THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 2026

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

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The Council met at 14:02.

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.

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY

CLUSTER 2D: SOCIAL SERVICES (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION AND SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE)

Question 90:

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Hon Chairperson of the House, let me also greet all hon members of the NCOP. My answer to the question from hon Mokwele is as follows: Our department has always aligned its priorities with

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the core objectives of our country's National Development Plan. For this reason, the 2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation and its 2022-2032 Decadal Plan, which is our roadmap for science, technology and innovation, support the NDP by elevating sovereign and frontier knowledge systems that contribute directly towards the knowledge economy.

One of the areas we are mainstreaming from seamless interfacing into our national system of innovation, I am pleased to say, is African Indigenous Knowledge Systems. As part of this, we transformed our Indigenous Knowledge-based Technology Innovation Directorate to become a translational and transdisciplinary organisation. Its implementing vehicle is the Indigenous Knowledge-based Bio-Innovation Programme, which is comprised of six platforms in African natural medicines: Cosmeceuticals, which is about cosmetics; nutraceuticals, which is about food and nutrition; health infusion; technology transfer; and commercialisation.

Further to that, together with indigenous knowledge systems holders and practitioners, this program publishes over 20 peer-reviewed scientific papers by annum in high-impact journals and has registered 15 patents at patent co-operation treaty level.

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Since 2013, over 150 individual science-based commercial products were developed for over 75 small, medium and micro enterprises, as well as co-operatives.

Our aim is to empower indigenous knowledge systems' community of practice as 100% owners of the means of production across the innovation and manufacturing value chains. We have supported and established 15 world-class laboratories, strictly dedicated to indigenous knowledge system-based research and innovation and have started implementing phase 1 one virtual centres of this institute.

One of these hubs are in the process of establishing the first African natural medicines, current good manufacturing practices facility. I am emphasising this deliberately to show also that African indigenous knowledge systems-based research, development and innovation is currently being interfaced with frontier sciences like nanotechnology, nuclear artificial intelligence, robotics, machine learning, precision agriculture and remote sensing. In all these areas, we are doing a lot of investment.

The development of the indigenous knowledge base sector requires sustainable investment, which is also what I want to emphasise.

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As a result, I am pleased to say that the department will be hosting an inaugural Indigenous Knowledge-Based Technology Innovation Investment Summit on 2 to 4 June 2026.

To advance our strategic priority of health innovation, we funded a working group under the SA Health Product Regulatory Authority, SAPRA, to review the South African Medicines Act. This is another important intervention. We aim to draw new provisions and regulations of inclusion of proprietary African natural medicines into the essential medicines list.

We are also excited, hon Chair and members, to announce that this year we will establish a curriculum development process for medical degrees, to produce healthcare practitioners to use African natural medicines for clinical applications. Lastly, we are also responsible for the research development innovation pillar of the Hemp and Cannabis Industrialisation Master Plan. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Mr M F MOKWELE: Thank you, Minister, for your elaborate response. Minister, we do know and acknowledge that the African indigenous knowledge systems are vibrant testament to human ingenuity and resilience. In view of the scepticism from other

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quarters of the world: How does your department validate traditional medicine through scientific research aiming to boost the economy and improve healthcare access in South Africa? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much, hon Mokwele. I do want to say, by the way, that you are raising a very important point when you talk about scepticism about African medicines and indigenous knowledge systems. I am not saying that ...

IsiZulu:

... ngoba nakhu, Sihlalo, ngizalwa inyanga. Ubaba wayeyinyanga.

English:

... but I am saying that because we now have a very important agreement with the Chinese. The Chinese have really developed their traditional medicines and tested many of them. Today they are used as medicines that are very popular around the world. There is a medicine that I am using, for instance, which treats my sinuses. They derive from traditional Chinese medicine. So, we believe that we've got a lot to learn out of that.

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We also use the guidelines, by the way, of the World Health Organisation on the evaluation of herbal medicines from across the world. South African scientists participate as expert advisors at the World Health Organisation, which, by the way, I must also mention that at the last Unesco General Conference, which was in Uzbekistan in November last year, our own Indigenous Knowledge Systems Centre, hosted by University of KwaZulu-Natal, was upgraded and recognised by Unesco to become a Category 2 Centre on Indigenous Knowledge System.

We partner with 12 universities. Some universities are outside South Africa, like Canada and other places, just to also show that, on this endeavour, we are doing very important work that is recognised worldwide, even by UNESCO itself.

We also use the World Health Organisation Standards in clinical research as is required by our regulatory authorities here in South Africa. Research, development and innovation of African natural medicines is conducted in South Africa and international laboratories that collaborate in a seamless value chain process, as I have actually said.

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We have established laboratories, by the way, which focus on agricultural sciences for quality medicinal plants and phytochemistry to determine the uniqueness of our medicinal plants, and so on.

Hon member, you may be aware that South Africa is amongst the top five most biodiverse countries in the world in terms of various species that we have, including plant species. Of the plans that we have in the country, we have only studied 5%. We haven't studied 95%, and that is a whole lot of new research that needs to be made because we don't know what may be hidden in those plans.

That is why we work also even with credible cosmetic organisations from across the world who are interested also in finding out, working with us, what could our plants be having, apart from their medicinal value and other things. I thank you very much, hon Chair.

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Hon Chairperson, I just need to verify that we are on Question 90 and not 91 before I start.

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The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Yes, we are question 90. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: We are on question 90!

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Okay, perfect. [Interjections.] I will continue. All right. Hon Chairperson, hon Minister. South Africans measure economic growth by unemployment rate. The National Development Plan has a target of 6% unemployment rate by 2030. That is less than four years away. Our employment rate currently sits at approximately 31,4%. Does your department define success by money spent, partnerships announced and summit held, or by firms' rapid growth, jobs created and technology sold into real market?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thanks, hon Adriaanse. The question you are asking is a very valid question, and we agree with the observations you make. This government, of course, one of its major priorities is to address unemployment, poverty and inequality. That is how in the main we measure our work as the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation. We have got the decadal plan, which is our 10-year plan. Amongst

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the things that the decadal plan wants to do - I won't mention all of them - is modernisation of industry. For example, the mining industry.

We have got what we call the Mandela Mining Precinct, which is a joint partnership between us and what used to be called the Chamber of Mines. We are doing some great work there and there are new innovations. One of the innovations that, for instance, we have come up with, is ability to determine tremors underground, sense them whilst they are still very far from where workers are working in order to prevent deaths and all that.

In fact, I would urge hon members to engage with the Mandela Mining Precinct so that you can have firsthand experience on what we are doing. We also see ourselves as contributing to new industries. Today, there is no country that would be keen to actually develop its own economy, unless it invests in science, technology and innovation. That is why I would urge this house, the NCOP, hon Chair, to support us in terms of raising resources to be able to invest in science and technology.

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Now, what are some of the new industries that we have started doing work on? The one important new industry is to develop the secular economy. What do we mean by that? As South Africa, just like the rest of the world, we throw many things away that actually we can be able to reuse or redevelop into producing other products - new products. We have got lots of potential in terms of the circular economy. We have got projects that we are doing with the University of the North West and so on.

Although I must say, despite having some new innovations, the challenge we have is upscaling, because we largely have got to rely on the private sector to be able to partner. This is why one of our goals is that we have to have academia, government, research institutions and the private sector, to be able to work together so that we are able to produce this.

The other big area in new economies is the digital economy. Digital economy, we all know, is actually the new game in town. We are doing that because we can be able to develop lots of new industries. Let me make one example for, instance: The Square Kilometre Array, which is studying our stars, the Milky Way and everything. Our own scientists have told us that we don’t have

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existing computer capacity at this point in time anywhere else in the world for the data we are going to generate from that project.

So, why we are also investing in such projects is to work towards partnerships to develop capacity to be able to produce digital technologies and computer technologies that will enable us to actually capture the data. So, in short, we have a lot to play. In fact, we want to be judged by the extent to which we contribute to growing our economy in South Africa. Thank you.

Ms A M SIWISA: Hon Chair, greetings to the Minister. Minister, the Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality's ICT Skills Development Centre in a small town called Fraserberg in the Northern Cape, Namaqua District, which is in partnership with Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority, Chieta, provides youth training in software development and cybersecurity. However, what was noted is the need to support to help local SMMEs with financial management and sustainability.

Given the NDP's focus on the role of SMMEs as primary employment creators: What plans have you put in place to integrate entrepreneurial financial management training into existing ICT

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so as to support small businesses' sustainability, specifically in the Namaqua District?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much, hon Siwisa. I must say I am aware of that program in the Northern Cape because I was part of its introduction in my previous role as Minister of Higher Education and Training, working with Chieta, and they are actually doing a lot of good work. We are doing a lot of work together with the Minister Ndabeni, for instance, in giving skills and supporting small business with science and technology.

Just as a country, as we have identified, that the majority of the jobs in South Africa are going to come from small and medium enterprises, we are also prioritising working together. Just to give you some examples, for instance: We have got lots of what we call municipal innovation programs on the ground that we are supporting in order to be able to grow and strengthen small business.

There is also lots of innovation that is happening at that level. As I say, the challenge we have is to upscale some of those. For instance, somewhere in Limpopo, I forget the local area now, we have got new innovation on how to use waterless

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toilets, given the fact that we have got a challenge of water in our country.

It is like in the airplane. You know, in the airplane, you don't really use water; it is more air than water. We have got such innovation, now that has actually come up, but the challenge we have is to upscale that intervention and get private sector investment so that we can grow that innovation. It can actually take us a long way in order to be able to address this challenge.

We are also prioritising working with small and medium enterprises in places like Ekurhuleni, for instance, in an urban area now. Ekurhuleni, by the way, is full of small and medium enterprises. There isn't much of big industry there. The real bigger portion of it is small and medium, which is why we welcome the fact that the President now is saying that money must be released to build a university of science and innovation in Ekurhuleni.

Thus, we can be able to work together with those industries, so that the students who are studying there are also at the same time having to do practical work in workplaces; and also, to

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create more laboratories in that university, which would actually work together with some of those SMEs in order to create new innovation and even create new industries, by the way. That is the other advantage of small and medium enterprises, in that you can grow them to actually build new industries. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Mr B J FARMER: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, can I take you back to your answer on the original question about indigenous knowledge systems and ask you: What is the department doing to address the strong need to protect indigenous knowledge systems from exploitation and to respect intellectual property rights of indigenous communities?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: That is a very important question. I need to say also that we have got an organisation which we call, in short, Nipmo. It is National Intellectual Property Management Organisation, which is one of the entities of my department. Its mandate is very clear: It is how to ensure that not only do we protect intellectual property that emanates from South Africa, but we are also able to do things in such a way that we are able to identify our own

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innovations, so that we can actually procure and acquire them as our own intellectual property.

You are right! One of the biggest challenges that we face is that a lot of discoveries that are made in the African continent, including South Africa, end up being patented in other countries - even our own indigenous. You may remember a few years ago there was a company in the United States which wanted to patent rooibos as its own property in the United States. We had to wage a very huge fight about that in order to say no, but Rooibos is South African tea. It is nowhere else; it is South African. We also, we export it, but it is produced here.

Even someone in the US, by the way, wanted to patent *Bafana Bafana* as a name that comes from the United States. It doesn't come from the United States; it is the name that we gave to our national men's football team here in South Africa. So Nipmo is dedicated to do that work. We have a dedicated entity to follow up on protection of our intellectual property, especially indigenous knowledge, so that it doesn't get taken away by other people to actually register those in other places.

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You might want to get Nipmo to come and report through the committees, so that they can be able to tell you exactly what they are doing, here as the NCOP, so that you understand firsthand because they are actually doing great work. I don't have the figures now because I hadn't anticipated that perhaps you could ask that follow-up question, but a lot of patents have been registered under the auspices of Nipmo, which come from South African inventions, including in indigenous knowledge systems.

I also do need to say that one of the tasks I have given all our entities is that we need to make sure that the research done at the CSIR is not stolen, hence Nipmo is trying to help that we establish our intellectual property. However, you need to make sure that the research done at the CSIR is not stolen into private property. You know that you could have inventions, and then people steal it to go and start a private company with an idea that was actually stolen from publicly funded research.

So, one of the goals of our department is to make sure that we do benefit from publicly funded research as government and as a department. In fact, one of the ways that one would judge the success of our department is the extent to which we are able to

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secure our own patents and be able to get resources that can be brought back to fund further research and development. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Question 72:

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Hon Chairperson, thank you to hon Adriaanse for this question. It is an extremely important question mainly because artificial intelligence, AI, as well as science generally is not neutral. Right now, Israel is using artificial intelligence to commit genocide in Gaza, and to even track their enemies that they want to deal with. So, science, just as artificial intelligence, can be used for destruction. Not to mention what is happening now, this unprovoked war by the United States and Israel on Iran. They are also using some of these technologies, especially artificial intelligence.

Now, let me say that the whole area of artificial intelligence in South Africa is led by the Department of Communications and Digital Technology. So, we work with them. They have the overall mandate to establish policies, regulations, and related frameworks to strategically guide the responsible and ethical development, deployment, and use of artificial intelligence

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across all sectors of society. I'm aware that they might be releasing a document for public discussion very soon, but they will announce it properly — I can't do that, which is important.

