IsiXhosa:

... akukho sikolo noxa nanibathembise ngomhlaba ...

English:

... opposite the flooded school.

IsiXhosa:

Basasifuns isikolo abantwana besasikolo iTyelinzima ukuza nabo bakwazi ukufunda njengabanye abantwana.

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English:

In Warrenton Northern Cape there a Mr Thabo Pele who submitted a request to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in Northern Cape ...

IsiXhosa:

... ecela ukusebenzisa ...

English:

... an abandoned building that was formerly a at an abandoned building which was a Hoërskool Warrenton hostel. To date, his submission has not been processed. These are the examples ...

IsiXhosa:

... esinibonisa ngazo ukuba abantu bayakhala kuba bafuna ukuphuhlisa izakhono zabantwana. EMthatha, eGcuwa naseCofee Bay ...

English:

... you have buildings. But all those buildings are being hijacked by criminals. What is sad is that the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure ...

IsiXhosa:

... xa usiya eCofee Bay uza kufumana ukuba ...

English:

... they are using containers as their offices ...

IsiXhosa:

... ekubeni isebe linazo izakhiwo apha eCoffee Bay kodwa liyekela ootsotsi ukuba bazisebenzise izakhiwo benze imali kuba asinaye urhulumente onamazinyo olumayo. Besicinga ukuba izakuyithathela amanyathelo into yabantu abathatha iizakhiwo ngokungekho mthethweni kuba benza imali eninzi ...

English:

... in the Eastern Cape. Generally, the state of infrastructure in these areas and many more is unacceptable and deployable to say the least.

The EFF therefore proposes the creation of state-owned construction company which should hire engineers, artisans, artists and the building of the maintenance to expand the Public Works programme. We are also concerned on how since 1994, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure is still trapped on the leasing of the building that have a

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negative impact especially to those people who occupy those buildings.

IsiXhosa:

Abantu bayonzakala kuba izakhiwo zenu azinazo izinyusi (lifts), zimnyama.

English:

You can be raped in the building. They are not safe ...

IsiXhosa:

... ukuba ungene kuzo kuba xa ungena ingathi ungena kwihlathi elineengonyama.

English:

This department also let the buildings ...

IsiXhosa:

... zimoshakale ziphele ...

English:

... like a glaring example of the psychiatrist hospital in Bloemfontein.

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IsiXhosa:

Apho abantu abahleli khona abazizigulana besonzakala kuba bengabantu abagula ngengqo. Xa besilwa besilwa balwa kakubi baqhekeze iifestile bonzakale, kwaye akukho nto yenziwayo.

English:

We are also saying Minister, please go to Mangaung Bloemfontein. Prioritise that hospital and those patients at the Bloemfontein Psychiatric Hospital ...

IsiXhosa:

... kuba sesona sibhedlele sinaso eFree State sabantu abagula ngengqondo.

English:

It has also failed to pave the internal road towards the township to assist the rural municipality.

IsiXhosa:

Imali niyayilahlela koomasipala, oomasipala bayitye.

English:

There is no accountability.

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IsiXhosa:

Ngoko ke sithi, kwimali eniyilahlela koomasipala baphenduliseni ...

English:

... otherwise, the municipalities' failures are to be your failures. Chairperson, we also concerned about the exit plan and the destination for the EPWP people workers, especially if we say we want to turn South Africa into a construction site. How can it be a construction site if we give them skills for 20 years without acquiring a single certificate.

IsiXhosa:

Kungamnandi kanjani xa sinokwenza umzekelo sithi ...

English:

... this person started as an EPWP worker, today is a successful businessman ...

IsiXhosa:

... ofana nabanye abantu. Masingathi basoloko belele engceni side sibabize ngokuba ngoalal'engceni kuba akukho nto bayenzayo abanazo izakhono kuba kaloku iiprojekti azigqitywa. Ilungu elihloniphekileyo lase Odendaal liyithethile into

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yesitishoi samapolisa saseOdendaal esivalwayo ebusuku kuba akukho akulayiti kumnyama akukho magumbi angasese. Abantu abafuna uncedo ebusuku abakwazi ukuyisebenzisa. Ngentsimbi yesibhozo kuyavalwa kuba ...

English:

... even the police officers are not safe in that police station. Lastly House Chairperson, the public infrastructure must extend their real network of the construction company. As the EFF we reject this this Budget Vote.

In Charles Mubeki Stadium, there is an urgent project to assist the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. To date that project is on phase two for three years. There is no movement in that project of Charles Mubeki Stadium. You are an agent to support the department, but if you are not moving, it is a problem. Thank you very much Chairperson.

Mr S RACHUENE (Limpopo): Hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces hon, hon Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Public Works and Infrastructure, hon Minister DN Macpherson, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Cogta Minister, hon Mamoloko Kubayi, Deputy Minister, hon Zihle

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Zikalala, members of the executive council, MECs who have also joined on this platform, ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed. Greetings.

I'm pleased to be part of today's National Council of Province debate on Vote 13 of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. This session of the National Council of Province takes place in July, when South Africa and the globe celebrates the former statesman Tata Nelson Mandela. It is this month when the people of South Africa embrace the chance to celebrate Nelson Mandela's life for the entire month, and this allows everyone to heed the call to action for people to recognise their power to make an imprint and change the world around them.

As presented by the hon Minister, the Budget Vote responds well to this year's theme for International Mandela Day, which says, it is still in our hands to combat poverty and in inequity. The department outlined its plans to ensure that we turn the country into a construction site.

If this is properly done, it will further develop our communities not only in urban areas, but also in far-flung areas. Hon Chairperson, before I go any further, allow me to

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take this opportunity to congratulate the hon Minister of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure on his appointment.

Minister, the Budget Vote you outlined in your maiden speech a few weeks ago gives an indication and reassurance that this democratic government remains determined to change the lives of our communities. We assure national Department of Public Health and Infrastructure of our support and cooperation. It is in in our collective interest to see the government succeed because South Africa works because of Public Works.

Hon members, about three days ago, my premier, the Premier of Limpopo province, the first female premier of this province since the dawn of democracy, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, participated in the President's Opening of the Parliament speech debate. In her speech, the hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, dedicated the alliance of allocation time to question infrastructure, delivery and maintenance.

The hon premier emphasised the commitment of our provincial government to make infrastructural development a catalyst for social economic development. As the premier shared with the

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joint sitting of the hon House, we in Limpopo have conceptualised a campaign known as the Dikgerekgere Wednesday.

The essence of this campaign is to prioritise the maintenance of infrastructure in our province, particularly road infrastructure. Through this campaign, we seek to rehabilitate dilapidated and neglected roads in our province. This campaign has also inspired our local municipality. They are following us.

Today, you will see the work if you drive to our capital city, Polokwane. The maintenance and rehabilitation of the road network in the capital city on ships and rural areas have been taken to greater height never seen before. We will rest once this concept is implemented in every inch of our province. We move from a solid understanding that the people of our province deserve better services. This in turn will go a long way in attracting investment to our province and facilitating social mobility.

Hon Chairperson, we also welcome the fact that the department has developed a strategy which the seventh administration Cabinet has already approved. This strategy seeks to repurpose and reposition The Property Management Trading Entity as a

viable and efficient vehicle to create comprehensive value through state immovable asset portfolio.

In Limpopo, we are even taking this opportunity to escalate this to the next level where we are starting a vigorous campaign to claim the state properties. The Limpopo Department of Public Works roads and infrastructure will soon launch a programme called operation ... [Inaudible.] ... operation what belongs to Public Works which translate into bringing back the state property.

It is through this operation that we are going to claim back our built infrastructure and provincial land, including state farms that are currently in the hands of thugs.

Sesotho:

Re tlo di lata kaofela.

English:

Law enforcement agencies are also coming on board with this one. This will also nip in the emerging tendency of the so-called construction mafias that are sometimes masked as community development forums. Speaker, rural provinces such as

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Limpopo will face the challenge of attracting private capital infrastructure investment.

Although we currently have a low private sector investment in our public infrastructure, the status quo is beginning to change. We are seeing an increasing private sector investment appetite in our public infrastructure delivery campaign. The truth is that we need more and more corporate citizens to partner with the government to deliver on this infrastructure to serve all of us.

Hon Minister, by now you should be aware that one of the major criticisms against your department is not from outside stakeholders. Your sister departments are criticising your department for being notoriously inefficient in procuring and maintaining public infrastructure. Indeed, this cannot be defining birthmark of the department as crucial as public works.

Hon Minister, our support for the budget you have tabled comes with expectations. Amongst others, you will attend the urgency of maintaining a credible and dependable public asset register. This this should properly update asset records and accounting for every acquisition law, revaluation transfer and

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disposal of asset. Unreliable public asset registers are a fatal condition for the for the theft of public assets.

Madam Speaker, historically, the Department of Public Works has been leading in creating employment opportunity. There is no reason why this rule should be minimised. On the contrary, we need to see the department create more sustainable jobs through the delivery and maintenance of infrastructure. The most suitable approach in this regard is the insourcing of state services.

We also appreciate the announcement that Infrastructure South Africa will receive extra attention as our particular purpose vehicle to ensure that we have well packaged projects that are financially viable, catalytic and delivered on time with all stakeholders meeting their commitment.

Through Infrastructure South Africa, ISA five provinces will be able to continue to deliver on their mandate of infrastructure development. In the spirit of the spirit of Government of National Unity, GNU let us continue to work together to make South Africa work through delivering quality and reliable public infrastructure.

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I want to reiterate President Cyril Ramaphosa's statement, which he has made five days ago during the Opening of Parliament when he said, and I quote:

"The Government of National Unity will pursue every action that contributes to sustainable, rapid economic growth and remove every obstacle in the way of growth. We are determined that growth must be inclusive. It must be transformational. Inclusive growth must drive the redistribution of wealth and opportunity. It must support the empowerment of Black South Africans and women and all those who in the past had been relegated to the fringe of the economy."