Also, the Department of Communications has published the National Artificial Intelligence Policy Framework. In support of this mandate, our Department of Science, Technology and Innovation supports technical research and artificial intelligence and other digital domains through what we call the Foundational Digital Capabilities Research in South Africa. This platform is implemented by our entity, the Council for Industrial and Scientific Research, and it has identified that artificial intelligence systems can produce and amplify, if not checked, structural inequalities leading to significant ethical, social, and technical concerns. So, the research programmes, amongst other things, also focus on these issues, of bias.

What concrete measures are we taking, which I'm sure that's what we are interested in even more, to ensure responsible artificial intelligence deployment and so on. There is research that we support as the department through the Centre for Inequality Studies at Wits University, which introduces a new human sciences research programme and dimension that is concerned with

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data privacy and ethics. That’s going to be another big thing, because no one is going to be safe with artificial intelligence. Instead, in terms of being raided, people’s private data system and so on, we are doing research with Wits University on this score.

Also, this domain explores the socioeconomic and regulatory challenges posed by the collection, management and use of data in the digital economy. We are also going to use this to examine digital rights policies for online freedoms and frameworks for ensuring transparency and accountability in data practices.

That notwithstanding, we must also think of evidence-based approaches that we, as a country, can use to harness AI and related emerging technologies, such as robotics, to address some of our country’s most urgent challenges. We have seen how AI and other emerging technologies have been used by other countries to address such problems as providing diagnostics to detect diseases like cancer or heart disorders, and more accurately, drug discovery by identifying high potential drug candidates, and in other areas are used in business processing, optimisation, fraud detection, and cybersecurity.

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So, the long and short of my answer, the Department of Communications is leading the process of providing the overarching policy framework, we are doing the research side of that, working with about 12 universities together with our Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR, in order to ensure that we are also able to follow the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO, guide on the ethics of artificial intelligence. So that's an important question. Thank you very much.

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Hon Chairperson, to the hon Minister, thank you for that. Yes, I agree with you, we need enforceable safeguards and transparent procurement consequence management because we need to be protected from harm. What exactly is already enforced today, and what is still missing? By what deadline will some of these gaps be closed? Has the department set aside a budget for deep fake detection tools? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: What you are raising is a rather complex matter. Let me put it this way. It is a really difficult question. What we are doing as government at the moment is to develop an overarching policy framework as well as regulatory framework — overall framework. However,

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different sectors will also have to develop their own regulatory mechanisms that are relevant to the sector in which they are operating.

Of course, government will have an overarching eye over that, but we also have to engage relevant sectors. All of them; there is no sector of society that’s not going to be affected by this. So, it’s going to be very important that this framework that government is going to develop is going to act as a guide and provide certain minimum standards that have to be recognised because you can’t leave AI completely unregulated. That would be a disaster. We will then encourage sectors.

I would urge you, hon Adriaanse and all of you, hon members, here, to actually await the release of this paper by the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, which has to go through Cabinet soon, so that you are also able to engage with that and see what is possible. There’s going to be lots of arguments, dissatisfactions, people wanting to do things their own way, some using it towards business advantage, and not wanting to be regulated in particular ways. That’s where also a House like the NCOP has a very important role to monitor that. If need be, have hearings now and again, and also help that we

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monitor the sectors so that we don't allow a situation where people just want to do things their own way. Thank you very much.

Mr M FENI: Hon Chairperson, to the hon Minister, thank you for your reply. We do acknowledge that the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies is the custodian of the policy and regulatory environment over artificial intelligence technologies. Be that as it may, we still see the misuse of AI to infringe on personal freedom, where there is application of AI in research projects, thereby infringing on academic development, and personal growth of individuals. What can be done at research and innovation level to prevent AI from causing social harm or furthering economic inequalities? Thank you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: You are raising a multiplicity of issues in your question. I hope I'll be able, with this time I have, to touch on all of them. Let me also ... this issue of academic development and education. That's one area where AI is already having a huge potentially negative impact because teachers and at universities, lecturers,

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you give students essays, they simply just go to AI and come back with an answer.

Now, the debate that is there in the education sector that I'm aware of is that some people were saying, we need to police that so that students don't come and get marks for things that have been written not by themselves, but by AI. Others are saying, no, you will never succeed in doing that. Rather, we need to be creative and encourage students that even if they are using AI, they must relate the information they get there to the South African context and to the questions that are being asked by the teachers or lecturers. In that way, they are able to process and think through this information in relation to our own situation here, rather than to say, you are burning this, because we are not going to be able to burn this.

There are even stories that are partly jokes, where some kids now are just leaving in Grade 10 and 11 and say, there's no point in continuing with education because all this information I can get from AI. So, what's the point of going through school because I can get any information that I want. So, that is one area of big debate.

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Of course, the prevention of social harm is what the regulatory mechanism is trying to do. For instance, we have research programmes on data privacy and ethics, as I have said, that seek to address the following, amongst other things: Data system, socioeconomics issues connected to collection and management and manipulation of data, and control of personal information.

We are doing research on how we can try and control and also prevent the abuse of personal information. Ethics, as we say, what is permissible, what is not permissible. Much as that is going to be a subject of struggle and subject of debate, but it's important.

I'm sure there's going to be a new, huge human rights issue also that arises out of this, which is digital rights and online freedoms. So, As we try to regulate, there are also going to be these issues that, don't regulate in such a manner that you interfere with our digital rights and online freedom.

Of course, as I have said, the governance and overall regulatory framework is something that is going to be important. Maybe our legislature, which of course include both the NA and the NCOP, have very important things that maybe you should use your

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platforms to open up these debates for amongst yourselves as Members of Parliament, as well as experts, they should be coming also to engage you so that you are better informed and seek to define your own role in this whole area of uses and abuses of artificial intelligence. Thank you very much.

Mr M K MONTWEDI: Chair, to the Minister, in your response I noted two things. That your department is working with the Department of Communications and Technology to release a policy and the regulatory framework on AI. Secondly, acknowledging the biasness and the danger of AI and how it has been abused by the Israeli and the US to commit ethnic cleansing in the Palestinian people. Now, as part of being proactive, Minister, what specific mechanism has your department contributed to the policy to be released by the Department of Communications to monitor, detect, and intervene in cases of artificial intelligence misuse across government, state-owned entities, and the private sector, and how many such incidents have been recorded, investigated, or escalated since the public warning on 3 December 2025? Thank you very much, Minister. Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Hon Chair, maybe let me just go back to one of the things that I've already

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said. It is precisely because of these considerations that we've started, for now a number of years, doing research on different aspects of artificial intelligence, whether it's policy issues, it's dangers, and what needs to be done. That is being done, as I have said, by about 12 of our universities. I would still like to see more of your historically disadvantaged institutions being much more part of this research as well.

So, our own role is more of a backup role to do research, to develop and understand artificial intelligence deeper and understand the complexities of regulating and so on. It is the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies that is leading that process.

I would not really say that there are certain people that we might have caught doing things wrongly and so on. I still think it's a bit too early, given where our work is, much as the world is moving very fast on the score. That is why government has said to DCDT and all of us who are part of this to move with speed because we can't afford to remain behind when the world is moving.

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I remember when I was appointed Minister of Science and Technology. In our own language, one comrade of mine came to me and said: Yeah, you are now Minister of Science and Technology. I will judge you only by one thing, by how far we are able to move fast on artificial intelligence. If we are not able to move fast on artificial intelligence, we'll be left back as a country, and we will be left for good. It was as a result of that that we are intensifying this work on research to support AI policies.

As I have also said, what is going to be important, government is not going to be able to monitor the entirety of artificial intelligence activities in the country. That's just going to be impossible. It's like monitoring every laptop or tablet in the country. We are not going to do that. That is why it's going to be very important to move closer to different sectors that are using this, including the sectors that are liable to abuse this, like the security sector. Security sector can use AI to prevent crimes, to track criminals efficiently, but also it can be abused to set up people who have done nothing, and so on.

It is going to be important also that we strengthen the sectors. I must say that we need your own wisdom as well as you inform

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yourself about this as Members of Parliament. How best do you think we can be able to prevent abuses in particular? We will bring reports here when you want us to bring reports to say, what are we doing, what are we finding, and so on, but we also need your wisdom as well, sitting where you are seated and the role that you are playing. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

Ms L P MHLONGO: Chair, greetings to Mphephethwa. I think you have covered most of ...

IsiZulu:

... yemibuzo ozakwethu abekade benayo.

English:

However, I would like to know whether in your plans you are planning to establish an independent regulatory body to oversee AI development and deployment in South Africa? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much.

IsiZulu:

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Ngiyabonga, sisi. Lo mbuzo owubuzayo ubaluleke kakhulu. Kodwa impendulo yawo izoqhamuka nalo mgomo ozoqhamuka noMnyango Wezokuxhumana, ...

English:

... the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies ...

IsiZulu:

... ukuthi kukhona yini ...

English:

... is there possibly going to be a need for new independent bodies and structures to be created. My sense is that there might be a need for that and creating credible bodies that are not seen as extension of our departments but are able to independently judge. Of course, it’s not going to require those bodies only. I’m sure there will be AI court disputes that arise. Whose knowledge is this that you are using? You have plagiarised. This is not yours; it's mine. These things are also going to go to court and other institutions that are going to play a role.

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As I said, I really do see a very big role for Parliament on this score in terms of creating mechanisms and what needs to be done to deal with this. But I can't answer categorically whether there will be new independent regulatory bodies. I know that the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies is also benchmarking this matter, to look at what other countries are doing to do this.

I'm also pleased to say that UNESCO has really been playing a leading role here. There have been some big debates, almost physical fights, in one or two of the UNESCO meetings that I've sat on, on this thing, because there are countries who are saying, "AI is a new technology, it's none of your business on how we use it. We will use it to suit our own needs." You can imagine which countries possibly or which president of which country is possibly talking like that at the moment. No one is going to tell us what we're going to do with this and so on. Others are saying, look ... it's like the issue of space, which is also going to become a very big issue in geopolitics. Artificial intelligence is already becoming a big issue in geopolitics.

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There is already a fight now. The United States is preventing China from getting what are called the Nvidia chips, microchips, which are produced by the big companies in Taiwan to say the Chinese must not get this. We must keep this to ourselves. So, it's going to be a complicated task, but I guess we will need some independent bodies. However, I don't want to be ahead of myself in terms of what might come up. All what I'm saying is that please, as soon as this document from DCDT comes out, engage with it immediately so that you are able to familiarise yourself with what are the issues coming from government, but also then so that you are able to empower yourself.

This is actually an exciting journey, despite all the dangers that are there. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Chairperson.

Question 91:

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much, hon Sibande, my comrade, for your question. Yes, our department continues to provide updates to Parliament and the public through its annual reports, strategic planning processes and briefings to parliamentary committees. I am still prepared to come back to this House whenever you want me to talk about these matters and to committees for that matter.

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We also provide support across the research and innovation value chain through programmes implemented through our entities such as the Technology Innovation Agency. That agency is the one that we expect to fund, in particular, emerging researchers, commercial activities that emanate from new innovations at their earlier stages. Because the biggest problem we have in South Africa, we don't have what are called venture capitalists.

Venture capitalists are those who are willing to risk when a new idea is being implemented into a commercial activity at the very early stages. That is the power of the Silicon Valley, by the way, in the United States. It has got lots of venture capitalists who are willing to risk. Many capitalists, like South Africa, usually they want something that's moving, they invest in something that's going, that's already grown big, and not in early innovations. The Technology Innovation Agency is doing that role. I have said to that agency, I want you to be the oxygen of innovation in this country by supporting your small emerging ideas that are being turned into commercial propositions.

There's also the National Research Foundation, which is the single biggest public research funder in the country, working

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with the SA Medical and Research Council. These interventions on advancing research outputs beyond basic research by supporting interventions that inform best practice and policy development, proof of concept development, technology validation, and product development to a stage where they can attract further investment and uptake by industry and other partners. We are doing some work together, for instance, with the Public Investment Corporation, which is your pension monies, and public service workers where they're invested, to say, can we reach an understanding of what percentage of your money we may want to put into innovation, including health innovation? Because we've also got to look at the resources that we have as to how best we can use them. For example, for instance, in this regard, include investment in health research and development through the Strategic Health Innovation Partnerships Programme, the Vaccine Development Programme, which we have. And I'm pleased to say one of the achievements of that vaccine research initiative that we have, we now have come up with a new product as South Africa, which is the oral cholera vaccine. We are going to be doing clinical trials now to test that. If it works, we're going to fly. In particular, I know that men are afraid of injections and needles, so they're going to find it easy now to take a cholera vaccine orally rather than through an injection.

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Lastly, our department further leverages partnerships with international organisations and development finance institutions to mobilise additional funding for late-stage development and scale-up. For instance, the other partnership we have with some German companies and so on and the World Health Organization is on what we call mRNA technologies that are very fundamental in developing vaccines. By the way, for the first time in South Africa now, we've developed a coronavirus-related vaccine, which is a local vaccine. And we are looking at developing more vaccines locally so that, as the AU says, that by 2040, 60% of vaccines needed in the African continent must be produced in the African continent. And thanks for your question.

Mr M P SIBANDE: Thank you, ...

IsiZulu:

... ngiyabonga, Ngqongqoshe.

English:

Taking lessons from the health sector where one country pulled out its funding that resulted in panic and near crisis, my question is whether South Africa's big industry has shown any appetite to fund these health innovations projects for the

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country to be self-reliant and not depend on foreign donors and institutions?

IsiZulu:

Ngiyabonga.

English:

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Hon Sibande, a very important follow-up question. In a way, I've answered part of your question with my earlier comments by saying one of the big challenges that we have is to create venture capitalists in South Africa. We don't only need BEE capitalists; we also need venture capitalists who are willing to take a risk because we won't be able to do this. Big companies are often reluctant unless it's something that they know is advanced enough they're going to get quick returns. Therefore, one of the campaigns that we are waging now and would like to urge the NCOP to support us is to reach out to business in South Africa, to be part of research and development and science, technology and innovation. We have got some incentives by the way; we've got tax incentive. If you invest in research and development that we see as being innovative and so on, we give companies 150% tax return. So, we give you what we have spent and even 50% more than what we have

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spent as a way of trying to incentivise the private sector to be able to come.

But, at the moment, we are looking at a number of other things because you are saying this tax incentive is important, but it's not adequate. The President, two Sonas ago, announced the Innovation Fund, which is another incentive to support companies. But there is something now that I've become passionate about that I would like to see before the end of this term maybe. Something gets done is to build techno parks, technology parks. And you don't just build technology parks in the air. You go to Coega, you go to do a trade port where there is already a lot of companies that are there and embed research and development there. You will find those companies; they need research and development on that score to be able to develop new ideas and to grow their own companies. So, techno parks is one of the things we've identified. We have also looked in a number of countries, are very helpful. For instance, companies in techno parks, get particular incentives to encourage them to grow so that they are able to benefit from science and technology. But yes, I may say something that some may not like, but it's true. Historically, South African business has been dependent on cheap labour. That is why they are not investing as

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much as we would like them on skills. And they are not investing as much as we would like them to invest on science and technology.

We have a capitalist system, if I can use that word in our country, that's still highly racialised and highly gendered. And this also manifests itself in terms of support and interest or lack thereof in science and technology to be able to take things forward. So, this is a collective struggle that we need to wage together with yourselves. We are not saying you mustn't call us to account what we are doing as the executive, but at the same time, we have to be partners. So, call us to account, but be partners at the same time. Let us do both those things. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Thank you, hon Deputy Chair, hon Minister, eHealth can revolutionise health care. A rudimentary example is electronic, easy-to-use patient history that private health care insurers offer to GPs. Why has a system like this not been created for implementation within the public health care system of South Africa?

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The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Sorry, I missed the first part of your question. What is it that you're saying has been built?

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Hon Minister, we have systems that give patient histories to GPs. A lot of private health insurers offer that as part of their system. Why has a similar system not been created for public health care in South Africa?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Yes, ... [Interjections.] ...

IsiZulu:

... ngibuye ngikhohlwe, Sihlalo ...

English:

... that you must give me permission to answer. My apologies. That is very important. That is the reason why we must have more money to invest in innovation. For instance, the third arm of the commitments of the Government of National Unity, GNU, is building a capable state. I want to say without fear of contradiction, you can't have a capable state unless it's technological, and unless it invests in science, so that we are

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able to create those new capacities that we desperately need in the private and public sector. I normally make this example. It may not be in health. Let me make it worse. If you go and apply for a job to be a chief director in the Department of Higher Education and Training, you have to go and certify your certificates, get in a queue in a police station for your certificates to be stamped so that you send them to the Department of Higher Education and Training to prove that you have a BSc Honours degree. You are proving to the very same department that has those results sitting with them.

By right, you should, when you are applying in any government department, I just press a button, put in your name, press a button, I'm able to see all your qualifications at institutions. Can you imagine how life would be? So those kinds of innovations, we need them. I'm glad that the President has emphasised this, that one of his goals is to modernise the public service, which includes the hospitals, which must include the schools, which must include a whole range of services, the Department of Home Affairs and so on, so that we are able to. But I also had another interesting example ...

IsiZulu:

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... ndabezitha ...

English:

... yesterday, that amakhosi [chiefs] in the past used to keep information about all people who are staying in their areas. Sometimes the Department of Home Affairs would come and use those documents to update their own systems. Okay, you could say that was handwritten and so on, but it had some foresight. How to improve information gathering so that you know everyone who lives ...

IsiXhosa:

... kule lali ukuba ...

English:

... who are they, and even where do they come from? So, I can't emphasise that more. I do agree with your question. The challenge we have, those who benefit from the archaic and backward systems in the government, they normally oppose introducing new technologies because they are not going to be able to steal some of them once you have new technologies. So, it's very important, this thing of modernising and digitalisation of the state, a campaign, a huge campaign, so

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that we are able to do these kinds of things that we are talking about. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Mr K CEZA: Deputy Chair, Minister, youth unemployment has reached national emergency levels, affecting over 4,8 million young people who are unemployed, and over 30% of unemployed young graduates across science, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, who return home after years of study only to face precarious internships. What specific measures have you taken to ensure unemployed science students can access national funding for transitional digital health research? Furthermore, how will these plans promote local innovation to reduce reliance on impotent digital tools? Thank you very much, Minister.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much, hon Ceza. Hon Minister, you may answer if you so desire, but this question also goes on to the next question that is on the Order Paper, so.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Deputy Chair, yes, I do realise that. Without maybe going too fully to the next question, I just do need to say that we have got lots of programmes as the department. Yes, of course, we do have

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problems. There's no society which doesn't have problems. All societies have got problems. So, it was just a twisting of my tongue, but we also have programmes over and above to address those problems that we are talking about. We are the single biggest public funder of postgraduate studies in South Africa through our National Research Foundation, NRF. We are not only focusing on digital-related postgraduate programmes, but across the board, which is why, by the way, I also need to say this thing. I am worried and I've spoken to Minister Manamela that we need to stand up for this thing, on increasing suspicions that there are people whose master's and PhD degrees are being written for them by others. I don't know how serious the problem is, but it's been raised, many times with me that I'm beginning to be worried that we will need to investigate this and even call for whistleblowers, because I'm told there are people who say, I live by writing master's and PhDs for people.

What is the point of having a master's or a PhD if you can't write it? Okay, so we've got postgraduate programmes. But also, we've got a huge internship programme that we've started specifically geared to science students, including those who are doing digital studies. If I'm not mistaken, last year, we had just over 2 500 interns. We are still raising more money for

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internships that we want to do. We also have what is called the Presidential PhD Programme, which is sending some of our brightest PhDs to different research centres and universities in the world, especially in areas where we are weak as a country, so that they acquire that knowledge and come back with. But the main thing is to say, we are part of this campaign by the government, led by the President, by the way, the Youth Employment Service Programme, called the YES Programme by the President, that one of the critical areas through which we will address unemployment is by giving our youth work experience and work exposure. It has been proven, by the way, that 70% of all internships, end up getting employed.

So, if we can increase that, which is what we are also doing, that's going to take us a long way towards addressing unemployment, including unemployment in the areas of science, technology, and so on, like the unemployed medical graduates, but we also need to be creative. Shouldn’t we also be engaging these young doctors to form co-ops? And we ask our banks to give them money to go and start surgeries in rural areas, so that they are able to work and so on. So those are creative things that we need to be doing. Thank you very much for your question

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Mr M F MOKWELE: Deputy Chair, hon Minister, one of the key challenges in funding health innovation in South Africa is poor collaboration between academia and the private sector, which creates a mismatch between academic research outputs and market-ready products, limit access to risk capital, and foster mistrust. This fragmentation also impedes translating health research and innovation into commercially viable solutions, often leading to the failure of innovative health projects due to inadequate funding and scalability. My question to you, Minister, is that is whether your department has found ways to collaborate with the higher education sector, the academic sector, and private sector to build an incentive structure that will bridge the funding gap and encourage private sector investment in health innovation to reduce the country long-term disease burden through early detection, such as mobile health apps and innovation like telehealth and visual Medicare to deliver high-quality health care? If so, Minister, what are the details? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much, hon Mokwele, for your follow-up question. I want to start by saying that one of our thriving innovation programmes is health innovation in South Africa. I have spoken to you about

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vaccine development, for instance. We have also got a wonderful facility at Steve Biko Hospital as part of the programme of the University of Pretoria called the Nuclear Medicine Research Initiative, NMRI. I would really encourage members to visit that at Steve Biko. You can even come to us to facilitate your visit to these institutions, which is using nuclear technology, not for warfare, but for health, to be able to diagnose and treat cancer, TB, and other related diseases. For instance, this is the only facility of its kind in the whole African continent. For instance, they tell us, Professor Sathekge is the star who is leading that. Today, if you go for chemotherapy, the problem is that chemotherapy, if there is a cancer here, chemotherapy would go all around here.

In other words, to try and hit this, it will go all over. With nuclear medicine, it just goes straight to where the cancer is, in terms of treatment. So, it improves dramatically the treatment of cancer and so on. But the point I'm making is that we have lots of health innovation that we are involved in. Because then I want to say, when we reflect on that, part of the success is precisely the partnership between the government, academic institutions and the private sector.

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In some instances, it's us as the government alone, there is no private sector. So, one of the things, as I have said, the Technology Innovation Agency, I have said, I want you to be the matchmaker between universities, science councils and the private sector, in terms of promoting innovation, including health innovation, which is very important, to work with pharmaceutical companies. But also, that partnership, by the way, also goes to the basics. One of the things I have asked my Deputy Minister to do is that, go and forge relations with industry as one of your primary tasks. For example, we don't have laboratories. More than 60% of our schools in South Africa do not have laboratories. How do you teach science? How do you produce scientists? So are libraries, by the way. More than 60% of our schools do not have libraries. That part of the partnership we should do, we should say, with your big pharmaceutical companies and other companies in the health sector, why don't you sponsor some laboratories in our schools? Including mobile laboratories, because it's not going to be possible to be able to build physical laboratories in all the schools.

That's also another part of partnership, because we must look at science development right from early childhood education to

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higher levels, in order then to ensure that there must be facilities that are there. So that's one of my big priorities, is to forge this partnership to ensure that our science strengthens in the country. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Question 77:

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: The total number of foreign nationals currently employed by the National Research Foundation's facilities ... The reason why I'm choosing the National Research Foundation, NRF, is because that’s primarily where our research infrastructure falls under ... in the national ... So, it's the facilities of the NRF. The total number is 41, which is 3% of the total staff complement of 1 348 ... foreign nationals.

Very quickly, they occupy the following positions: They are, amongst others research scientists, head of department, head of astronomy, deputy director, astronomy engineer, electronics engineer, and so on. Also, at the next level, they occupy ... senior commercialisation specialist, senior science processing developer, and further on is a senior software support engineer, electrician and so on.

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Their nationalities are as follows: Bulgarian, British, Finnish, Ghanaian, German, Indian, Kenyan, Malagasy, Mauritian, Malawian, Nigerian, Rwandan, Russian, Spanish, Swiss, American, Zambian and Zimbabwean.

They are associated with the following facilities and projects: It's what we call iThemba labs, which are our laboratories under the NRF, the SA Astronomical Observatory, which by the way has one of its facilities here next door in Cape Town — One day, you know, when you finish an NCOP session earlier, we could arrange ... beforehand, and we'll take you just to go and see what is happening there. But, I'm diverting. It's just that I'm very keen that Members of Parliament should see what we are responsible for and what we are doing — the SA Environmental Observation Network, and so on. However, all of these are appointed under the ones I've just read ... under the Square Kilometre Array, SKA, project.

You must also remember that the SKA project, much as it is located in South Africa, is an international project. It's not a South African project. It's international. It's owned by a number of countries that have come together. So, inevitably, you

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will have international ... or nationals from other countries that are employed here, but it's still this 3% maximum.

So, the question is also, why then are these ... not occupied by South Africans? As a matter of policy, all efforts are made to ensure that priority is given to South African citizens when making appointments. Our boards know about this and we expect them to do this.

Non-South Africans are only considered after it has been established that there are no South African citizens suitable for the position. Usually, foreign nationals are employed strictly on a fixed-term contract, no longer than the duration of the work permit obtained, and they are also given the task of training locals to be able to occupy those positions.

Now, our national facilities often struggle when recruiting for highly specialised roles. Affordability in terms of salary packages becomes another factor, given the fact that the NRF is a public entity.

What are the challenges that lead to the employment of foreign nationals in our national facilities? In addition to what I have

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already said, it is worth emphasising that across the NRF and its national facilities, all of these are done within our employment equity plans. This is non-negotiable. If you are aware of any of our entities that crosses this line, you should actually make us aware of that.

We also make it a requirement, as I have said, that foreign nationals mentor locals to take over the work that they are doing. Of course, some of the research work that is done by the NRF is highly specialised and it sometimes requires us to employ people from abroad. This is why we have the Presidential PhD Programme, so that we train our own PhD ... in those areas where we do not have skills as yet.

Of course, the other thing that we guard, as I have said, through our National Intellectual Property Management Office, Nipmo, is that our knowledge and our intellectual property is not stolen. Thank you very much, hon ...

Mr H J VAN DEN BERG: Minister, your department also takes care of many other institutions where you see many non-South Africans. The majority of institutions under the management of your department were developed in the previous century by South

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Africans. We have a shortage of scientists. Where are they now and how did we lose them? And, would it not have been wise to make use of this institutional knowledge to train young, gifted South Africans skilled in maths and science?

My problem is the following. Does the utilisation of all these foreign specialists not expose the national security and intellectual property of the country, specifically with regard to sensitive local nuclear and weapons testing installations?