This is indeed part of the constitutional imperative to redress past imbalances and deal with the slow development process. Let's join hands and make South Africa work for all its citizens. I thank you.

Sesotho:

Ke a leboha.

Ms T MOTARA (Gauteng): Chair of Chairs, Chairperson of the NCOP
Mme Refilwe Tsipane-Mtsweni, Chief Whip of the NCOP, to all permanent and special delegates to the Council, Minister

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of Human Settlements, hon Mmamaloko Kubayi, Minister of Infrastructure Development, hon D Macpherson, Deputy Minister of Human Settlement Mme Thandi Mahambehlala, Deputy Minister of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Development, hon Sihle Zikalala, stakeholders of the Human Settlements as well as built environment fraternity, members of the media and honoured guests and viewers, good afternoon. It is an honour for me to submit the first Budget Vote of the Seventh administration for the Department of Human Settlements. This is a historic time as we begin a new chapter in our joint journey to serve the people of Gauteng and South Africa as well as of Gauteng.

This Budget Vote comes at a time when the Gauteng people have entrusted us, the government of national unity and the government of provincial unity, with the task of improving their lives. This is no easy task, but I am convinced that with the steadfast leadership of Premier Panyaza Lesufi and President Cyril Ramaphosa we will be on pace to fulfil our aim of expanding Gauteng together by 2030. At the heart of our goal is the establishment of a unique Gauteng regional city, a seamlessly integrated urban landscape that will transform the way our people live, work and flourish. And at the heart of

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this ambitious strategy is the creation of human settlements that actually meet the requirements of our communities.

I am overjoyed to inform that the smart city of Lanseria is no longer simply a dream, but an unavoidable reality. Lanseria will become a reality with the guidance of Premier Lesufi as well as the President demonstrating our commitment to innovation and revolutionary change. In addition to residing there and working and playing within its energetic boundaries, more than half a million individuals will also make Lanseria their home, permanently altering the face of our nation. In order to accomplish this, more than 100 000 single family homes will be built, which is evidence of our commitment to offering decent, reasonably priced housing to everyone.

However, that is not where our goals end. We have established important priorities as the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements, and these will guide our work in the upcoming years. These top priorities consist of, firstly, eradicating the province's housing allocation backlog, we are dedicated to addressing the long-standing issue of housing backlogs ensuring that every citizen in Gauteng has access to the shelter they deserve. Secondly, developing innovative tactics to combat illegal invasions of land and built structures. We

do recognise the importance of this issue and are working relentlessly to create long-term solutions that match the demands of our communities with the rule of law.

We also want to ensure equitable distribution of the department's financial resources, and to this end we are committed to allocating our financial resources fairly and transparently, ensuring that our interventions benefit every corner of Gauteng. Fourthly, we want to accelerate the completion of existing housing projects and fast-track and turning on new ones. We understand the necessity of delivering housing units quickly and are committed to optimising our operations to accomplish this aim. Fifthly, we want to collaborate with other departments to expedite service delivery to our people. We understand that efficient service delivery necessitates a comprehensive strategy, and we are committed to working together with our colleagues to provide a seamless experience for the people residing in Gauteng.

Sixth, we want to capacitate rapid land release teams so that more serviced stands can be made accessible to people in need. We are dedicated to empowering our land release teams to expedite the availability of serviced land which is a crucial step in meeting our communities' housing need. We want to

collaborate with departmental officials to ensure seamless and efficient delivery of human settlements in Gauteng. We recognise our departmental officials' invaluable role and are committed to cultivating a collaborative and supportive environment that allows them to provide exceptional service to the people.

To meet these lofty objectives, the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements will collaborate closely with the national government to gain the finance, investment and resources required to develop Gauteng into a major hub of human settlements building.

On informal settlements, the growth of informal settlements presents a huge concern for our province. According to our most recent data, there are over 200 informal settlements throughout the province containing an estimated 1,8 million people. It definitely constitutes a sizable proportion of Gauteng's overall population and offers significant challenges to the provision of adequate housing and basic amenities.

Rapid population expansion and informal land invasions in recent years have seriously damaged the province's human settlements strategy. Land that was set aside for the

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development of affordable formal housing has instead been instead taken by informal settlements, leaving us scrambling to keep up with the growing demand.

We must address this situation immediately with a multifaceted plan that includes renovating existing informal settlements, accelerating the delivery of low-cost homes and taking decisive action to prevent future illegal invasions.

For us as we commemorate the Nelson Mandela Month, I'd want to convey our heartfelt gratitude to the devoted activists at Habitat for Humanity, the Industrial Development Corporation and the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Their recent effort to donate five houses to worthy people in Orange Farm, Gauteng, on International Nelson Mandela Day exemplifies the potential of teamwork in reducing homelessness in our country. According to the former leader who said, and I quote:

To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity.

The right to shelter is inscribed in our young constitution, and it is our responsibility to guarantee that we uphold people's rights, which have been fought so hard for.

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Hon Chair of Chairs, hon members and distinguished guests, let us all work together as a unified front guided by the principles of the government of national unity and the government of provincial unity to fulfil our promises to the people of Gauteng. We will work together to create a better future where every citizen has access to excellent human settlements and the ability to prosper in a smoothly connected Gauteng regional city. With this, I propose that Parliament and in particular the National Council of Provinces accept Budget Vote 33 for Human Settlements. Thank you, and may God continue to bless Gauteng and South Africa.

Mr E NZIMANDE: Hon Chair, Chief Whip, hon Ministers, Deputy Ministers, traditional leaders and the faith-based leaders or organisations, I greet you all, I rise to address matters that strike at the heart of our struggle which is human settlement and infrastructure. Our mission as the MKP is to ensure that our people live under conducive and inhabitable conditions, and not as refugees in the land of their birth. That would be to restore their human dignity.

Just for your disappointment, we as the MKP, definitely reject this budget for reasons enunciated hereunder. For example, let's take a few points. Look at the budget cuts for human

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settlements and infrastructure, and such, in our viewpoint, evinces proof of a government that does not have the political will to regard housing as one of the factors that will contribute to economic growth.

This budget is designed in a manner that is pro-elites, and not for the poor, the vulnerable and the proletariat. It is illusionary that there will be an increase in infrastructure investment when the budget is drastically reduced over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period.

I would now want to turn to the issue that is public infrastructure Reducing the Capital assets budget by R3,8 billion is in contrast to an agenda for economic viability in all spheres of government in dealing with crucial projects.

Whereas you are sitting in a situation or a backdrop where workers are subjected to unsafe and dilapidated buildings which are not compliant with Occupational Health and Safety, OHS, standards and Employment Equity.

I want to deal now with reducing the goods and services budget by R176 million plus and will limit, in our viewpoint, the

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capacity of the government to deliver on the commitment it has made in the strategic plans and APP.

On reducing transfers and subsidies by R4,8 billion, we believe that shall impact adversely the early development of African children, it will affect the new sites for childcare and development facilities, and sports and recreation. Furthermore, it shall adversely affect negatively on community development and partnership.

Turning to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee, PTME, over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period, we noted that there is a view to develop precincts, which is a good idea.

However, we have seen, and we have known of this idea in Gauteng. Since 2008, the Kopanong Project never kicked off the ground. What we have seen are renewal lease agreements which have cost the government a lot of money. For example, in three offices in Commissioner Street, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni, the government is spending R50 million per annum.

Furthermore, we have seen these lease agreements in other areas or parts of the country. They have expired and these

expiry dates are more than five years, constitute an irregular expenditure, and no one has been taken for consequence management.

On refurbishment and maintenance, we are happy that the Ministries are acknowledging that there is no computerised maintenance management system, which we believe is now of vital importance. That could be one of the factors that are causing inefficient processing and overspending since some equipment is over maintained and non-performance of other assets since they are undermaintained. This leads to emergency work skyrocketing. Today, we are informed of the budget cuts.

On capital expenditure, Capex, approval and process for planned projects that are ready for planning and execution are taking far too long. [Interjections.] ... [Inaudible.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R RYDER): MEC Rachuene, please, mute yourself.

Mr E NZIMANDE: ... There are not defined output and outcomes. Projects are not completed on time due to poor project management, poor interdepartmental co-ordination and poor

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workmanship. Again, the plans are not dealing with such a problem.

Human dignity in housing, the Six Administrations failed and the plans that are currently before us that are to be dealt with by the Seven Administrations evinces no political will to realise this obligation or this goal.

Just on informal settlements, we have 119 alone in Ekurhuleni alone. One of them is Makause, which is 34 years old. It was there from 1990. There has never been any improvement. There are open shafts running or sewage that are spilled over Our people are subjected to hazardous situations. There is no plan to deal with that. This is the same situation that you will find across the length and breadth of our country. Your Nyanga, Khayelitsha, and in KwaZulu-Natal, your Umlaza and other areas. Emijondolo [shacks]

On RDP houses, this area is an area that is engulfed by corruption. That is known and there is no plan to deal with that. The corruption is done by councillors, including officials in provincial departments. The current state of the RDP houses is appalling. They resemble death camps designed to trap the unemployed in a space devoid of economic

opportunities. It is our viewpoint that much has to be done around this particular area.

On co-operative solutions, we strongly recommend combining RDP houses with housing co-operatives. We believe this will assist in long-term housing. In terms of our own people's mandate, we are of the view that we have to deal with cartels in construction. We believe that eliminating cartels will lead to state-owned companies dedicated to housing project management and quality-assured construction and related services.

[Interjections.]