You only referred to the research institutions, but you also have many other institutions. Can you just enlighten us on that? Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you, hon Van den Berg. Hon Minister, were you able to catch the question?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Yes, thank you very much. I battled to catch the question. I hope that I've got the essence of it.

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Hon Van den Berg, if I hear you correctly, I think you are raising points that are also of concern to us. We have lost many skilled scientists that we had in the past. I will make ... something that may be regarded as controversial, hon Chair, and then divert everything into a new headline ... when I talked about very constructive things here.

We were the first one to produce an internationally acclaimed electric car, the *Joule*. We didn't have a billion rand, I don't know, 10, 12 or so years ago, and we couldn't launch it. And most of ... When I became a Minister, I asked where did those scientists who developed the *Joule* go to? They told me most of them went to the United States. Do you think it's by accident that Tesla emerged from the United States? I wonder. I'm just thinking aloud, you know.

Some of them were in the modular bed facility that we had. They also went to the United States. There are certain inventions that are coming from that part of the world. One can't help but suspect that these are things that were being done by our scientists.

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So, if I understand you, the point that you are raising is that we need to try by all means to keep South Africans in South Africa. That is one of the things with ... the Presidential PhD Programme, for instance the condition would be that if we've sent you out for three or four years, you come back, you commit, you sign that you're going to come back and work for at least those number of years in South Africa.

You are right. The danger is not just ... losing researchers and all that ... sensitive information. There are people who stole our intellectual property, IP, from Denel. They are called the Guptas. They stole those things. I'm sure they are trading with that somewhere else in the world.

So, to also keep your own people and train your own people here. You know, I mean the story has been out all over. You know ... [Interjections.] [Inaudible.] ... national congress, of course we were. Now, hon Van den Berg ... losing technology and other sensitive things, I agree with you.

There's also another thing that we must guard against, including ... sensitive information. I'm worried about the information stolen from Denel. We've got our own unique fighter helicopter.

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What is it called? The Rooivalk. Sometimes I worry if that technology is still exclusively with us or if it has actually gone somewhere else. That is one of Nipmo's immediate tasks and ... the department to close those leakages. It is something that is very important. Thank you very much.

Ms S MASUMPA: Minister, I am so comforted by your assurance that foreign citizens are considered after it has been established that there are no South African citizens suitable for the position, and following a determination that the role falls within the critical or scarce skills category. As mentioned earlier by my colleague in an earlier question, South Africa exists in a globalised world and therefore cannot close up. South Africa cannot work in isolation and we cannot isolate ourselves.

Are there any measures and mechanisms built into the contracts of those who come to work here to ensure the transfer of skills to locals and the rest of Africa? Are there any mechanisms? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Yes ...

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The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you, hon member. Hon Minister, your response please.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: My apologies ...

iSiZulu:

... hheyi, sengajwayela ukuzikhulumela nje.

English:

My apologies, Chair. [Inaudible.] ... I should wait for you to give me the opportunity.

I think I've addressed that to a large extent. It's part of what we've told our boards, our entities and of course ourselves as a department, that there are conditions that go with employing a foreign national. As we say, it must be a critically scarce skill that we do not have, and we keep them for as long as the work permit ... which is not permanent or perpetual, and also there must be training of South Africans who are able to actually take over from them.

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Most countries do that. Sometimes I get surprised that people accuse us of being xenophobic when we do things that are done by all countries. All countries do that, and we actually have to do that.

Of course, as I say, in the sphere of science, sometimes it is healthy to have people who come from outside your country to be part of your team, because in that way you are able to learn from each other, you are able to share knowledge and so on. However, that mustn't violate these principles that we have placed here, in that it must follow certain procedures and there must be agreements on what actually needs to be done. I think I actually addressed that. So, the point you are raising is an important point which is understandable.

Of course, we also have got our task to closely monitor our own entities, because I can say these things here and only find that some of our entities do not stick to the letter of this, and where we pick this up we actually have to act. Also, where you pick this up, please draw our attention to it so that we are actually able to deal with this.

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It's very important to develop South Africans to be able ... in these positions, especially in this area, because the area of science and technology is notorious, for instance even now for not having enough black South Africans for that matter and also not having enough women who must be part of this. We still have a huge struggle when it actually comes to that. Science, technology and innovation is still uncomfortably too white for my liking. I want to say that. However, that is why each of our entities have targets that they should actually meet every year in order to ... because we have reverse apartheid, as our detractors would say.

You know, there can be no country that doesn't affirm its women and that calls itself a country, or actually ... the majority of its population do not feature in certain professions and categories of work. That's just a precondition to develop our country. That's normal. Thank you very much.

Mr N H PIENAAR: I must say I wasn't expecting that xenophobic question from the FF Plus, which I thought believed in equal opportunities for all. Nevertheless, Minister, goeiemiddag. [good afternoon.]

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When it comes to research and innovation, it should be excellence and competence, not race, colour or creed that determines opportunity. If South Africa is serious about attracting and retaining the best and the brightest minds, particularly from across Africa and the global research community, we must ensure that our policies promote merit, competitiveness and innovation.

What is your department doing to retain top research talent in South Africa and ensure that our policy environment supports merit, attracts global expertise and strengthens our competitiveness in the international research space? Thank you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Is it Peter? Pienaar? Hon Pienaar, sorry. I didn’t hear correctly. [Interjections.]

You're tempting me now that ... because the manner in which you're asking this question is also deliberate. I can see that. [Interjections.] It's also provocative. I'm not guessing. I'm listening to him.

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Now, to answer your question. In affirming black and women South Africans, we are advancing competence. Who says black people are not competent in anything? It was apartheid which said if you are a black person ... I remember my economics professor at the University of Zululand. In 1976, I was a first-year student. We were 150 in a class. He said ... too many of you in an economics class. Black people don't know ... economics. You know, you go shouting black power, black power. I want to tell you one thing — to our faces — black power is only good behind a spade. ... to say that's all that we are. We are ... actually capable of being labourers. That actually suppressed competence.

As a result — by the way, I came from a poor family — I dropped economics as a subject because I said I'm not here to stay. I must finish quickly and go to assist my mother to actually educate those of my siblings who were coming after me.

Also, who says that merit is used neutrally? Merit is often not used neutrally. In the past in South Africa, black people were not allowed to have blasting certificates in the mines to be artisans. They were prevented by the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924. In other words, South Africans were stopped from being ...

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You see, today when you see a black pilot, you still feel a bit teary if you are of my age, because we know in the past you never saw a black pilot. Today they fly, just like everybody else.

So, the policies that we are advancing, hon Pienaar, are for equal opportunity in the context where equal opportunity was prevented in the past. So, the only way to do it is by removing the obstacles. That's how you create equal opportunity.

You know ... people who start there compared to people who are here. Then they say, no, no, no, no, this gap is fair. We must just continue. Don't interfere. You are interfering with merit when you interfere in changing a situation where someone is already 10, 15 metres ahead of the other person.

I thought that all South Africans actually need to accept that the ANC has had good and excellent policies to promote. That's what I'm doing in my department. I'm not ashamed. You see, women scientists, cancer specialists were not there in the past ... black women. Today, they are there because of these policies. I wish every South African accepts that. However, I suppose in

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order to accept that, you must accept that apartheid was wrong and evil. Thank you very much.

Ms M MAKESINI: Minister ...

IsiXhosa:

... mandibulele ngokuwuphendula kakuhle lo mbuzo. Kodwa umbuzo endinawo ngulo: Ndicela ukuqonda ukuba kwezi zakhono zinqabileyo sinazo ...

English:

... how many South Africans have benefitted to date, especially young people who are living with a disability ...

IsiXhosa:

... oomama bethu abamnyama. Ukuba ungakhe usixelele idatha yenu kwabo bantu ekuxhamleni kwabo. Enkosi.

IsiZulu:

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZESAYENSI, EZOBUCHWEPHESHE NOKUSUNGULA: Ngiyawubonga lo mbuzo wakho kodwa bengingathanda kakhulu uma ubungawubuza ngqo ngelinye ilanga ngoba bengingafikanga ngiziphethe lezo zinto, uma uthi ...

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English:

... how many South Africans have benefitted? In which categories and all that? I'm happy to give you that information. You can convert it into a written question. I'm more than happy. Then I'll be able to answer this. You can even add which categories you are talking about.

I think we've done well in many categories. For instance, for the first time now since about seven, eight years ago, there were more black engineering students in our universities than ever in the history of South Africa. We had never achieved that. That’s just one example.

Today, 60% of university students are women, with the majority being black women. Graduates are now about 60% female, although there is still a shortage in scarce skills areas. We are not addressing that.

However, I am happy to give you information in any category you want, provided I have that information. I will be able to give it to you. However, it's an important matter to investigate. Thank you very much.

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The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much, hon Minister.

Hon Makesini, if you still need further detail, the Minister is open to giving you that information, if you put it in writing. Thank you very much. We now move to the next question that was asked by hon Kennedy, and that deals with postgraduate support programmes. Hon Minister, your response to that question.

Question 84:

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Hon Chair, yes, this is an important issue, thanks to hon Kennedy. As the department responsible for research, development, and innovation, we want to ensure that our postgraduate cohorts become economically active after they have been funded and are qualified. This is why we look at postgraduate support against the absorptive capacity of our system, which includes, as I have said, providing employment opportunities and internships, and for them to create their own enterprises. To assess the absorptive capacity of the system, we commission annual research and development surveys and tracer and graduation destination studies, such as the National Tracer Study of Doctoral Graduates 2022, for example, to assess the absorptive capacity of the

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system. These things are on our website. If you cannot find them, we can be able to provide you with those.

In 2023, one of our entities, the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions, SACNASP, for example, completed a study on the pathways into the labour market and self-employment for natural science graduates. For 2022-23 to 2025-26, our department placed and supported a total of 2 217 graduates and postgraduate students in research and development institutions, private and public institutions, for workplace preparation as interns. It is not a small number, if you consider this. These are natural and scientific professions where there are still huge shortages and backlogs. Since its inception in 2006, our internship programme has supported more than 7 000 graduate and postgraduate students. Thirty percent of them were absorbed into tenured employment during or after the completion of their two-year internship periods. There are similar programs targeted at doctoral graduates, such as the Professional Development Programme and the Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme. I might as well add the Presidential PhD Programme that I was talking about, for example, in three years, from 2022 to 2025, our department supported 2 261 postdoctoral fellows at universities, science councils, and other research

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institutions. Due to limited financial resources for postgraduate support, our biggest contribution focuses on disciplines that are in demand for both the economy and the National Development Plan, NDP, goals. We focus on those that are in demand. To ensure that young people with the required skills enter academic careers, we also work together with the Department of Higher Education and Training on the Staffing South African University Framework, SSAUF, which has its flagship Nurturing Emerging Scholars Programme, NESP. I am pleased that I set this up and another flagship programme called the Next Generation of Academics Programme, nGAP. With these programmes, we target younger graduates or undergraduates who have the potential to become academics and researchers, and we nurture them through their master's degree and PhDs, which we also normally sponsor, so that they become what we want.

Lastly, through our entity, the National Research Foundation, NRF, we provide research grants to some of the New Generation of Academics Programme scholars, nGAP. And because of the internship programme, youth employment within our department currently stands at 17,9%. Not bad, but I want to admit it is below the 30% target. I wish that we were higher than this. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

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Ms M KENNEDY: Thank you, hon Minister, for the answer. I have a bit here. In the quest of providing the youth with successful employable career journey, how is your department integrating strategic mentorship for postgraduate student to receive full course of study support so that student gain that knowledge of, for example, entrepreneurship or Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises, SMMEs, development necessary to launch their own businesses rather than being limited to formal employment path to avoid that stereotypedness of studying?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Hon Kennedy. I have touched on several programmes already that would have responded to your question. But let me recap some of them, for instance, I have said that we have the internship programme. Our internship programmes are intense. We negotiate with the institutions where we place these young people, that we must not just turn them into photocopiers. Sometimes we make them make coffee for the senior staff and so on. They must be given real experience, and they should give us reports. That is what we are doing, and so on. And then we also follow up on them. We also then, as I have said, have a programme of young emerging researchers, entrepreneurs, and innovators who we support with entrepreneurial skills and innovation knowledge so that they

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move forward. We are not doing this in enough numbers that we would like to do, but those that we have caught in the system - sorry if I used a wrong word - we make sure that we support them so that they will be able to become innovators and entrepreneurs rather than just queue for jobs. They themselves should be job creators and be able to produce new ideas. Also, as I have said, with the Technology Innovation Agency, TIA, for instance, there are quite a few interesting successes that we have had of young women and men who come out of the system already having ideas as to what business they need to start. And we send them to incubation centres to be properly supported so that they can turn those into successful business propositions. That is one of the tasks of our Technology Innovation Agency, as I have said. So, the matter that you are raising is the things that we are doing. As I say, I will admit, we are not doing that in enough numbers because we do not have money. That is why, as a department, we have partnerships with other science entities that do not fall under us, like the South African Medical and Research Council, SAMRC. We also have partnerships with other government departments because all government departments should be involved in nurturing young people to become innovators, because we must not just be consumers of knowledge produced by other people. Our own kids, if I can use that, must be producers

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of knowledge as well. I suppose I can talk like that; I am getting older now. So, thank you very much for that question, and I would also like you to visit some of our institutions and meet these youngsters. Hear from them yourselves what their experiences are. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Mr M FENI: Thank you, hon Minister, for your extensive response. In line with the country's intergovernmental relations ethos and the shortage of critical engineering skills at the local government, can the Minister champion a law to make it compulsory for engineers, just like doctors, to serve a certain number of years at the local municipality level, especially in rural provinces?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much, hon Feni, for your question. We are putting forward a legitimate ambition for what we need to do. It is very legitimate. Well, my department is not so much responsible for engineers and so on. That would be more of a project led by the Department of Higher Education and Training, taking engineers out of universities of technology and universities to be able to be given practical work in municipalities and so on. It is an excellent idea. I know that the Department of Higher Education

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and Training, having been there before, has some programmes along these lines. I find your idea of placing them in municipalities an excellent one. Because in our municipalities, if there is one shortage we have, it is engineers. In some of our municipalities, you take people who have never even seen a university and say they are heads of engineering. So, that concern that you have is an important one. And such a championship will also need the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Cogta, because the Cogta is one department that uses engineers and is responsible for local government, and so is the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, as well as the involvement of the professional body of engineers, the Engineering Council of SA, ECSA, as it is called, because it is a regulatory body. In fact, that idea is very good. I am likening it to an idea I had when I was still a new Minister of Higher Education a few years ago: Why do we only train attorneys in private law firms? Because if you do not get placement in a private law firm, you cannot do your articles. Why can't we train attorneys in government? When I was in Higher Education and Training, I was in court every day. I could have trained many attorneys to become attorneys in education and related fields. I think we might need to engage with this idea. The Department of Higher Education and Training, DHET, and these

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other departments, Cogta and Public Works and Infrastructure, state in the requirements for qualification by engineers that they must also recognize placement in a municipality. Because you might find that in their requirements, they do not have that. And there is nothing in the world that stops them from saying, if you have spent so many years in a municipality in these types of categories of work, they will then be able to accumulate the points that they need to become a registered, qualified professional engineer. It is a good idea. In fact, it will need piloting and so on. It is something I need to check what Minister Manamela of the Department of Higher Education is doing and see if we can explore this specific idea because it is a very good idea. The other thing we have, I do not think it will solve your problem hon Feni, immediately. Some people argue that we are not short of engineers in South Africa. They say the engineers are in professions other than engineering. Banks now use engineers because they want engineers to engineer projects that they are funding. The health sector has lots of engineers. So, we might need as a country to say, how do we make sure that of the engineers we have, we keep as many of them as possible in typical engineering professions, let alone that it is South Africa that is building Dubai. The South African engineers, in the main, are building Dubai for Dubai to be what it is today.

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However, I will take that idea. Also, if hon Manamela comes here, you can also raise it with him to see whether it is not possible to tweak the qualification requirements of the ECSA for engineers to spend some time in local government. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Hon Minister, I heard all the internship progress and everything about that, but when will the department move from merely funding qualifications to building a credible, measurable pipeline from postgraduate study to jobs, innovation, and enterprise, so that taxpayers are not funding excellence on paper, while young graduates, after all these internships, remain unemployed in practice? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Well, that is what we are about, hon Adriaanse. Thanks for that question. The pipeline. We look at the whole pipeline. I insist to my department and with my entities, that we must look at the entire pipeline. But in the pipeline, there are students who are going to join and do a BSc because they want to go out and work in a laboratory. They may not be interested in becoming an entrepreneur, or becoming a scientist, and so on. There will always be those who want to move out and get employed. However,

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we must provide opportunities for those who want to proceed. That is why I was counting the lots of programmes that we have in internships, which we are doing to train scientists or future scientists, or entrepreneurs for that matter, in the science sphere, because there is lots of entrepreneurial work, there is lots of business in the science sphere, the health innovation that we have been talking about, and lots of new things that still need to be invented. I support Orlando Pirates, and when I have a chance, I go to Orlando Stadium to watch Orlando Pirates. The other day I met this guy that I have seen for a long time, several times at the stadium. He says to me, Minister, at some stage I will need to meet with you. I say, that is what you do. You see a Minister, then you think you must meet the Minister. So, I asked, I did not say it rudely, and said: What do you want us to talk about? He says, I am a science postgraduate from the University of Limpopo. I run a company now. And he says to me proudly, I am going to follow him up. I have just made an innovation, a new medicine to get rid of period pains for women. I said, wow, that sounds interesting. Those of us who have had partners who go through this, we have seen this thing. It would be nice. I would not like my girls to go through this, but I do not know about that. They are now adults. Yes, absolutely. So, we agreed that we are going to meet because he says, yes, there

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is a US company that has seen this. They want to buy it from me. No, I do not want to sell it. I want to develop this product here in South Africa. I hope it works. Now, that is an example. Being at Orlando Stadium, watching Orlando Pirates brought this to my attention. I want to meet with him because those are people I want to meet with and see how genuine this is about which they are talking. How can we help? Get him to contact companies or give him support through the TIA, because that is what it is supposed to do. So, that is up our streak. I mean, we, as the government, have elevated this thing. This thing of training youngsters and training them for unemployment is just not right, particularly those who have gone through Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, colleges and universities. We must train them to get jobs or make money themselves. Thank you very much, hon Chair and hon Adriaanse.

Ms L P MHLONGO: Chair, ...

IsiZulu:

... Mphephethwa, ...

English:

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... I only have one question here. You said you have other partnerships and collaborations. I would like to know: In the private institutes, how many students or recipients have been absorbed? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Well, Ms Mhlongo ...

IsiZulu:

... uNjomane, awuzwake.

English:

Your question is like the earlier question because you are asking me details that I did not bring here. It is legitimate, though, that you have that. As I have said, please ask me that question as a written question. Yes, that is usually the quickest way you can do it so that then I can be able to reply. And tell me also which categories of people you are interested in so that we can be able to provide you with as much information as possible. I am one Minister who is very generous with information because I do not want to hide anything, but it serves another purpose for me. When I joined this department, I discovered that this department is doing so much of good work,

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but it is unknown. Some people are scared by the Department of Science. We speak big English, we have complicated concepts, and people just turn their back away from it. So, one of the things we are trying to do is to say that we have adopted a mantra. We need to place science, technology and innovation at the centre of government, education, society and industry. And the only way to do that is to provide more information. So, the more information you want from me, I am happy about that. I am sorry that I cannot give you those figures right away. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Question 92:

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much Honourable Finnis for the for the question. Our country's hydrogen society roadmap which was adopted by Cabinet some years back as to the pathway we are going to take to develop green hydrogen in particular. This roadmap is responsible for guiding a framework for the integration of hydrogen related technologies into sectors of the South African economy and society. Can you open the water for me please? I went to my doctor by the way he told me I use this finger too much for the cell phone. So, it is as sore as anything. Thank you very much.

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Be careful also about how you use your cell phone and using one thumb all the time. You may suffer what I am suffering. - Cheers to my doctor.

We have strategic integrated projects which are part of the hydrogen roadmap. One of them is the Boegoebaai Green Hydrogen Project in the Northern Cape under the Green Hydrogen National Programme which is led by Infrastructure South Africa which is an entity of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. And these were identified by this roadmap as catalytic projects to stimulate the development of the local hydrogen economy. I know Northern Cape government leaders are very excited about this project and we are very happy that they are excited about it because it means that we are really going to take it forward because it has got such huge potential.

They also have to position South Africa as one of the first movers to participate in the global hydrogen export market these projects. Our departments acknowledge that strategic integrated projects would require the necessary support needed to move them to final investment decision. We have had very meaningful engagement with the Northern Cape Economic Development Trade and Investment Promotion Agency. I pronounce it as NCEDA in short.

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That is what it should be called. Okay. Which is a nice citrus award this. So, this which is the project lead of the Boegoebaai Green Hydrogen Project and has provided international platforms for the agency to showcase their project potential and attract investments.

Furthermore, NCEDA has been part of the South African delegation that supported the participation, my own participation and our department in the European Hydrogen Week, in November 2023 in Belgium and also at the Sixth Hydrogen Energy Ministerial Meeting in September 23 in Japan.

Given our department’s investment in the hydrogen South Africa programme that have resulted in relevant infrastructure technical capabilities and competencies as well as value-added products that have been tested and validated through various deployments. Our department is also engaging using the engagements with the strategic integrated projects, the SIPs, as we call them, to advocate for the integration of these value-added products that are locally developed and based on publicly funded intellectual property. This will enable the creation of a commercial pathway for these value-added products and assist in bridging the gap between research and commercialisation.

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Going forward, our department is committed to utilising formal structures such as the inter-ministerial committee on hydrogen economy. By the way, the first meeting has just happened about two weeks ago. It is chaired by the Deputy President. We now have a cabinet inter-ministerial committee on the hydrogen economy which must strengthen its relationship with the Northern Cape provincial government and entities such as NCEDA to advance the commercialisation of locally developed and publicly funded intellectual property through the implementation of the strategic integrated projects including Boegoebaai Green Hydrogen Project.

Hydrogen fuel cells have got huge potential, and we are in very good state if we support projects like this in the Northern Cape. By 2035/40 to be a huge exporter of hydrogen, greening facilities. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Ms D W FIENIES: Thank you, hon Deputy Chair. Hon Minister, thank you for your response. We know that hydrogen energy has many positive spinoffs. For example, contribution to the climate goals by not emitting fossil fuels that damage the environment. My question is, how has the specific Boegoebaai Green Hydrogen Project contributed to improve air quality and foster economic

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growth through new jobs in the energy sector of the Northern Cape?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much, hon Finnish, for that follow-up question. Of course, I must say that Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, DSTI, is not responsible for the Boegoebaai project. We are a partner, but it is led by the Presidential Infrastructure South Africa Programme. And our role is to provide support for the implementation of the project within the project itself has not yet commenced operations, nor are there any physical activities on the ground. However, the following progress has been made. I think that it will go a long way to answer your question.

Sasol, which we are working with, by the way, that was a company produced by default for Apartheid trying to undermine sanctions in the 1980s. But we are benefiting from that now. Perhaps we should not have allowed it to be privatised. Sasol has completed a pre-feasibility study outlining key enablers required for South Africa to become a globally competitive producer in the green hydrogen sphere. In addition, the request for qualification process has been finalised, resulting in the

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appointment of three joint venture partners and entities to proceed to the request for proposal stage. So, it is getting ready to take off in a very impressive way.

Furthermore, NCEDA has established a working group for the strategic environmental assessment, which is being conducted by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. This initiative is intended to assess the environment so that as we take off with green hydrogen, we are able to make sure that there are no side effects that are able to pull the project back.

As the DSTI, hon Fienies, I am sure you will be very happy, we are committed to support the Boegoebaai project and for Northern Cape to lead that, because it is likely to be the lead hydrogen project in South Africa, by providing platforms for fundraising, promoting international offtake opportunities, and facilitating collaboration.

As the progress moves towards implementation as the DSTI, our role would be to position Boegoebaai as an important component of the hydrogen society roadmap, which is our overall government

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framework to take forward hydrogen projects. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Mr N H PIENNAR: Thank you, Deputy Chair. Minister, it is me again. Minister, unfortunately, you are only telling half the story of green hydrogen, and the facts are that major economies are stepping back from large-scale green hydrogen projects due to high costs, inefficiencies, and uncertain market demands. Those are the facts, Minister, they are not debatable.

The South African taxpayer, however, is being asked to commit billions of rands to this initiative, and how do you justify this level of public investment in high-risk, uncertain sector when the country's urgent priority remains reliable energy supply to grid expansion and proven technologies like wind and solar?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much. You know, hon Pienaar, you sound like a typical South African capitalist that I have been talking about earlier, who is unwilling to invest to take risk in projects that all our research and pointers point to the fact that they are going to be a success. We are not thumb sucking this work we are doing.

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We are funding the University of the Northwest, for instance, which has been doing research and telling us that by 2040, you know, green hydrogen is going to be worth billions of US dollars. In the context of what we are raising, there is maybe a legitimate concern in what we are raising, which also we are aware of, that green hydrogen is not going to fuel your cars on the road. And some people are saying its demand is doubtful. But green hydrogen has got lots of potential for massive industrial transport, including aeroplanes, including ships, and including things that are used in mining and in many other things.

In order to test that, we have designated the N1 from Musina in Limpopo, from Musina, to be specific, to Pretoria, through to the N3 to Durban. And we are designating that as a hydrogen corridor. What do we mean by that? Is that through this corridor, we want that everything that moves there be able to move using hydrogen fuel cells. Even industries that are adjacent, they use for energy, hydrogen fuel cells.

We are taking this, by the way, from other countries. So, we test it as a corridor and see how things happen. You ask me, I am convinced. I do not know those who are saying that there is no market. I would like to see that literature, if we have got

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it. So that also we can respond, not arrogantly, but to say that, well, we think that we are wrong here, we think that we are wrong there.

And I would also urge you, hon Pienaar, to read wider than that literature. We can give you some of our literature so that you actually can be able to engage constructively, not destructively. Because without diverting, I think that there is a narrative that we need to counter. That is emerging about South Africa, that South Africa is failing. We did say in the past, as P. W. Botha said, "if the ANC takes over, this country is going to go to the dogs. Everything is not working. Look at this and that."

It is like showcase now that we are going to be bearing the ANC and this democracy. It is a deliberate narrative to cast doubt on us. And it is usually reinforced by a very partial, one-sided approach to issues. Let us be proud South Africans and say, without this democracy and where we are now, we are not going to be able to move forward as a country, not at the name you are telling me. So, let us share the literature, hon Pienaar.