IsiZulu:

Sekuphelile? Kulungile, akufani, kodwa bazwile

Mr N GOTSELL: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister and Deputy Minister, hon provincial Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, good day. As we debate Vote 33 of Human Settlements' Budget, let us be mindful of the importance of the restoration of dignity that owning a home brings to individuals and families. Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution, section 26, reminds us that everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing, and it also places the responsibility on the state to take

reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the realisation of this right.

According to the 2022 census, 88% of South Africans reside in formal dwellings, 8% in informal dwellings and 8% in traditional dwellings, otherwise known as mud houses. This means that nearly 5 million of our citizens live in a makeshift structure, not erected according to approved architectural plans in residential areas that do not comply with local authority requirements for conventional townships. They are typically unauthorised and are invariably located on land that has not been proclaimed for residential use, resulting in the loss of property and shelter during floods, as we've currently been experiencing in the Western Cape.

Overall, it is important to recognise housing not as an end, but as a means to several ends. Access to housing is not about shelter alone, it also encompasses the following: security of tenure, health and safety, livelihoods and subsistence, learning, recreation, family and identity, culture and community. The Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa recently indicated that the budget of this department increased by 4,4% to R33 billion in 2024-25 and that this

budget is the main vehicle to resource the delivery of integrated sustainable human settlements nationwide.

It goes further to say that although the department's budget is set to increase by a nominal average growth rate of 1,6% over the medium term, this constitutes a 3% decrease in real terms. Furthermore, due to fiscal constraints, there is a R3,147 billion baseline reduction in the department's budget in 2024-25 alone, with bulk cuts taken from the Human Settlements Development Grant and the Provincial Informal Settlements Grant, which will likely have a negative impact on housing delivery.

When considering that housing is a concurrent function reliance on all three spheres of government for successful service delivery, transfers in 2024 and 2025 to provinces, municipalities and public entities that implement Human Settlements programmes, constitute an estimated 96,6% or R31,7 billion of the overall departmental budget. Included in this are allocations to the Human Settlements Development Grant, Urban Settlements Development Grant, the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership and transfers to public entities.

It is therefore critical that those funds are spent effectively and efficiently by receiving agents in order for national to successfully leverage those transfers to address sector priorities. Take for example, spending of the informal settlements upgrading partnership part, when taking rollovers and budget cuts into account, only 45% of the total funds available for this grant have been spent by provinces at the end of quarter three. The municipal expenditure of this grant was also low at 31% at the conclusion of the municipality's second quarter, while metro spending midway through the financial year was reported at just 32% with nearly half the metros falling behind.

All of this shows us that there is a problem that requires urgent intervention. It is essential that the department outlines its strategy to ensure provinces and municipalities spend their allocations and that they explain that the mitigating measures would be to deal with provinces and municipalities that fail to honour the constitutional imperative of section 26. This will enable Parliament to do proper oversight on the department and provinces.

Minister, it is therefore essential that challenges experienced in contract implementation in, for example, the

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Western Cape, are taken into account. First, the continued threat of the construction mafia and extortion through acts of violent threats, shootings and intimidation on several project sites which leads to stoppages. One such example is the Gugulethu Infill project, which has been closed since March 2022, resulting in the underspending of R244 million. The good news is that the DA-run City of Cape Town has now completely taken over the project, which will mean more rapid progress to completion. In fact, in March this year, an additional 11 breaking new ground homes were handed over to qualifying beneficiaries stretching over two sites, Erf 8448 in Gugulethu and Mau Mau in Nyanga. Gugulethu Infill is back on track.

Another example is illegal land invasions on land earmarked for housing development, which also has a detrimental impact on spending. One such example is the Welmoed/Penhill project where over 60 illegal farmers are delaying the delivery of over 8000 housing opportunities. Phase 1A of the project budgeted for R729 million.

Furthermore, violent community protests by non-qualifying beneficiaries such as can be seen in the National Upgrading Support Programme in Mossel Bay also creates major delays. It is worth noting that despite these shortcomings, the Western

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Cape Department of Infrastructure has innovatively delivered on its mandates. Between April and December 2023, more than 1 665 housing opportunities have been delivered for the most deserving and vulnerable beneficiaries. In addition to the housing opportunities, the departments have installed more than 295 solar geysers as part of an initiative to mitigate the energy crisis to assist indigent households and beneficiaries with disabilities.

Furthermore, a total of 2 614 title deeds have been provided to beneficiaries to promote security of tenure and leaving a lasting legacy. The Western Cape Department of Infrastructure achieved 100% Human Settlement Development Grant, HSDG, expenditure for the last financial year. The Western Cape has not been flagged as one of the provinces with a preliminary performance below 80%, unlike elsewhere. Despite the aforementioned challenges, the department has persevered even in the face of in-year budget cuts. The department remains committed to its goals.

In the period between 2019 and 2024, the department provided 46 000 housing opportunities for qualifying beneficiaries in the province, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to

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providing the people of this province with the opportunities to live safely, securely and with dignity.

In conclusion, the DA-run Western Cape Department of Infrastructure sets an example to other provinces and will continue to deliver housing opportunities despite the shrinking fiscal environment being faced as per section 26 of the Constitution. I thank you. [Time expired.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon members, just to draw your attention to the fact that there is tea available in the foyer for members. Please don't all leave the House at once. The debate will continue. Please feel free to go and enjoy a cup of tea as we take the debate forward, listening to the hon B Makamu, the Limpopo MEC for Corporate Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs.

Mr B MAKAMU (Limpopo): Hon Chair of the House, Minister of Public Works, Deputy Ministers of Public Works, Minister of Human Settlements, Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, members of the provincial executives, my colleagues MECs, chairpersons and members of the committees, hon members of the National Council of Provinces, directors-general and other officials and fellow South Africans, good afternoon. Let me

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begin by extending my congratulations to the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Public Works and Infrastructure together with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Human Settlements. I wish them well in their new deployments.

This being national the Mandela Month, it is fitting to remember the words of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, and I quote: "It always seems impossible until it's done."

As we commemorate his legacy we pay tribute to an icon who dedicated his life to justice, equality and the betterment of humanity. There has never been anyone like him and his spirit continues to inspire our nation.

In celebration of the 30 years of freedom and democracy we highlight the strides attained to date, more importantly under the Sixth administration as we get into the Seventh administration under the leadership of Minister Kubayi. On issues of the low-cost housing the 2024-25 financial year, the department plans to deliver 4 555 low-cost housing units with an allocated budget of R687 million. In the past quarter, which is the first quarter, 1 062 units have been delivered against the annual target.

In line with the ministerial priority to eradicate mud houses the department aims to replace 500 mud houses with low-cost houses at a cost of R69 million. In the first quarter about 34 mud houses have been replaced leaving a target of 466. These 500 units are part of the overall target of 4 555 low cost housing units.

Polokwane Municipality was the first to be granted Level 2 Housing Accreditation. The department gazetted and will transfer R73,5 million to Polokwane Municipality for implementing housing programmes. The municipality is currently appointing service providers for the construction of houses. The postaccreditation technical support will continue to be provided to Polokwane Municipality and other level 1 municipalities, namely, Makhado, Musina, Thulamela, Lephalale, Bela Bela and Greater Tzaneen. One technical support workshop has already been conducted in Tzaneen, Makhado and Bela Bela.

In honouring our freedom fighters, for the 2024-25 financial year, the department has planned to construct 132 housing units for military veterans at a cost of R16,5 million across five districts. In the first quarter we have already delivered 44 houses.

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The issue of the removal and replacement of asbestos, from the financial year 2022-23, a total of 1 500 asbestos roofs have been removed and replaced in Seshego. The second phase to replace 755 asbestos roofs has commenced with the site handed over to service providers.

On community residential units in order to deal away with the apartheid setting of hostels, we have committed to complete Marapong. Already 480 wall plates of the 61 blocks have been done. The Tshikota project has started with engineering services and the physical progress at 15%. The Talana CRU will be completed as the feasibility study, project designs and packaging have been completed. The principal agent was recently appointed and the project design review is underway.

We have started to construct servicing sites of 5 428 for informal settlement upgrading.

On title deeds, the department will transfer a total of 1 460 title deeds different categories pre-1994, between 1994 and 2014 and post-2014 & 2019. Service providers have been appointed to conduct the proclamation in townships which will unlock at the registration and transfer of title deeds.

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On bulk infrastructure engineering services a total of 25 projects have commenced in various districts. This will help lessen challenges during the implementation of water and sewer reticulation projects in our area.

In the audit of asbestos, a professional resource team has been appointed to undertake technical assessments on all asbestos roofs on government subsidised units in all local municipalities in Limpopo province. Stage 1 and Stage 2 have been completed in all municipalities, with Stages 3 assessment of structures and Stage 4 in progress.

The apartheid spatial planning has left deep scars on our urban and rural landscapes entrenching inequality and limiting access to economic opportunities for many South Africans. The legacy of this planning is visible today in the form of segregated communities, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to essential services. The Department of Human Settlements is committed to addressing these disparities through integrated human settlement development. Our policies and programmes aim to create inclusive well-connected communities with access to quality housing, education, healthcare and employment opportunities. By prioritising the development of affordable housing in well-located areas and

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investing in infrastructure projects that connect previously marginalised areas to economic hubs, we are actively working to dismantle the remnants of apartheid spatial planning and build a more equitable society.

In the spirit of the Mandela Month let us close with another of his quotes:

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

In conclusion and in this note, I express my support for Budget Vote 33 on Human Settlements. It is on course to improving the lives of the needy and vulnerable as the Minister is leading this department. We appreciate your leadership, Minister. Thanks very much, hon Chair.

Mr K MASHILO (Mpumalanga): A very good afternoon to Minister Kubayi, Minister of Public Work Works, Deputy Ministers, my colleague, MEC and indeed hon members and the leadership of the SA Local Government Association, Salga.