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Ms M KENNEDY: Thank you, hon Chair. Hon Minister, thank you for the answers. Our understanding is that this green hydrogen production is water intensive by its nature. What advanced water saving technologies is your department piloting, for an example, the Boegoebaai region, not to experience that water depletion?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Again, I am not dodging your question. I would like to get more specific information on this. What I know for a fact is that this hydrogen society roadmap and the projects, especially at the University of the Northwest, specifically also includes research on how to advance the hydrogen economy using less and less water. But I do not have those technical details. I can get you those technical details. But we are absolutely aware because, by the way, the hydrogen itself is drawn from separation of hydrogen from carbon dioxide. And you do that from water, this water, largely. And, of course, you add other things, platinum, copper, metals to process. That is why, by the way, we have placed our project and research at the University of the Northwest, because it is right in the middle of platinum land of our country, where most of the world's platinum reserves are actually located. But I can be able to actually come back to you.

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The question you are raising is very important. We cannot afford to be using technologies that are going to be demanding too much water without also at the same time researching how do we produce the same thing in using less water, because we are a water scarce country. As I was saying, for instance, about ablution facilities, that perhaps we need to be doing like the aeroplanes, looking at toilets that are using more air rather than water. We have got lots of air and wind in the African continent. Rather than using water, knowing that we are going to at some stage have a problem about that. Good, legitimate question. I am sure my staff are noting all these things. Going to be giving you this information so that I can share, according to my own philosophy, share as much information as possible. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, Minister. Good afternoon to you, hon members, ladies and gentlemen. The last follow-up question for you, Minister, will be posed by the hon Van den Berg on the virtual platform.

Mr H J VAN DEN BERG: Thank you, Chair. Minister, unlike the very capitalist hon Pienaar, I can make a distinction between

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xenophobia and what is in the national interest of the country. And this is the case with this question too.

Minister, we all know that interest in green hydrogen in Namibia is becoming less due to oil and gas reserve fines that promise to double Namibia's GDP and increase state income by 60%, with hydrogen being described as very difficult scientifically and with high energy needs.

What are the real chances of this programme actually taking off? And how can your department tangibly help us? Remember that we have not even produced a single photovoltaic wafer used in solar panels in South Africa. This is something the DSTI could have achieved on a small scale long ago. Or should we also now look to fossil fuels?

The MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Thank you very much and good afternoon, Chair. We already have a pilot somewhere in KwaZulu-Natal where we are running motorcycles using hydrogen fuel cells. I think it is a post office somewhere, in case I can get that information. I forget that now. We also launched a pilot, by the way, with Anglo-Platinum in Limpopo. One of these big trucks, mining trucks, those who

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come from mining provinces, they should know them, which are now using hydrogen fuel cells.

That is part of the project and collaboration between our department, the University of the Northwest and Anglo-Platinum. So, we are already experimenting and piloting about this. We have got a very good relationship with Japan, because Japan is one of the leaders in terms of hydrogen, green hydrogen. Also, the EU is very big in hydrogen. We have got relations with them. Japan already, there are cars.

It is not meant, I am told, largely for private cars, but there are cars where they are now piloting and experimenting that are using hydrogen fuel cells. And they have got stations, looks like a petrol station, but it is hydrogen fuel cells, and where cars are actually running in the street actually using this. We would not be, I do not want to say stupid or reckless, let me put it that way, it is a better word, would not be as reckless as to pursue something that we think has no hope.

The research we have conducted, and the research we plan to undertake, continues the work. We are very well placed in South Africa regarding green hydrogen because we possess the necessary

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ingredients for its production. These include the platinum group metals, of which we have the largest concentration of reserves in the world. South Africa also has abundant wind resources, which are very important. In addition, we have research institutions of which we are very proud, and which are advanced enough to undertake these studies, such as North-West University. It is not the only university involved, but we have invested significant resources there to ensure they continue to conduct research with us.

We are not being reckless as a government. I hope this does not become part of the narrative we have to face. I am here as Minister, but also as an ANC Minister. I hope our ANC comrades will empower themselves to counter this negative portrayal of South Africa as a country in decline. We are not in decline. We will continue to move this country forward, as the African National Congress has led society to where it is today.

Of course, we do have problems. We are not denying. We do have lots of problems, but there are problems that often arise out of our attempts to build a better life for our people. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you very much, Minister. Hon Falmer, if you need to take a phone call, you are welcome to leave the Chamber and take your phone call outside. It is inappropriate in the extreme to disrespect the rest of the members of this House by sitting on the telephone. That activity was caught on camera yesterday as well. It is inappropriate, uncalled for. And the next time you are caught, you will be asked to leave the Chamber.

Afrikaans:

DIE MINISTER VAN WETENSKAP, TEGNOLOGIE EN INNOVASIE: Baie dankie.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, Minister, very much indeed. Hon Delegates, we have come to the end of the questions to the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation. I would like to thank the Minister in Nzimande for availing himself to answer the questions. Thank you very much, Minister.

Hon Delegates, before we proceed to the next set of questions, which will be posed to the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture, I would like to announce that the Office of the Chairperson

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received a request from the Minister to respond to the questions on the virtual platform, and that request was agreed to.

Good afternoon, Minister. I now call on the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture to respond to Question 86, which was asked by the hon Feni. Minister, you have five minutes to respond. You will note that there will be a timer on your screen. Thank you.

Question 86:
The MINISTER OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you to the House for allowing me to respond on a virtual platform. As far as the Video Assistant Referee, VAR, the department announced the transfer of R20 million to the SA Football Association, SAFA, on 4 March 2026, to support the implementation of the VAR technology in South Africa. Given that the transfer was only made recently, it will be premature to expect full operation and implementation at the current stage. However, this does not mean that the progress has not been made. In fact, preparatory work has already been undertaken by SAFA and the VAR project team, prior to the release of funds.

This includes the research, benchmarking against international standards and the development of the detailed implementation

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plan aligned with global best practice. The implementation plan covers the key areas such as the training of match officials, the procurement and installation of VAR equipment, upgrades to stadium connectivity and ICT systems, as well as operational and logistical planning for match during delivery. The next phase is now underway, it includes the procurement of infrastructure and equipment, alongside the commencement of training of VAR match officers to ensure that South Africa's rollout is aligned with the Federation Internationale de Football Association, Fifa, standards and it is sustainable over time.

This approach ensures that the introduction of VAR is properly implemented. I can tell the South Africans that the VAR is here, and it will be implemented. The Treasury has given out a green light that to release the money, and it has been released. We have been guided by the Fifa guidelines; therefore, we are not doing our ow thing. The South Africa cannot afford not to have the VAR, otherwise we will be left behind with the international game of football. I thank you.

Mr M FENI: Hon Minister, thank you for the response. We know that soccer is the major sport in South Africa. The people from all walks of life invest their hard-earned money and emotions to

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support the sport. We are aware that Fifa, the world governing body of football, frowns upon government's involvement in the sport. My question is, what accountability measures are there to make sure that funds are used to the purposes that they were given for, and no maleficence will occur to those funds. Thank you, Chair,

The MINISTER OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, hon Feni for the question. Fifa has that rule which you say that government should not interfere. But that doesn't mean that government should not get involved. It is in extreme cases where I have seen Fifa act like that, like in India and the other country where they were chucking the management of Football Association out of their offices, but we wouldn't go to those extremes. But what we intend to do is that, obviously, you should have seen that there is problem in our football, hon Feni. It cannot be, that when the people that the MEC meeting of the people who represent us in football, then the security is called in. These are the board members, the MEC members that should sit and work together. That was a very ugly scene for South Africa. We have heard of instances where people are getting loans, but SAFA is not a bank, and it shouldn't be giving people loans.

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We have also heard instances where people are conspiring against each other. Our intention is very clear, that is, few months before the team goes to the World Cup in Mexico and the USA, upon their return, in consultation with Fifa, we shall be investigating all these allegations. Many people would want me to investigate immediately as the Minister because the Act allows me to do so. However, hon Feni, it is not a wise thing to do, according to me, because witnesses would be called and nothing should disturb the four months wherein the team will be training for the World Cup. It is time the team is getting together, and we are helping the team to play against the international teams. But I can assure this august House that, as soon as we are back from the World Cup, we will then look into our football and fix what needs to be fixed. Not all is doom and gloom in our football, it's only these bad things. But we have very good highlights. Nothing is perfect, but we have done very well so far. Thank you very much, hon Feni.

Mr M BILLY: Good afternoon, Minister. Minister, the expenditure of state resources on a project that should clearly be funded by SAFA is, to be quite polite, questionable, especially when SAFA has so many questions about financial mismanagement hanging over it. Minister, your actions seem to be supportive of Mr Danny

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Jordan, and an enabler to his re-election, in spite of the total dysfunction in the administration of South Africa's favourite sport. Minister, what deal have you made with him? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you for the question, hon Billy. Hon Billy is so lost, hon Chair. The money is not for Danny Jordan, and the money is not for SAFA. That type of thinking belongs to the politicians who wants to drive a political agenda. The money is for the majority of people in this country, for the poor people that their only entertainment is football; the money is to make sure that our stadiums do not get vandalised when referees is giving wrong decisions; the money is to make sure that .referee behaves in a responsible manner, and when the human error occurred, then they can go back and verify; the money is not for Danny Jordan, but for the masses of this country. How am I supportive of somebody whom I have founded – in fact, my interaction with Danny is that I stood against him, politically. He is from another party; therefore, he has always been my political rival. Other than that, I have no business with Mr Danny Jordan to be making deals with him.

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Mr Danny Jordan, whether we like it or not, he has been chosen through a democratic process, and whoever wants to stand against him, the process is now open. He is coming to the end of his term. So, we should put the names in the hat. If anybody feels that the process is not fair, you should write to me and show me what part of the process is not fair, so that we can have a look at it. I am not favouring anybody; I favour the incumbent, no matter who the incumbent is, whether it is Danny, Sally, Piet or whoever is in there, I favour. Hon Billy, you cannot expect that our football must be left behind in the stone of ages, and that is exactly what you are proposing here. The world is moving towards the VAR. You worry about Danny, and this has nothing to do with him. This has to do with the development of our football. How wouldn't we have VAR playing the World Cup? Our team will be playing in the competitions where the VAR is present. How would we even know how it works? Our referees wouldn't be chosen because they will not be VAR acquainted. Thank you very much.

Mr M K MONTWEDI: Minister, in terms of the National Sport and Recreation Act, just to mention a few of what is expected of you as a Minister in supporting federations. Firstly, to provide leadership, policy direction and oversight, to promote and

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enforce good governance and ensure proper use of public funds. Currently, we all know that SAFA does not tick any of those things that I have mentioned above. With serious governance challenges, financial mismanagement and incompliance with good governance standard.

These, Minister, points to one direction of failure by you, as the Minister in supporting federations with good governance. Now, Minister, what oversight mechanism have you put in place to ensure that SAFA complies with procurement standards, financial controls and operational readiness requirements for the implementation of the Video Assistant Referee, VAR, system? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you for the question, hon Montwedi. When you are talking about my failure, I don't know how you substantiate that because, my term so far has been hugely successful. Even today, I have a link of events, as a Sports Minister, like the biggest golf event in the history of this country that is going to bring close to R1 billion to our economy. So, you have to point out to anything that you say I've failed. In as far as the question is concerned, I don't deal with SAFA in a way that you've described. A year and few months

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ago, SAFA couldn’t pay salaries. The players were going for Christmas without money. We then advanced SAFA with money, with a very clear instruction that the money should find its way to the pockets of players, which is what happened, hon Montwedi.

If I could have mention earlier with the question from hon Feni, we are planning to have a full-scale enquiry to what is happening with SAFA. Time is not on our side. If we had to call people who have to prepare for a World Cup here, we would hear all types od excuses because they would be in America. So, the post that we have done is that SAFA have clearly instructed me with some issues that we are going to investigate. But as you are saying, we have qualified for the World Cup, African Cup of Nations and Women African Cup of Nations. So, as I’ve sad earlier, not all is doom and gloom, but I have to act.

We are working very hard, I mean, the President of Fifa and I have just signed... The regional head of Fifa is coming for the first time to South Africa, representing 14 different countries. I can understand your frustration and the frustration of the people with SAFA. I, myself, get frustrated with these federations, including SAFA. But the timing, to have it now before the World Cup. If ever you ask me, the timing is

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brilliant before the new elections. So, if ever you have capable people that are not happy with the status quo of leadership, I think it is perfect time for them to put their hands up to remove Danny Jordan because the feeling is in them, and with the feeling we can change some stuff.

If Danny Jordan is making it difficult for them, they need to tell the Minister about those issues, I will deal with them. But at the moment, there is nothing else because Bafana Bafana is going to lose. The coach is being asked questions at an inquiry, and the whole management is being asked questions, and the players wouldn't be there; therefore, we would take the blame. They say that white and black doesn't disappear, which means, the teams and their paperwork is still there. As soon as we are back from the World Cup, we will do that. Thank you so much, hon Montwedi.

Mr B J FARMER: Hon Minister, before I ask my question, there are just two quick points. Congratulations on your byelections victory yesterday in Ward 7 of Beyers Naudé Municipality in the Eastern Cape. Secondly, thank you for Joshlin Smith Foundation that you funded and invested in. You are helping our people to find kids that get lost. My question, hon Minister is, the

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chairman of the Fifa Referee’s Committee, Pierluigi Collina, is of the view that our RSA football has improved, but it still has deep imperfections. As South Africa, are we aware of such imperfections, if so, how do we intend addressing them? Thank you, hon Minister of Happiness.