Thank you Chair for allowing us to take part in this important debate. Let's me take this opportunity and welcome the debate

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by the hon Minister of Human Settlements, Mama Kubayi. Once more, Minister, congratulations. As a globe commemorates the Nelson Mandela International Month, this department is joining the rest of the globe to do its part in improving the people's lives through quality services.

Allow me to quote the former President: We need to help to build infrastructures so that Africa can take advantage of the trading opportunities and be given a fair chance to compete in the world economy. This help that the former state's man is alluding should come from all the stakeholders within our build sector.

The country has just concluded a successful national and provincial elections in May as exposed by the Constitution. Eligible members of the community have exercised their rights, and the results are known to us. Indeed, numbers cannot lie that we got 40% at national, which makes us the majority and in the province of Mpumalanga, we are above 50%. Despite much talk the people still have faith in the ANC whom I am representing today.

Allow me to quote former ANC President Oliver Tambo when he said: "The fight of freedom must go on until it is won; until

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our country is free and happy and peaceful as part of the community of man, we cannot rest". Taking a lead from this quote, our freedom as people of Mpumalanga will be incomplete until all our citizens have been provided with recent and integrated services in the form of houses, service land, community hall, childcare centers and title deeds amongst others.

Before I go further one more, let me congratulate the Minister and say to the Minister, always experience is the best teacher. In a way you understand this department can make more progress and your leadership and Deputy Minister, Mama Thandi Mahambehlala.

I must say after due consideration and consultation, Mpumalanga has decided to merge both the Department of Human Settlements and that of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, which we are now working on the modalities to be one fully amalgamated department will now know as Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs like another department have done.

For those who may wonder why, the reason is simply both departments are delivering both ground and dealing with the

same stakeholders while focusing on the structure and integrated development. Therefore, planning will henceforth be seamless and integrated in approach. We have noted that as the Department of Human Settlements over a period of time, we have built houses and municipalities were unable to put infrastructure that make the human settlements not to be complete. According to the recent report and statistics, Mpumalanga province population has grown significantly from what it was in the previous year to 5,1 million, which has now risen.

The province has a mix of urban rural areas, which some being more developed whereas other are still not developed. Despite the use of financial spending policy intervention and infrastructure development, the province has some disparities rating to the access to development. It is against this background that the provincial administration through the Department of Human Settlements before merger with Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs has developed a strategic plan and intervention to address these disparities. In terms of the provincial overview, Mpumalanga amongst the province is the fastest growing population with the provincial population growth at an annual average of 1,7% compared to the national average of 1,4%.

In terms of the economic infrastructure, Mpumalanga counted for 7, 7% of the national production in 2021 up from 7,3% in 2022. As people continue to migrate to cities for further economic opportunities thus put pressure on the infrastructure in housing delivery.

According to Minister Kubayi, when she said, the sector must reconfigure and reciprocate the human settlements system that is capable, adaptive and innovative.

Previously delivery, in a recently published future report in one of the mainstream print media house, the provincial government has been focusing on accelerating its infrastructure development to boost economic growth and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

Over the past 30 years, the government has completed numerous projects in education, health, transport and other sectors. These projects include construction of new schools, houses, community halls, hospitals, clinics and various other facilities at enhancing service delivery.

As the province of Mpumalanga, we have now embarked in terms of the new project that we intend to do. That includes some of

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the mega cities. Nkosi City is one of them. We are now discussing around the Acornhoek City in the deep rural municipalities. Our believe is that municipalities that are in the rural areas can be changed and be converted into a proper democratic and development.

The speech from Tata Mandela words, once he said: "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph trying over it". As this department, we should not fear invoking section 25 of the Constitution on land expropriation without compensation, but we must triumph over it in adhering to existing laws of the Republic.

I must indicate, the province will put this matter before the court wherein Gert Sibande earnestly we want to expropriate this land and deeply it will test if section 25 as we understood it, it will assist the process taking forward.

In line with the department's five-year strategic plan, the following strategic focus areas informed and continue to inform all human settlements delivery targets in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework, MTSF, 2025 to 2029. Firstly, the delivery of proclaims township to ensure compliance with local Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, SPLUMA, bylaws

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and secure land tenure rights option. Secondly, accelerate informal settlement upgrading. Thirdly, development of service site in support of rapid land release. Fourthly, increasing access for affordable rental housing opportunities.

It is my considered view that we are all aware of the global challenges since 2008 recession and by extension sluggish economist, which have a huge bearing on budget allocation to the department.

We continue to roll out our services to a total budget allocated of R1, 1 billion appropriated to the department for the 2024-25 financial year under the following funding streams: Firstly, Human Settlements Development Grant, HSDG. Informal Settlements Upgrading Programme Grant, which is known as ISUPG. Much as we acknowledge the needs and social challenges that continue to be a burden where our communities still need more services.

Our approach ... [Inaudible.] ... of Mpumalanga more services and this has been tested during the campaign that our people need more service land than building their houses and we are adherent to that. This major of Human Settlements and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs will assist that

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municipalities, their milk funds are utilized for this important infrastructure.

Indeed, as I move towards the conclusion, now that the dust has settled and the government established and mandate is clear, go out there and deliver. This is what the people of Mpumalanga request us to do. Perhaps one should take the lead from the fact that both the Ministers and I are returning to the portfolio well some will prefer continuing. Ours is to grab the opportunities and deliver as expected.

Once again, let me congratulate our Minister and Deputy Ministers for being appointed. Certainly, the service is in good hands. Thank you very much, Chairperson. Congratulate yourself once more, Chair.

Ms T BREEDT: Chairperson, let me start by congratulating the new incumbents to their positions in both departments. Our initial engagements with the annual performance plans, APPs, and budgets were very good. I have that hope this is not just a case of new brooms, but that there's actual commitment, vision and dedication. These departments can change a lot for the everyday South Africans.

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Both Ministers were cognisant of the fact that their departments have had challenges in the past and that it cannot be business as usual. Specific mention was made to the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, pit toilets, mud houses and title deeds. What we need now is clear action to address these issues. The task at hand is great, because these projects have been marred by wrong priorities, incompetent contractors, corruption, and monies ill-spent to name but highlights.

What I wish to see and what I trust will be the focus once we have dealt with the sixth administration legacy, is that there is clarity on what still has to be done, that there are clear timeframes that are realistic and achievable, that the budget has been finalized and will be available, that the competent contractors are appointed and that there is good monitoring of the processes and its progress made. Too often than not we have seen tenderpreneurs that do not have the necessary skillset, get appointed to the project to the detriment of South Africans.

Minister Macpherson, I think it is great that you want to turn South Africa into a construction site. There are many infrastructure projects that need to happen and with haste.

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Besides the focus areas you have mentioned, I would like to mention three specific aspects I would like to focus on:

The first is contractors, we need to have a mechanism whereby work is evaluated and should need be, contractors grey listed from working with government. In Moqhaka Local Municipality a contractor failed to successfully to implement a project, he was evaluated and find to be substandard, and yet the same contractor is being used for new projects. Safe to say I think the same happened with these projects. Minister Kubayi, I think the same actually applies to your department.

Secondly, the maintenance plans for government buildings need to be developed and followed. You yourself said that it is a disgrace to see in what state these buildings are. And lastly, we need to ensure that we have an asset register is up to date. In Matjhabeng Local Municipality in the Free State, there was a need for land. Land for both human settlement and agricultural. But because municipality's asset register was never kept up to date, they did not know of the 140 farms that could be used these for purposes.

Minister Kubayi, you had said that not enough was done to address the need for title deeds and I agree with you 100%. In

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my former role in the other House, agriculture was my priority. We had long discussions about land, the need for land, and whether this be for agricultural or housing purposes. But what we could all agree on was that the right to own and need to own, was what was important. Title Deeds give people security of tenure and that is so important South Africa.

Hon Minister, we spoke this briefly yesterday, in the engagement about the manner in which your department monitors the grants that have been distributed. The Free State has had many scandals with regards to housing. But more worrisome is that over the last 10 years we have surrendered more than R105 million in the Department of Human Settlements because money was not used.

This year is the first year in 10 years that we will not surrender funds. But I can assure you, it's not because the mandate of the department has been delivered to. And it's been so bad in the Free State, that we have joked around that the department needs to close down, because it is not serving the people.

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Also as mentioned about contractors, need to be made mention of. I think you mentioned, addressing the construction mafia. These two departments are very critical for service delivery. Hon Ministers, I will conclude, you have tremendous tasks ahead of you. Good luck. But know, we will be watching. Thank you.

Cllr S HUMA (SALGA): Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Minister of Human Settlements, Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Chief Whip of the NCOP, House Chairpersons, permanent delegates, special delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I note that the sitting today includes both human settlement and public works. Please allow me to begin reflecting on human settlement and proceed to Public Works and infrastructure.

The South African Local Government Association, SALGA, welcomes the continued commitment by the Minister of Human Settlements to the Freedom Charter, which states that 'there shall be houses, security and comfort for all'. As we reflect on the 30 years of democracy, it is important to acknowledge the strides that the country has made in the number of housing opportunities provided to the most vulnerable members of our

communities. We commend the Department of Human Settlements on that.

Although a lot has been achieved in the delivery of housing and the creation of human settlements, the reality is that the housing backlog and other related challenges persist.

While the number of housing opportunities provided is commendable madam Minister, where the bulk of them are located, which is far from places of opportunity such as economic, social and cultural activity risks perpetuating the historical fragmentation of our cities and towns. Fragmented cities, towns and villages place a huge burden on municipalities who must now build infrastructure and deliver services at huge costs.

We urge you and our partners to accelerate the identification of land and buildings that can enhance our collective efforts to deliver housing closer to where the jobs are. This, madam Minister includes investing more in providing affordable rental accommodation.

We need to expand investment in social housing. We also need to strengthen policy, regulation and support for backyard

dwelling. One in seven people in the country live in these types of accommodation. When unregulated, this creates all sorts of challenges. However, if properly regulated and supported, they can help reduce the backlog while allowing small scale entrepreneurs to enter the residential property market.

The unlawful occupation of land is a particularly big risk at multiple levels. It requires a very sensitive balance between ensuring the right to shelter particularly within the context of the history of land dispossession and exclusion of many from accessing the opportunity of our cities and towns. This must be balanced with the rule of law and must avoid strangulating municipality's ability to proactively drive socio-economic development in their areas.

The SALGA welcomes the review of the Human Settlements White Paper, which will lead to the review of the Housing Act and the Housing Code. We welcome the consultation process including deferring the finalization when some key stakeholders requested more engagement. We appreciate you and your team for allowing that.

Some say democracy is expensive and time consuming. Opening yourself up to the multiple voices will result in a robust product that we can all collectively own. Just remember to drive the accreditation of municipalities to play a key role in the delivery of integrated human settlement. Integration is at the core of municipal plans and housing goes a long way to improving or limiting this. Intentional investment and support for municipal accreditation therefore remains essential.

We note the country's economic outlook and the tough fiscal environment that has led to budget cuts which is quite unfortunate. We as a sector commit to work with you to ensure that we maximise on the limited resources that have been made available. We call upon you and the department to work with us on an intentional local support programme to help the municipalities who receive part of this budget to plan and spend wisely.

Regarding the emergency housing grant. We appreciate your acknowledgement of the difficult environment within which we operate. We have seen an increasing number of natural and human induced disasters. Various other social and economic difficulties have led to the need for emergency housing. The amount allocated to this is worrying.

Even more importantly, municipalities are complaining that centralizing of the management of the Emergency Housing Grant has not worked in speedily responding to disasters and emergencies when they arise. We invite you to engage with key stakeholders including local government to review and strengthen this.

Turning to Public Works and Infrastructure: The department remains the biggest custodian of government property and land. Whilst SALGA notes the progress made in redistributing land to needy citizens and transferring of land to municipalities for development purposes, the pace is slow.

Furthermore, the process seems to be quantitative in nature and less concerned about the quality of land being redistributed and transferred. The emphasis must include both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of land.

The SALGA has promised that local government will work with the department regarding illegal occupation of departmental properties in major cities around the country.

One of the major issues to be resolved hon Minister is the debt owed by the department to municipalities. We urge that

this challenge be addressed as a matter of urgency because of the knock-on effects on financial stability of municipalities and the ability of municipalities to pay their own utility related debts.

Local government through SALGA has been consulted on the policy development of the Expanded Public Works Programme. However, some of the major concerns about the programme remain a challenge. The differential between the national minimum wage and the EPWP wage creates difficulties for municipalities that are part of the programme through their own budgets and projects.

The expected role of EPWP as both a social net and employment enjoins all stakeholders to ensure its success, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The SALGA continues to applaud the efforts of the department through the Council of Built Environment and its affiliates to professionalise all disciplines in the built environment. We have already signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the CBE and some affiliates in this regard.

The challenge remains that the quality of workmanship in many infrastructures related projects remains questionable at a huge cost to the state with little or no consequences for those involved. Consequence management is an integral part of the value chain for professionalization. We are ready and willing to work with the ministry and department in pursuit of the professionalization of the sector. I thank you.

Sesotho:

Ke a leboha.

English:

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, Cllr Huma on the same note, can I request that next time when you come to the House, please try and observe the Rules of the House. When you speak, please switch on your video, so that we can see your beautiful face. Thank you very much.

Mr T A SIMMERS (Western Cape): Hon Chairperson, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements and members of the portfolio committee, national Ministers of Human Settlements and Public Works and Infrastructure, the Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, my fellow colleagues, all Members of the Executive Council who have

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joined virtually from across the country, Director-General of Human Settlements and the DDG, hon members of the NCOP, chairpersons and members of boards and councils and entities, Mahatma Gandhi once famously said that: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

This is embodied in the commitment of the Western Cape government, which I represent here today, which seeks to provide a service delivery noteworthy, which citizens can be very proud of. Therefore, my provincial Department of Infrastructure, which also includes human settlements, will be driven by five focus areas for this term. Firstly, prioritising infrastructure for maximum impact, supporting municipal infrastructure, fostering new and innovative private-sector partnerships, innovation and future spending, and, crucially, given all the rain we have had over the last two weeks, responding to climate change.

Due to the harsh constraints of this august House, I will only reflect on one of our five focus areas, namely prioritising infrastructure for maximum impact. We are focusing our resources and efforts as a provincial government and department on developing and improving infrastructure projects that will have the most significant impact and widespread

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benefits for all the communities in the Western Cape. This involves economic growth, by investing in infrastructure that boosts local economic activity, such as transport networks, which is a key driver of our provincial economy, but also in industrial hubs, which we envisage to create not just much needed job opportunities but also to stimulate business growth formal and informally.

I will give some examples of what we have done, building up to this moment. In Malmesbury, we have a R540 million bypass road, which already is earmarked to create nearly 220 jobs, and is already on track to create opportunities for 37 SMMEs. But above all, this project is a 7 km road project, which we believe is on track to be concluded by the end of 2025 and I will invite our relevant national Minister for that opening as well.

Added to this is the N7 refinery interchange, which we recently completed in April 2024. It is an integral part of our provincial government's long-term development of the N7 corridor in the City of Cape Town. We are ensuring that we break down the spatial apartheid legacy by integrating the transport nodes within the city of Cape Town itself through this specific project. This was a R250 million project. We

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created 534 job opportunities for local community members in the area. However, most importantly, we empowered 57 SMMEs in the entire lifespan of this project. Again, it ended within budget on time.

We have also come to realise that with all our projects, whether they be from the infrastructure component or the human settlements component, the social benefits to which our sector contributes just through this one focus area makes a massive improvement in the quality of our people's lives, through the health care facilities we erect, the schools we are now constructing in under 60 days, and the public spaces we are providing through human settlements to not only support the wellbeing of our citizens, but also to ensure that we develop our communities as a whole.

As we are commemorating Mandela Month, which is close to the end, what my department and I have committed to is not just 67 minutes for Mandela Month, we have committed actually 67 days of good citizenship, as we call it as a Ministry and the department. We have put this challenge to all our provincial departments, and I am doing so now too to my two national Ministers and their departments.

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And what we have done is to acknowledge that there are certain areas, even within our own province, which do have needs. One such area is Blue Downs, and we went to Malibu High School, a school that did not have a computer laboratory that is needed in this age to ensure that we create opportunity for our children in that Community. So, as part of our first day of the 67 days of good citizenship, we actually built, created, fitted and handed over an entire computer lab, all of this within record time to ensure that for Mandela Day.

One understands that, for our assets to last within this province, the local community needs to take ownership of what we handed over and delivered for them. Therefore, as part of our commitment to the school, we also now included the entire community in partnership with the City of Cape Town, noting that we will be facilitating a recycling solid waste and environmental awareness session with them later in the month. Again, we want our community in the Western Cape to take ownership of what we deliver for them.

It would be amiss of me, when I speak about prioritising infrastructure, not to speak about the maximum impact of technology and the recent inclement weather we have experienced, not only by the Western, but also our sister

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provinces in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern. However, our province has experienced numerous extreme weather occurrences since 2022, significantly impacting our infrastructure negatively, especially in human settlements, the formal and the informal components, but also our transport sectors,

Infrastructure is designed and constructed to withstand certain stress levels, based on past experiences' data. In our case, in the province, we also use future predictions when we design our infrastructure. However, when severe weather events occur in close succession, it exacerbates the vulnerabilities of the infrastructure, which we envisage to develop. We have also now recently seen that saturated areas that do not have sufficient time to dry out are particularly high at risk, and this increases the likelihood of further infrastructure failure for these communities, again formal and informal communities.

So, as much as we welcome the declaration of a provincial state of disaster by the national Minister Hlabisa of Cogta, we are, however, as a provincial department and government, wary of a repeated non-committed stance by the National Treasury, as we saw eight months ago in September 2023, when we had a similar disaster in our province. Yes, we got the

disaster declaration, but guess what? No funding followed the declaration. Instead, as a department and as our sister departments, we had to reprioritise from within our own budgets. We had to change the infrastructure planned projects and programmes to address a component of the destruction left behind by the disaster of September 2023.

However, the most recent floods are in a scale, second to none, the worst in the last three years. An amount of 50 083 structures have been affected up until 17 July, affecting 162 419 people and my question now will be, through you: We have seen the disaster declaration, where is the funding that this province needs so much? And again, I would like to make my call, seeing that my national Minister of Human Settlements is here. In terms of the Emergency Housing Fund, the Western Cape believes in the decentralisation of that fund. We have the support of two other provinces for this as well.

For your department to work, Minister, you need our support, just like we need your support. We are in this together. And by decentralising this fund, to competent provinces such as the Western Cape that have proven to have the capacity, and expertise, we do believe above all, we have a commitment to manage these funds responsibly and effectively.

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As I conclude, as the Western Cape, we are willing to lose ourselves in the service of others. It is now upon your provinces to start doing the same. Through the Government of National Unity, we are proving that South Africa can be steered on the right track. Infrastructure, tangible and unchangeable, plays a massive role in that. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure and the Department of Human Settlements actually shape that future. And it is how we work together to ensure that the impact of GNU actually does materialise over the course of this term.