The MINISTER OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thanks for the compliments, hon Farmer. Yes, we won Ward 7 last night. Hon Farmer, let me also compliment you on your scotch jacket, it goes with your grey hair. I see that you are matching with your hair. Thank you, hon Farmer. It is very true what you’ve just said that VAR is not perfect, but I can tell you what’s the gain. For me, there was just clear corruption. We had teams like Stellenbosch where they had a clear penalty, the gentleman was even stopping the ball with his hands. For me, it was a clear form of corruption. The referee didn’t point to the penalty spot.

Now, VAR might not be perfect, but it is better. It is an improvement of where we are at the moment, and I just think that the VAR is also a job creation in a space of referring. It happens because, when you have six people who are sitting there and are getting better with the game, and what we have done in

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this instance is that we have taken our top three referees to head this committee. So, I get my advice from them in as far as the VAR is concerned because they know more than me. I have done what the regulator and the government should be doing to assist sport like cricket, rugby and others, to have this type of equipment. We cannot let the game of the masses stay behind. But I hear what you are saying, and we will be on the lookout for more improvements, and where the system lacks, we will learn from them. Thank you very much, hon Farmer.

Question 74:

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, hon Adriaanse, for the question. The concerns raised through parliamentary oversight, particularly in provinces such as Limpopo, regarding infrastructure decay and underutilisation of sports facilities, are noted and taken very seriously by this department.

In terms of accountability, sports infrastructure investments are primarily implemented through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, Mig, where funding for sports is ring-fenced and subject to strict planning, reporting and compliance requirements. Municipalities are required to submit detailed technical

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proposals, including cost estimates and intended community benefits, which are assessed at both provincial and national levels before funding is approved.

Hon Chair, once projects are underway, municipalities must provide regular financial and progress reports, and the department undertakes verification through site visits and intergovernmental oversight structures to ensure that delivery aligns with the approved plans. To strengthen accountability further, the department is formalising a dedicated oversight mechanism to improve co-ordination and ensure consistent monitoring across all stages of project implementation.

In relation to performance monitoring, the department has adopted a more integrated end-to-end approach, taking projects from planning through to post-completion use. This includes assessing not only whether facilities are completed on time and within budget, but whether they are maintained and actively utilised by communities. Importantly, lessons from parliamentary oversight and provincial engagements have been incorporated into this approach, particularly to address recurring challenges related to maintenance and utilisation.

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Chairperson, I would not be honest if I don't tell you that there are municipalities that use those funds for the wrong reasons. They are not using the funds. They will pay salaries, they will pay people, they will repurpose or redirect the funds meant for helping, building or maintaining our infrastructure. We have taken a very grim look at this, hon Chair, where we now are looking at every little step in every step of the way.

We've got partnerships now with schools, local clubs and community organisations, where we tell them about what we're going to construct there. So, the community pressure is there when they ask, how far are you with this. The community even comes out in the mornings and asks, why were you guys not at work yesterday to finish. So, there's more pressure on municipalities.

We are also going to name and shame the ones that are guilty and not fixing the stuff. I mean, we've just seen the other day, it was the Solomon Mahlangu Stadium that had not been fixed for 24 years. Now that it has been fixed, a Premier Soccer League, PSL, game was played at that stadium. Those are the things that can be attributed to us taking a very hands-on approach. Thank you so much, hon Chair and hon Adriaanse.

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Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Hon House Chair, maintenance is a foreign language. So, as provinces and municipalities are currently passing the maintenance and facilities ball, like the best fly house in the country, how will the department involve provincial, local stakeholders, including athletes and sport federations, in the oversight and planning of these facilities? Thank you, hon Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Well, hon Adriaanse, you know, that has been a problem. I can agree with you that maintenance has been a problem nationally. It's a legacy problem. It's a problem where people take on a tender, build the thing, but no provision is being made. It is the reason why we are where we are today.

I can assure you, hon Adriaanse, that we have taken a keen interest in what you just proposed, to include athletes. One example that I can give you is that I work very closely now with Simbine, the sprinter, to arrange one of the biggest events at a stadium in Pretoria for later next month. Our decorated tennis player, a wheelchair tennis player, we work with her and her foundation also, "KG" Montjane, to make sure that ... Kgothatso is helping a lot through her foundation, making sure that she

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builds new sports infrastructure and combi courts, and we are there every step of the way. But it is a problem, and I'm not going to sit here and say it's not a problem. It is a problem.

We are meeting with mayors, we have Minmec, we are meeting with the premiers, and we tell them that time where you just take money away from sports infrastructure. It will make you very happy, hon Adriaanse, to tell you that I take this extremely seriously. If I look at how many combi courts have been built in the past 10 years, I can tell you that in the past two years, we've built more combi courts currently than was built in the past five years prior to us arriving here. We've done that in not even two years. It speaks to our dedication to the infrastructure of sports, and we are including the local community in it. Thank you very much, hon Adriaanse.

Ms D W FIENIES: House Chair, hon Minister, thank you for the response. You have indicated in your original response to hon Adriaanse about the accountability measures that the department has put in place. Are there any other accountability measures in place to ensure that projects are delivered according to the approved plans and budget? What consequence measures are

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implemented in situations where projects are delayed or not delivered at all? Thank you, hon House Chair.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, hon Fienies, for the question. It is a big problem for us, hon Fienies. They say old habits die hard.

When you come here, you see that people are using money to maintain and build a soccer field. They use it to pay for, let's say, overtime. And you ask, what happened to the person? You see there was no consequence management. You go to the federations, you're like, you guys are supposed to be the watchdogs. So, let's start with your question. What new measures are there?

Firstly, we met with the federations. We said charity begins at home. The federations that are not compliant, they don't report what the money was used for, we have held back their money until they ... figure skating comes to mind. Then federations like wrestling, they are doing such a great job. We've given them more money. Hockey, we've given more money. Netball, we've given more money, but then we get basketball.

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It was just Armageddon; it was a mess. We totally disbanded them. We are now in the era where people don't get away with business as usual. Basketball is an example of a federation where we put our foot down. We are soon going to have all the mayors and MECs in a meeting where we're going to speak about our sports infrastructure. Thank you very much, hon Fienies.

Ms M KENNEDY: House Chair, hon Minister, how is your department planning to address the safety risks and lack of functional sports facilities in areas like Mokopane, which currently hinder youth participation and competitive sports? What management and maintenance models will be implemented for rehabilitated facilities to ensure that they don't fall back into disrepair in the future? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Hon Chair, rehabilitation is a big thing for us. One practical example that I can make is that I refuse, as a Minister, to sign for sports facilities to be put up in a community where there's no security. We then came up with a new strategy, and we've done it so far, I think, at 25 schools because the school already pays for security. There's already dedicated security at the school.

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We are now doing all our projects ... If we build the combi court or a public gym, we are no longer building it on the street corner, because the people that are addicted to drugs take that and use it as scrap metal. They can't be doing the same thing all the time, knowing what the result is going to be. You can put up a public gym outside and the next day, it will be gone.

What we've done now, and we've seen it's working, is put the children's play parks in the schoolyard. We then speak to the principal, and we say, listen, this is in your schoolyard, but all the other schools get access to it. For example, in Ennerdale, when we put it there, we sat with the principal, and she agreed that other schools could use this facility. At night, we can sleep because the school has security already that the state is paying for.

It is a problem and this is my one way to make sure that we don't spend the same money every year to build the same things. Thank you so much, hon Kennedy.

Ms T BREEDT: Thank you, hon House Chair.

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Afrikaans:

Agb Minister, jou antwoorde laat meer vrae as wat ons antwoorde het vandag. So, laat ek probeer om by een punt te bly.

English:

Hon Minister, the fact of the matter is that through the Mig grants, municipalities are refurbished, but as you said and stated, you are supposed to ensure that these sports stadiums, athletic fields and so on are actually done, and you say that you will improve monitoring. But we have seen, and I would like to use one specific example in Letsemeng Local Municipality in the south of the Free State, where less than 10 years ago, the athletic stadium was refurbished.

It has never been used, and it has deteriorated to such an extent that it is unusable now. Furthermore, in that same municipality, a soccer stadium was built. The scope of work was changed, and now not even a primary school soccer team can use that soccer stadium.

So, what I want to know, hon Minister, is what interventions are triggered when facilities like this become non-functional within a short period of time or their scope of work changes? Are you

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aware of this and how are we intervening? We cannot allow this to continue. Thank you, House Chair and Minister.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Hon Chair, I think let's ventilate some issues here. The hon member spoke about Mokopane. This doesn't only happen in ... it happens in all provinces, and I mean all nine provinces.

We've had multiple complaints, but some of these matters, as you say, ten years ago, is pure criminality. It is pure corruption. It needs whistleblowers. It needs people in that municipality, the community, to stand up. I want to encourage community members, where they were told there will be a swimming pool, if there's no swimming pool, it needs to be reported. Because the money has disappeared. That is a matter for the Hawks or the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, for instance.

We are, however, not doing nothing, as I've just made a clear example. Look at George Municipality, we gave them R40 million for a stadium. They finished their stadium to completion. Not a cent was missing, for example. You can go to different places in South Africa where people are really using the money for what it was meant for.

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Matzikama, for example, we had a partnership there with business and we ... a sports centre, and we did that. That was done very, very well. But then you do get that one or two, or some places where the money was just stolen. Me doing stuff now at the school premises, it's one of the intervention methods. Us naming and shaming individuals will be, and I think that's what the Government of National Unity, GNU, is, is very, very good you know.

Let's take the equipment outside the Western Cape, the sports fields outside the Western Cape. It was very difficult for one party to sometimes speak against their own party. In the Western Cape, in Stellenbosch, we have the same issue in some of the areas there. It was very hard for that party to speak against their members. But now when you have the GNU, we can confront these issues directly.

So, lest you accuse me of creating more questions, I want to say, firstly, I have started with an intervention of doing stuff at schools where there's already security. Secondly, we have the name and shame, where we're going to name and shame the people that are responsible. Lastly, number three, we also encourage our teams to follow up directly now. We're sending our teams to

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go and see what’s happening out there, and to ask questions. Thank you very much, Chair.

Question 82:

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: House Chairperson, the question relating to rural and township schools has always been a big problem. It is a legacy. It is a legacy problem. The reality that many schools in rural areas and townships lack adequate sports facilities compared to those in more affluent areas is a legacy issue. The government continues to address across multiple departments. That can squarely be blamed firstly to our past where some of the schools, black schools don't even have swimming pools and never had. But I'm not saying that by now we should have had them.

In terms of responsibility, the provision and maintenance of infrastructure in public schools fall under the mandate of the Department of Basic Education. However, this does not mean that the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is not actively involved in addressing these disparities. We are actively involved together with the Department of Basic Education hence we signed a memorandum of understanding to work together. Our

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role to work with the Department of Basic Education is something we take very, very serious.

In advancing equity in sport development, the department applies a spatial targeting approach, prioritising rural areas, townships and historically marginalised communities where infrastructure backlogs are greatest. This is reflected in the current interventions including the roll-out of 30 combi courts in the 2025-26 financial year. Many of them are being delivered within school environments to expand access to fullness.

Beyond infrastructure, the department is also strengthening school sport programmes by partnerships with local clubs and community structures ensuring that the facilities are actively used to support participation and talent development. The objective is not only to reduce infrastructure backlogs over time, but to ensure that young people, regardless of where they live, have meaningful access to sport and recreation opportunities. I thank you.

Mr M K MAMPURU: Thank you, Chair. Minister, you have just highlighted that the situation that we find ourselves in is the legacy of apartheid where the privileged minority were given

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preference over the underprivileged majority. However, it is concerning that under your watch children of the elite swim in heated pools and compete in world-class tennis courts in the suburbs whereas children of the working class, the sons and daughters of domestic workers, farm labourers and the unemployed are relegated to a bare minimum of physical development. The situation is far worse in rural areas, in Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal where many schools do not have even a fence, let alone a functional netball court or a soccer pitch.

How do you justify the continued reliance of school governing bodies' funds for sport maintenance when you know very well that this model only benefits the privileged and affluent areas leaving in rural and township schools in disadvantage? If we are to compare the sporting facilities in Tembisa and the one that they have in Rhodesfield Primary School in Kempton Park, you could see that children of the poor are still subjected to bad sporting facilities when compared to those of the privileged in affluent areas. Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, hon Chair. Thank you, hon Mampuru. I think that the house is burning and you are fighting the firefighter. Let me explain. Since becoming

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a Minister, most of my time is seized with dealing with the very same problem that you are asking me, to make sure that the kids in rural areas, the kids of domestic workers and gardeners have the same access. I am a person who believes that you can't have equal support if there is no equal access.

I can show you examples by Rand West. For the first time we spent millions of rands in Rand West. We gave and put in children’s hands tennis rackets that they never had them. We put hockey sticks in their hands that never had them. Three weeks ago, we opened in the rural KwaZulu-Natal, a multimillion rand combi court. The next day the teacher was trending because he said, this was the first time the kids could play volleyball. He is teaching them how to play volleyball. In Matzikama, the children of the farm workers are now playing with the same equipment that we have given them. We were in Limpopo with the Rain Queen when we opened in a rural, rural area a combi court. In Dysseldorp, in George! I can go on and on with places where we have really, really ...