And as we focus on the future, our National Minister of Public Works said he wants to see the entire country turning into a construction site. Hon Minister, our province is ready. We have project pipelines for each of the sectors within the infrastructure sector. So, we heed your call. Now, we challenge you, take up our call. Come look at our projects, fund them, ensure it happens. However, above all, let us take the entire South Africa forward, together. Thank you very much.

Mr K CEZA: Hon Chairperson, the EFF rejects the proposed budget for human settlements as there exist a lack of clear and achievable targets in this department. We also reject this

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report because at the centre of human settlements are some of the most serious backlogs in the provision of housing to the poor and the working class.

Chairperson, South Africa is currently on the verge of housing disaster as there are currently 2,5 million families in need of housing. This housing disaster is made worse by the fact that a large group of or people are excluded from benefitting from the government housing schemes because they earn more than the required amount that would make them qualify for housing subsidy.

There also exists a far-reaching divide between the affluent areas and the townships which are poor. In the Steve Tshwete, the Reconstruction and Development Programme, RDP, houses in ward 28, Reabota Ward 18, Avalon there is also the human settlements there and ward 17 leave a lot to be desired.

The same can be said for some RDPs built in townships and rural areas which still have asbestos roofs. Instead of the provincial department removing these roofs, they have allowed municipalities to continue putting guizers on top of these asbestos roofs, making cracks and people susceptible to diseases borne out of the asbestos.

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Chairperson, we also note with concern the failure of the provision of houses to victimised families in disaster-stricken areas of Dr J S Moroka and Nkomazi Local Municipalities, following a disaster which took place in 2022, which left the people displaced.

A proper procedure to guarantee the houses and people affected by the disaster, get the necessary attention in terms of their location has not been put in place since 2022. The provincial government concerned has also showed complete disregard of the affected residents of Dr J S Moroka and Nkomazi.

We therefore reject the budget of a department which has demonstrated a lack of co-ordination between national and provincial governments, including government houses and agencies.

Chairperson, the EFF strongly believes that the state should deliberately build spacious housing in a sustainable human settlement with flushing toilets and facilities such as sports grounds, libraries, recreation centres, roads and all public infrastructure.

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Therefore, perhaps at the level of Minmec, in the spirit of co-operative governance, you might have to discuss these issues. The government must establish social housing in each department. There can never be a proper provision of housing without the land. The EFF believe that there should be a led process on land distribution on an agent basis. Economic freedom whose starting point is access to land is the most agent need for the sustenance of democracy. Any democracy build on landlessness is doomed to fail. For without land the majority of our people cannot legitimately claim this country as their own.

In South Africa the land must be under the custodianship of the state. The state must take buildings not occupied or used for any productive purposes and put people into these spaces. The department must be able to build internal capacity to build own houses for their own population so that they can restore dignity in terms of section 10 of the Constitution.

Chairperson, there are no tangible reasons that have convinced the EFF to support this budget. While the reports outline various targets and indicators, many of these are either overly ambitious without clear implementation strategies and cannot be effectively monitored and evaluated.

The proposed cuts undermine the ability to achieve the key outcomes particularly as it relates to the areas of informal settlements, upgrading social housing, financial assistance for home ownership. The budget presented also does not provide critical areas such as economic transformation and the creation of safe communities.

There is therefore a need for a more balanced approach that will ensure development which will address the pressing needs of our people. The department must also zoom in into the serious circumstances confronted by the people with visual impairment and the blind. Their houses must meet the requirements for their disability, in terms of building a fence around the house and the robberies they are encountering.

This budget does not address any of the problems we have highlighted. It provides no departure from the stagnant approach to the housing problems adopted previously by the ANC-led government. The EFF therefore rejects this Budget Vote. Thank you very much.

Mr S THOMO (Mpumalanga): Chair, let me take this opportunity to greet the Ministers and congratulate both of them and also

congratulate the Deputy Ministers who are part of this session. But importantly, let me greet everyone who is part of this session. Thank you for this opportunity to participate in this crucial policy debate on Budget Vote No 13: Public Works and Infrastructure. As we gather here today, our country faces significant infrastructure challenges that hinder our economic growth and development. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we prioritise infrastructure development that benefits all South Africans. We continue to recognise that much work needs to be done to address the backlog on infrastructure development, particularly in rural communities, such as here in Mpumalanga province.

As we debate this vote, I call on our government to continue to prioritise infrastructure spending that benefits rural communities. We must ensure that our infrastructure development is people-centred and responsive to the needs of our citizens. This includes investing in rural development, addressing the urban-rural divide, and promoting inclusive growth. This requires streamlining project implementation, reducing bureaucracy, and promoting collaboration between our national, provincial, and local government through the District Development Model, DDM. The Budget Vote before us today presents an opportunity to address our challenges head-

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on. I commend the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for their efforts in allocating resources towards critical areas such as rural bridges, social infrastructure as well as capital infrastructure projects.

The baseline for maintenance of state-owned buildings is inadequate to make a significant impact on the maintenance backlog. In relation to this, Mpumalanga is prioritising the disposal of all noncore fixed property assets, which are overburdening our maintenance budget. The costs of maintenance and administration of these assets far exceed the income generated from rental collection. That said, we have taken the heed of what the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure had said in this regard. We are going to identify state properties that can be used for the accommodation and offices for government departments.

I want to also concur that our government is currently paying exorbitant amounts on property rentals, which is a significant drain on fiscus. However, I am proud to announce that the Mpumalanga Provincial Government was able to take a proactive step to address this issue. The province has invested in building the parliamentary village - a state-of-the-art facility designed to accommodate our Members of the Provincial

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Legislature, the MPLs. This visionary project is nearing completion and promises to yield substantial savings on rental costs.

Upon completion, the parliamentary village will not only provide a comfortable and secure environment for our MPLs but also enable us to redirect funds previously spent on rentals towards more pressing developmental needs. This forward-thinking initiative demonstrates our commitment to fiscal responsibility and prudent management of public resources. By building for the future, we are ensuring that our government's resources are utilised efficiently, effectively, and in the best interests of the people of Mpumalanga.

As we consider this budget, I want to emphasize the inextricable link between industrialisation and capital infrastructure projects. As Mpumalanga province, we have seen first-hand the impact of investing in infrastructure on industrial growth. Our province's strategic location and natural resources make it an ideal hub for industries such as mining, agriculture, and tourism. However, to fully unlock our potential, we believe that we must continue to invest in supporting infrastructure such as roads, railways, and energy generation. As this budget prioritise the development of these

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critical infrastructure projects, this will enable industries to thrive and create jobs for our people.

As we consider this Budget Vote, we should be cognisant that our country's economic growth and development depend on our ability to invest in infrastructure that supports industrialisation. As industries produce, from the mines to the ports, from the farms to the factories, infrastructure remains the backbone of our economy. Investment in infrastructure create the foundation for industrial development. As industries grow, they drive demand for more infrastructure, creating a cycle of growth and development. This budget, by prioritising both industrialisation and infrastructure development, shows the commitment by our government to break the cycle of poverty and inequality.

We are optimistic that this budget will drive sustainable economic growth in our provinces and create opportunities for all South Africans to have access to decent jobs, quality infrastructure, and a better life. Mpumalanga's unemployment rate is at 48,1% because of the prevailing socioeconomic factors. We are cognisant of this challenge, and we are steadfast in our resolve to mitigate this through effective, holistic and sustainable interventions. One of those

interventions is the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, which continues to create work and training opportunities for the unemployed.

The EPWP remains the backbone of creating employment for the youth. Through our Young Professionals Programme, Mpumalanga intends to place 200 technical graduates with respective professional firms and contractors that are implementing our various infrastructure projects. The process of creating a provincial database of such graduates will be completed before end of August 2024. Therefore, we call upon the private sector and our black economic empowerment, BEE, firms to create placement for these graduates.

It is with great pleasure that I indicate that the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market project is nearing completion. The progress the department has made is a testament of our commitment to delivering infrastructure that drives economic growth and development. This project is a significant achievement, showcasing the province's commitment to investing in critical infrastructure. The market will provide a vital platform for farmers to showcase and sell their produce, ultimately benefiting the community and contributing to the region's economic development. As the

handover and operationalisation phase is currently underway, the market promises to become a hub of activity, connecting producers, suppliers, and consumers. This milestone highlights the government's dedication to fostering economic growth and development.

The successful completion and operationalisation of this project will have a positive impact on the province and our economy, demonstrating the multiplier effect of capital infrastructure projects and paving the way for future initiatives that drive growth and prosperity in Mpumalanga. Infrastructure governance demands a clear strategy and institutional framework to promote robust co-ordination across levels of government. The District Development Model provides us with a streamlined approach of how we should facilitate integrated planning between the three spheres of government. In Mpumalanga, we have reviewed and updated our Provincial Infrastructure Master Plan to focus on agreed spatial and development priorities for the period until 2060.

Let me close by quoting Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in industrial policy and economics, who said: "Investing in infrastructure is investing in the future. It's investing in

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the productivity of the economy, and it is investing in the wellbeing of our citizens.”

As we consider this budget, let us heed Professor Stiglitz's words and recognize the transformative power of infrastructure development. Let us prioritise investments that will drive growth, create jobs, and improve the quality of life for all South Africans. I support the Budget Vote as presented. Thank you very much.

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

Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Minister of Human Settlements Minister Kubayi, Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson, Deputy Minister hon Sihle Zikalala, the Chief Whips, ladies and gentlemen, as the IFP, we approach today's Budget Vote with the belief that there is no secure future for any segment of society while another remains disempowered. Hence, we are appealing to the Department of Human Settlements and all stakeholders to commit to finding innovative and sustainable development approaches that will help address the challenges of homelessness. There is a need for a long-term approach in dealing with the creation of sustainable human settlements as outlined in the National Development Plan. We call upon the department to curb

illegal land grabs, which not only slows down provisions of services to settlements and disenfranchised people that have patiently awaited developments, but also puts land grabbers in danger in cases where they occupy land that is unsuitable for human settlement and the provision of services.

As we start with the seventh administration, we call upon the department to deal with the poor alignment of the built environment functioning between the three spheres of government. As the IFP, we call upon the department to find lasting solutions to the issue of transit camps and temporary residential units since living conditions in most of these sites are inhumane. As the IFP, we don't only focus on problems but we offer possible solutions. In this regard, we propose the following:

Firstly, implementation of a rent to own scheme by developing low-cost housing programmes with the private sector with an ownership provision; and

Secondly, roll out service sites for self-home building available to communities, forums as well as stokvels.

Hon Minister, over decades there has been no coherent approach to the planning, regulation, management and development of land. Responsibilities are dispersed across different agencies of government sowing the seed of confusion and conflict over scarce sites.

With regard to Public Works, we call upon the department to address the significant challenges facing the construction industry that comes in the form of the construction mafia. These illicit networks initially surfaced in KwaZulu-Natal about a decade ago. Their influence has since expanded across all provinces, resulting in significant losses to the economy. We hope and believe that as we adopt this budget, Public works will develop strategies to deal with this challenge since construction as a sector has an inherent capacity to generate additional economic output and create sustainable jobs, particularly for low-skilled and semi-skilled workers.

The integration of infrastructure development functions must be reconfigured so that the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, workers are not only employed for a short term. There must be skills transfer that will enable people to find sustainable jobs going forward. We must improve supply chain management and enhance internal controls to prevent fraud and

corruption. We further recommend that this budget be used to prioritise the maintenance and upgrading of existing infrastructure, and repair damaged water and sewer infrastructure and invest in modern technologies to improve the efficiency of our water systems.

Hon Minister, societies that have done better in managing crises are those that are characterised by a high degree of trust between citizens, business and government, which reflects in standards of governance. Social cohesion is intrinsic to sustainable growth.

As we move for the adoption of these Budget Votes, the IFP calls for intergovernmental co-ordination amongst the three spheres of government to make things work in the best interest of ensuring human dignity through the provision of decent housing infrastructure. I thank you, hon Chairperson.

Mr J H P BRITZ: Hon Chairperson, Hon Ministers, Deputy Ministers, hon chairpersons, hon members and fellow South Africans, against the backdrop of financial constraints in the budget, the continued search for new innovative housing models, building ... [Inaudible.] ... technologies, funding structures and community participation initiatives to keep

improving the quality, affordability and flexibility of housing options is imperative to lower the burden on the fiscus. The DA believes that every South African family should have access to adequate shelter and supports an interpretation of section 26 of the Constitution which requires that such right must be progressively realised.

Hon Minister Kubayi, in order to alleviate the pressure on the budget, the pressure on the department to address backlogs and to increase fiscal space in the budget, the DA presents the following practical and innovative proposals:

Firstly, housing options should make greater use of the energies and commitment of the poor rather than seeing them as passive recipients. Previous delivery has failed to lay a solid foundation for a more inclusive society and has tended to trap the poor in new urban ghettos far from work opportunities;

Secondly, the Human Settlement policy cannot be separated from its immediate and related context, particularly issues of densification and economic opportunity. In this regard, the budget is the vehicle to achieve these objectives. The

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proposed budget falls short in the adequate provision of realising these goals;

Thirdly, state resources can be freed up to service the most vulnerable and the poor, and ease the burden on the fiscus by encouraging market-based solutions for housing provision in so-called gap markets as well as self-help initiatives;

Fourthly, through the appropriate mix of fully subsidised housing, self-help initiatives, in-situ upgrades, site and service schemes as well as housing schemes, the needs of specific beneficiaries can be addressed; the use of flexible subsidies to allow users more choice in the manner in which their housing needs can be met. A one-size-fits-all approach proved inadequate, impractical and is not cost-effective, and

Fifthly, the housing backlog can be addressed faster if the private sector is allowed greater scope to become involved and to develop innovative models for housing delivery and for affordable housing developments.

Hon Minister MacPherson, we note that the Department of Correctional Services and the Department of Defence owes your department a total of approximately R8 million in ...

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[Inaudible.] ... arrears. This is unacceptable and we expect you to take action.

Hon Mabebo of the ANC, it may come as a shock to you but clearly you did not receive the memorandum. South Africa now has a Government of National Unity and we note that your opening statement contradicted the President which is a shame. We must guard against using statistics as drunken men use lampposts for support rather than for illumination. The proof of the impressive statistics you mentioned will be in the delivery thereof.

Hon Twabu from the Eastern Cape, I was an alderman councillor in the Sarah Baartman District Municipality that you mentioned until a month ago and I want to say to you and hon Makamu that to repeat the same ideas over and over has not yet produced any fruits in your provinces. Big actions do not come from big words. Your residents now demand results.

Hon Motara, I'm going to pause and interrupt myself. On a different note you mentioned people flourishing in Gauteng. Apparently you might know where one gets the best deals on new Maseratis?

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Hon Makesini and Ceza from the EFF, I'm going to repeat what I said yesterday. I've heard a lot of great, brilliant and constructive inputs and ideas in my life, but again, not today. However, I look forward to your next attempt.

Hon Nzimande from MK, listen carefully now. There is nothing wrong with your argument that rethinking cannot cure.

Hon Chairperson and hon members, in conclusion, we echo the words of Minister MacPherson, let us join the project to rebuild South Africa and to turn our country into a construction site.

Ms K R MOLOKOMME: Chairperson, let me start by greeting the two Ministers present in this meeting, the Chief Whip of the NCOP, MECs, hon members, South African Local Government Association, Salga and ladies and gentlemen. Chair, before I can start with my debate, I just want to indicate to this august House that we had ample time to engage with the two Ministers in our committees and there were some questions raised and answers provided to members. So, I am worried when members come here and oppose the Votes here. I don't know whether we understand what it means to oppose this Vote. Do we mean we don't want to take services to our people, because if

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this Vote is not passed here, it means we don't understand why those people voted for us.

Hon Chairperson, I want to also talk to hon Britz and suggest that you organise a workshop for him. I understand that yesterday he didn't even understand the Budget Vote that we were debating here. The only thing he is good at is criticising. We are not here to criticise; we are here to work. Our main purpose is to take services to our people. So, a workshop is needed for you, hon member. I will propose that even in the programme committee meeting so that we have another induction for members.

Minister Kubayi, the reason why as the ANC we are supporting this budget is because the Annual Performance Plan, APP, that was presented by you and the Minister of Public Works really shows that there is ... as the a department your APP talks to the challenges that were raised in those committees and your plans really show that whatever challenges that were raised in all the nine provinces you are going to deal with them. We agree that it might not be done in one financial year, but the budget that we allocated in this department really shows that ...

Sepedi:

... mathata ao batho ba gaborena ba nago le ona a tla rarollwa, le ge e le gore a ka se kgone go rarollwa ka ngwaga wo motee.

English:

Construction and infrastructure development are the key drivers for implementing the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. Therefore, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure and its entities have a crucial role to play in ensuring the implementation of the Economic Construction and Recovery Plan to ensure inclusive economic growth and job creation. This is also largely a result of the fact that construction to the built environment and infrastructure development are the core competence of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

The Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan seeks to reverse the historic injustice of the apartheid past through ensuring inclusive economic growth and development, as well as job creation. It also seeks to reverse the historic legacy of poverty, inequality, unemployment and historic economic exclusion for the majority of South Africans.

The budget policy Vote for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure comes at a critical moment as the department has made important progress to reverse the effects of state capture and corruption also made important progress to implement the transformation policy of the ANC-led government in the Sixth Parliament.

Critical areas need to be highlighted in order for the Government of National Unity, GNU, to build on successes which have been laid and to ensure that the policy and programme of the GNU are delivered and are within budget. The department is a policy department that has entities which are implementing agencies. In the past, the entities of this department were plagued by a number of issues and currently the entities have stable boards which ensure good co-operative governance and financial control.

In the past financial year, the Auditor-General's report reflects that the department and most of its entities received unqualified reports. This shows that there is an improvement. There is only one entity, which is Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE, that received a qualified report. However, it has improved from the previous year.

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In order to achieve the policy objectives of the government, the department has five programmes relating to government immovable properties - I think the MEC of Limpopo has already alluded to this point - construction and the built environment. Other programmes of the department include administration, intergovernmental co-ordination, extended public works, property and construction industry policy and research, and lastly the prestige programme.

There has been a decline in the budget of the department, which means it will need to achieve more with less financial resources. There is no room for fruitless and wasteful expenditure or irregular expenditures, as there is a need for qualitative and impactful spending. The creation of Infrastructure SA in the department means that the department has an important role to ensure the delivery of infrastructure project with the Presidency and National Treasury.

As the ANC, we welcome the allocation of R585 million to ensure the development of three feasibility and feasibility studies aimed towards the implementation of the infrastructure project. We also welcome the fact that the infrastructure project in the form of Welisizwe Bridge - I hope I am calling it correct - building project has already commenced. We

believe this programme, which is aimed towards providing rural communities with access to social services, educational facilities, jobs markets, will make a considerable impact in addressing rural infrastructure challenges. Without these bridges, in rainy seasons it will be impossible, for example, to access schools and health facilities.

The development of the Oceans Economy is a key priority of the Economic Reconstruction And Recovery Plan, as this will economically benefit coastal communities and ensure the development of small and medium fishing co-operatives as the Department of Environmental Affairs has already been issuing fishing licenses to those communities. These small harbours are also tourist attractions, with the hospitality industry also benefiting.

The refurbishing and development of small harbours has already occurred with 13 harbours in the Western Cape and government invested about R500 million in this project. This project created about 925 shops and empowered the local small, medium and macro enterprises, SMMEs, to the value of about R116 million. The department must continue with the development of small harbours programme.

In the last financial year, the department commenced with a pre-feasibility study to develop small harbours in Port Saint Johns and Port Alfred. This project will enable the development of the Oceans Economy for local communities and enable inclusive economic development and job creation in historically disadvantaged areas. These harbours also have the ability to ensure the development of agro-processing zones in the seafood sector, and this must be part of the integrated approach adopted to the development of small harbours.

The department, through its entity, the PMTE that is responsible for the immovable assets of government, it must enhance the value of property for government. This entity has improved during the course of the Sixth Parliament and much more improvement in in the functioning of the entity is required to improve the value of the property and its income potential.

Its audit outcome in the past financial year has also improved and further improvement is required for it to achieving an unqualified audit in this financial year. However, there are a number of problems which afflict the entire the entity, such as the lack of maintenance of government property and ensuring

that it is pays rentals by government departments and entities.

The Independent Development Trust, IDT, has historically played a critical development role in ensuring infrastructure development in communities. The IDT has over a number of years had difficulties which have been resolved in the Sixth Parliament and prepositioned to engage in development projects as it has historically done. It is imperative that government ensures financial stability and viability of the IDT through ensuring that it is able to engage in infrastructure development projects.

Land reform is critical for revising apartheid spatial planning and reform and the role of the department is critical in this regard as the process has already commenced in terms of making state land available for spatial development and for the development of small and medium scale black farming. An integrated approach needs to be developed between the Department of Human Settlement and the Department of Land Reform with Public Works to ensure that housing development and agriculture development occurs.

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As the ANC we welcome the fact that much land has already been distributed and this needs to become productive in terms of development. The department is intending to release more land to ensure development in the current financial year and development process is critical, as land empowers black communities economically and improve their lives.

We acknowledge that there is much work to be done and much to be achieved to ensure the transformation in communities and create inclusive economic development. Job creation is critical to create better lives for all of and improve quality of life for our people. As the ANC we support this Budget Vote, in fact, both budget votes that were presented. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you hon member. Before I call upon the Minister, I just want to bring it to the attention of the House, hon members, that Rules don't make provision regarding taking of pictures or videos of the speaker whilst on the floor. However, conversions require that members should not conduct themselves in a manner that is against the decorum of the House, and therefore taking of pictures in the House is not permissible. We will now move on to the next speaker.

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The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, what a fascinating debate it's been, because on the one hand there's been inputs, there's been suggestions, there's been constructive positions put forward, and on the other side, there's been individuals who have offered very little to the debate. Hon Badenhorst asked a very good question about what are we going to do to get the money that is owed to the department by other departments? Well, hon Badenhorst. I'm going to engage my colleagues and Cabinet, and we're going to see how we can take the process forward. Of course, you know, if we don't get money, then we can't provide for services. So, if it needs be, we may have to take further steps, but I think that we can find each other in that space. We're going to need the support of this House to do so, and to make sure that we are paid rightfully what is ours.

The hon Scheurkogel tells a story that is very evident across towns in South Africa, about crumbling infrastructure and about public buildings that don't work. That's why we're going to have to take tough decisions about how we generate money that we can use to fix public assets, so that they can be used for public goods. It's very obvious that the Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE, is one of the biggest threats

that faces our department, and we must make sure that it becomes its own property company so that we can take good financial decisions, we can implement good internal controls and subject it to corporate governance. The *Expanded Public Works Programme*, EPWP, is a crucial aspect of our department, but we need to reimagine it, we need to make sure that people are able to come out with skills that they can use and climb up the opportunity ladder. On the Warren pit toilets, I want to thank the House for the support, maybe that's the one thing that you all agreed on, but it's going to require the assistance and the involvement of the public sector and the private sector.

This week I'll be meeting with the Minister of Education, and we're going to start setting out and mapping out a way to do that. I also want to thank the MEC from Limpopo for the great work that they are doing out there, and the support that they are saying - but you must clap for the Western Cape, and I'll talk about them, that's why I spoke about them first - I want to say that you know, the work on ensuring that they have a reliable asset register, is absolutely crucial, and we must make sure that we're able to do the same thing, and I'll support all measures to look after and maintain public buildings and that we're able to be proud of the buildings

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that we have across our country. Minister Simmers, let me say that I'm inspired by the work that the Western Cape is doing to take infrastructure roll-out across the province and to build up a path line, and that's what we need to see in every province and in the country and look forward to being on site with you as we go forward.

House Chairperson, you know the EFF had a lot to say about schools and about construction. In 2019, their leader said that they were going to build a school, and if in five years' time that school was not built, then people must not vote for them. Do you know what, hon Mzamo, that school is not built, that school ... [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Order, hon members. Can we allow the speaker to conclude his speech? Hon member, order.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: ... that school was not built in five years' time and that's why they lost votes, because the public don't trust them. Imagine if they were a national government, they wouldn't even be able to build one school nor ten schools, absolutely nothing. So, we can thank the gods that they are not in power. and just. Just when we wondered about what the MK's contribution to this

debate would be, they said that we must deal with cartels. I agree with them, and I'm going to ask them if they can speak to the cartels and stop them from hijacking our projects, if they can stop them from breaking our projects, and if they can stop them from taking over because we know that the MK is very close to the construction mafia, and they are funded by the construction mafia. So, if you can do that job for us and speak to the cartels, we'll be able to build a lot more in this country, and we'll be able to get a lot more done. So, I want to thank you, Chairperson of the NCOP for the opportunity to address today, and I look forward to coming back in the future.

The MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: Hon Chair, let me appreciate hon members for the inputs and concrete suggestions, and also feedback about our work. I agree, hon Kaunda people, depoliticisation of human settlements remain critical. That's why our commitment is to be able to do a digital platform where it's transparent and we can be able to account. No, counselor, no mayor, no one should be able to manipulate the beneficiary system and that's why we want that digital platform. So, that is supported, hon members. We will present a detailed plan in terms of the title deeds. We have agreed that we work together with operations Vulindela to turn

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around the situation. Last year we introduced a title deeds Friday, as part of responding to the challenges of issuing of title deeds. Within that three months, we're able to see more than 20 000 of the title deeds being issued. We do think that this is one of the critical areas that we should be able to work.

We are also looking at options of setting the price because currently, the price per conveyors is quite huge and it is unsustainable for us. Hon Simmers and SA Local Government Association, Salga, Cllr Huma, spoke about devolution of the powers of emergency. I do not agree, and I'll say this, we took the powers because provinces and municipalities were not performing. Currently, we have a difficulty of provinces and municipalities not even performing on Informal Settlements Grant, ISG, across the country. So, before we can talk about devolution, let's talk about performance. Let's put systems together so that we can be able to respond. We're willing to be accountable, and the reason why we did this, and we've explained, I'll take this back again to the Ministers and Members of Executive Council, Minmec, so that we can have more discussions like I don't think we are not willing to open the discussion, but the fact that when you go, for example, in the city of Cape Town, councillors in the City of Cape Town has

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appreciated and supported this taking of powers, because they have seen the turnaround time in response.

So, there's a different response from communities and there's a different response from politicians and departments, in the provinces and municipalities, and I'm going to leave them. Cllr Huma, on accreditation, we've changed the accreditation system. In the new accreditation, we've seen the accreditation of Buffalo City, we're waiting for the Minister of Finance to finally sign into accreditation level 2. Polokwane has received their letter because it was an Implementation Protocol, IP, that was outstanding. So, there is quite a lot of work that is being done, but it's not free for all. There's accountability once a municipality receives accreditation. We will evaluate. If they do not perform, we'll take it back, if they are doing well, they will increase. So, we just want to make sure that there's efficiency and there's also effectiveness in the system. With the White Paper policy that we have issued, hon members, it's one of the areas that we are improving in terms of the response, efficiency and time, but comprehensive in a sustainable way. So, that's what we are doing.

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There are quite a number of things that were raised, and we'll deal with them as we go, I will not be able to completely deal with them here. For example, the issue of gap market, we do have flexible subsidy. We provide first home financing, hon member, we provide social housing, we provide Breaking New Ground, BNG, we provide service houses, but also now with the policy review, we're looking at rent-to-own. So, there's quite a lot of brightly. In terms of your missing middle, but also the issue of gap market, when you look at it, and we've met with the banks, the people who are earning between 22 000 and 30 000, currently, do not have anything that is provided for them in the country, whether commercially or publicly. That's what we must respond to, and that's one of the issues we are paying attention to. Therefore, the state has to come in and intervene. On the issue around ... hon Britz, you've made a reference to the member of executive council, MEC, Makamu. Actually, currently, he's one of the best performing MECs in the last financial year. So, let's get the facts. Look at the grants, look at the performance. I mean, when he came in, that department was not doing well. We worked together, put in support and turned around the Department of Human Settlements in Limpopo. I'm proud to say, on output and also on spending, because with others, you will find that there's spending, but there's no output. So, with Limpopo, you have both. So, it's

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one of the things I thought about when you reflected on him. He's not claiming, but he's working.

The last point, hon members, when it's not broken, don't fix it, improve and run, improve on the efficiency. We've learnt in the past few years we have been in government what we need to do. We are empowered by our experience to be able to accelerate. That's why we are comfortable to say there shall be security, comfort and dignity for our people. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Minister, Kubayi, hon Minister Macpherson, as well as our Deputy Minister, Zikalala, we thank you so much for availing yourself before the House, and we once more want to take this opportunity and wish you well in your endeavors as you discharge the constitutional mandate that you are expected to do in order to transform the lives of the people of South Africa.

Debate concluded.

The Council adjourned at 18:15