Trust me when I tell you that we are still far from where we want to be. One thing that I said to myself is that, when I look back at my term as a Minister I must be able to have had a real

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huge, huge impact in making sure that our children have access to sporting facilities. Thank you very much.

Mr M P SIBANDE: Thank you, House Chair. Minister, thank you for your response. Minister, when was this memorandum of understanding signed? What are the specific deliverables of this agreement? What has been achieved so far and in which provinces? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you so much, hon Chair. Thank you, hon Sibande. The memorandum of understanding was signed last year, two months after the formation of the government of national unity, GNU. I am saying it under correction because I don't have the information in front of me. I can tell you what has been achieved so far - the deliverables that have been achieved. There are many deliverables which can keep you the whole day if I have to tell you. But let me tell you what we've achieved so far. We have signed a memorandum of agreement and understanding to say, firstly, we will create sporting facilities in schools. I think we are now in the 40th sporting facility in schools since signing the memorandum we have agreed upon. Secondly, we will not only bring sporting facilities – the multimillion rand combi courts – but we will

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capacitate the children and the athletes to be able to play, give them balls and gear so when they play against schools that are well known they mustn't look like orphans when they rock up.

Thirdly, which for me is very exciting, for the first time we brought together SABC and Super Sport and said, you are going to show school sport to motivate other children that don't have DSTV and cable TV. School sports are now being shown for the first time and there is now a GNU of broadcasts showing specifically school sport. Very exciting for me is when we said because government doesn't have enough money it has to approach private sector together with the Department of Basic Education. I can tell you, for instance, we've approached Canal+ and they have already started, I think the fourth since the agreement. They've done it previously, but now they're doing it structurally together with us. They've already started with R4 million or R5 million combi courts that they are rolling out throughout the country. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Chairperson and Minister, good afternoon. Minister, South Africa seems to be chasing expensive and high risk mega events like the Formula One and the Olympics, but struggling to retain events like the World Surf League in

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Jeffreys Bay event. We are not even talking about the parents' loss of focus on sports, arts and culture at formative levels, like the poor children in Borcherds, George that are still waiting for the bicycles that you gave them and took them away in December. Minister, tell me: Is there a strategy here or is it just a ministerial wish list of media agendas and a few free tickets to glamorous events for yourself? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you so much, hon Chair and hon Badenhorst. Let us start where the hon Badenhorst started, in Borcherds, where I took my kids' money to. I told them they need to buy something for Christmas for poor kids. My kids decided to buy 30 bicycles for the kids in those areas.

Now, hon Badenhorst listen to fake news that said I took the bicycles back. I wonder how I would have carried them because I went there with my kombi. The bicycles are still there. Just to show you the proof we have won that place that you've mentioned, Borcherds, at the by-elections. There was another by-election and the PA won again. Unless you think the people of Borcherds are very stupid why would they vote for somebody who took the bicycles back. We have won it twice – the first and the second one.

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You must understand that sport is no longer what it used to be during apartheid. Sport has now become a business and is called the business of sport. Today, we are here at LIV Golf where it was reported thus far that we are standing at R900 million back into our economy. Jobs have been created. R200 million has been given to local entrepreneurs. Hotels are fully booked in the City of Joburg, in Gauteng – they are packed. We have sold 95 000 tickets. We have given Diepsloot a lot of money. We are putting back into Diepsloot to alleviate hunger. People working there are all or mostly from Diepsloot.

The Formula One event and the other events you are talking about are no longer just about entertainment, they are also money spinners for the countries through the fiscus. They are also showcasing your country and they are also drivers of tourism.

You speak about the surfing event. The surfing event you are speaking about we have never had a letter. That is white privilege at its best. If you ever want to know what white privilege is, it is that black people must stand and write letters to me. You want me to give money to people that just assume that I will think they need money. I've never given them money. They've never given me a letter. In fact, the

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municipality has let them down because they used to give them money. I wonder why they've stopped. Thank you very much.

Ms L P MHLONGO: Thank you, Chair. Greetings to you, Minister. Minister, can you indicate: Does the department has clear measurable targets and timelines to eliminate imbalances in sports infrastructure between the affluent and the disadvantaged schools? How is progress towards these targets monitored and reported? If such targets don't exist: How can the government claim to be serious about achieving equitable access to sports facilities across all communities? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, Chair and hon Mhlongo. Honestly, we do not need even to debate the fact that there is a big discrepancy between the haves and the have nots in this country. It is so clear. I think there is like 25 000 schools in the townships. Of those 25 000 schools, I think, not more than 2 000 have swimming pools and not more of them have sporting facilities. Let me tell you, we have rolled out 100% of sporting facilities, hon Mhlongo. Since I became the Minister, I have been to the previously disadvantaged communities and communities that are affected by gang wars and shootings where children get shot as they play in the street. We

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are now starting sporting facilities where they can go to such areas.

In the rural areas, I always thought I'm well-travelled until we started rolling out sporting facilities. We went to areas that I never even knew existed in South Africa. I agree with you. I'm not going to even debate this. There is a problem. The measurables in our department are very clear. We just took a decision in the department that we must reach a stage where there is equal participation and also equal roll-out of sporting equipment.

South Africa has a vast talent. The biggest indictment on me as the Minister and everybody else is the fact that there are children that still play with plastic balls made from plastic bags. And it breaks my heart to see that. I can assure you that this coming weekend, not even this weekend but on 21 March, I am rolling out two multimillion combi courts. One at a school for the disabled children, Re Tlameleng and Roodepan Primary School. I'm giving you basics in one day. I want to show you how serious am I as the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture. We are rolling out. We also don't leave behind our artists living with

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disabilities. We are rolling out two in one day. I thank you so much.

Question 87:

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: The SA Geographical Names Council recommended the name change of Pretoria to Tshwane in 2005. That recommendation did not result in the completion of the renaming process. In 2012, the matter was referred back to the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, which has been the original applicant. Because a significant period of time has passed since the initial recommendation, it was considered necessary that a fresh and inclusive public consultation process be undertaken.

The municipality was accordingly advised to consult again with all affected communities and stakeholders and if it wished to proceed to resubmit the matter for consideration through the proper processes. To date, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture has not received a resubmitted application from the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality or from any other applicant. As matters stand there is, therefore, no active process before the department regarding the renaming of Pretoria to Tshwane.

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The position is, therefore, straightforward. The department does not reopen or advance such matters in the absence of a properly submitted application. I know, many say, Gayton McKenzie, the Minister, is changing names. That's not my job. It has never been and it shouldn't be. It goes through a process. When an application is brought, it must be supported by the required consultation and process. In this instance, that has not occurred. Accordingly, there is no substantive progress to report at this stage because there is no current application under consideration by the department. I thank you.

Mr M F MOKWELE: Thanks very much Minister for your reply. Minister, I just want to remind fellow South African and hon members in the House that the renaming of cities and towns is driven by the transformative desire to remove colonial and apartheid era legacy and to reflect South African diverse indigenous cultural heritage.

Does the Minister or your department have an appetite to take up the issue with the Tshwane Metropolitan Council to bring to an end this ambiguity about the name of our capital city? I thank you.

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The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Hon Chair, it is through the names ... it is just for us to deal with the redress and to fix names that are hurtful, names like Verwoerd, who was the architect of apartheid. That brings bad memories to people. However, I also believe that things should not be done in a spiteful manner. It should not be done to make certain races feel guilty.

I agree with the hon member that it is a process we have to undertake, no matter how painful it might be. You look at what happened now with Robert Subukwe. Last year, the application was in front of my desk to change Graaff-Reinet to Robert Sobukwe. I sent it back because it did not comply with all the tick boxes. It did not tick all the boxes. Eight months after, the application came back and it complied with everything.

As far as Tshwane is concerned, I cannot do that, or Pretoria, because I cannot get myself involved in pushing for a name change in my capacity as the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture. Then, I will not be fair to the applicants that are against the name. Anybody that feels Pretoria should become Tshwane, should take it up and follow the process. I will get involved when it lands on my desk. I thank you very much.

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Afrikaans:

Mnr N H PIENAAR: Goeiemiddag, Minister.

English:

Minister, this name change proposals are creating division instead of unity. Despite clear public resistance and serious cost concerns, just take the example of Graaff-Reinet you just spoke about, with over 21 000 objections in just one month, shows that communities are speaking, but they are not being heard.

Why is your department treating public participation, as you said, a tick box exercise instead of a constitutional mandate? Will you commit to honouring the will of the communities when they clearly oppose these changes? Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Now, hon Pienaar, nothing should give you greater joy than what you just mentioned, that Robert Sobukwe's name I've sent back last year. I refused to sign it because I wasn't satisfied that proper consultation has happened. Eight months thereafter, proper consultation has happened.

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You talk about 22 000 people, what I find very strange, hon Pienaar, is the fact that there's this resistance for name changes that can reflect the majority of these people, that can reflect our history, our heritage and our stories, and it is not hurtful. I don't understand the name Robert Subukwe. How can that be hurtful? The freedom that we enjoy today is because of people like Robert Sobukwe. I don't know what Graaff has done and his wife, Reinet, for the freedom that we are enjoying today. Nevertheless, I can tell you, maybe they did and I don't want to cast aspersions on them.

However, I can tell you what Robert Sobukwe has done. Hon Pienaar, you must also understand that most of the people, particularly in the white community, who complain about these name changes, go look at their business names, most of the business names got black names, Khumalo and Sons, but the only sons are white for the purposes of benefiting from Black Economic Empowerment, BEE. However, when it comes for the purposes of benefiting the nation, then they have a problem.

We cannot and we shouldn't do this to hurt people. Imagine your child has been killed by Verwoerd and every day you must drive in Verwoerd Street, for instance. It cannot be. I'm totally

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against things like kill the boar, kill the farmer. I'm totally against things like names that should remain the way they are. Democracy ... we must all make sacrifices.

I just think it's not right for people to sit here and say, yeah, there's 22 000 people who don't want the name. I can assure you there's more people that want the name Robert Sobukwe. I have been painted as the person that changed the name. In the very place yesterday, the people overwhelmingly voted for me, or the party I belong to, the PA. So, if they were so against the name change, why did they vote for the PA? I thank you.

Mr M M MAMPURU: Minister, as part of social cohesion, correcting the ills of apartheid and colonialism, it can only be fair that the country we live in reflects our democracy. Imagine, Minister, the children of the so-called Israel having to live in a city named after Adolf Hitler, or the people of DRC having to live in a city named after Leopold II.

Having said that, Minister, can you update us, as you've also indicated, give better clarity, especially on the people living in Tshwane, on the progress regarding the proposed renaming of

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the capital city from Pretoria to Tshwane, as recommended by the SA Geographical Names Council in 2005? What are the reasons for the delay in finalising this, finally having to allow the people of Tshwane having to go to a city named after King Tshwane, who once resided in that area? Thank you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: I did respond but I will respond again. In 2012, the matter was referred back to the City of Tshwane, which had been the original applicant, and they have not resubmitted it again, hon member. So, where I am sitting, it means such a serious issue, the City of Tshwane should come and say, we want the name Pretoria to change to Tshwane. They've not done that.

I'd referred it back because so many years have elapsed and I just think it's unfair. I said, let's restart the process. It was even before my time when it was said the process should be restarted and we are still awaiting them to come with the new evidence in so what they've done. They haven't ticked all the boxes. They have done the public consultation. They've met with all affected parties. They've not done that so far. We cannot because people just wish for names to be changed. There are processes, processes that should be respected, no matter who it

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favours or who it doesn’t favour. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you hon Minister. The last supplementary question on this particular question comes from hon Feni.

Ms T I LEGWASE: Chairperson, from my knowledge, the Table staff has been informed that I’ll be replacing hon Feni.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): No problem at all, hon Legwase. Please, continue.

Ms T I LEGWASE: Hon Minister, I would like to know whether the department has undertaken an assessment of cultural benefits of changes when it comes to historical names of places that remains a symbol of our divided past? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Hon Legwase, thank you for your question. Look, this is a constitutional obligation on us for names to be changed where people feel that better names will serve the country better or new names.

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So, this is not something that we must even investigate. We'll be investigating the Constitution if we do that. This is a constitutional imperative that it has to happen and it will happen.

Hon Legwase, I can assure you, Beyers Naudé, there was not a lot of people that was against the renaming and called it Beyers Naudé. The same was Nelson Mandela. We can't name everything to Mandela. There seems always to be an issue when it is names that people don't understand and that gives us an opportunity to know about this culture. I look at some of the names and I don't even understand them and I would research them and find out and after some time I quite understand why people want to change the names. We come from a very, very difficult past. We, as South Africans must understand that, you know, an example, this week we've Human Rights Day.

There are people that died on Sharpeville Day. They carry the scars, they've lost their parents, but now, for that name to no longer be called Sharpeville Day and now called Human Rights Day is a tremendous sacrifice that I think black people have to make on their part. I can share a story that, I always thought that when Nelson Mandela come out we will take white people's houses.

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And, when Nelson Mandela came out he said, let's work together and let's hold hands.

Many of us were angry with Nelson Mandela but he had the wisdom to understand that unity, social cohesion comes above everything else. Fools like myself, then, were like aah ... Mandela ... Can you say that now? Today, with the little bit of wisdom, we realised when Mandela assembled the springbok emblem. I was one of the people that said, it needs to change. Mandela also said, it shouldn't change. Today, the very same thing that divided us, is the most unifying thing in our country.

So, I want to make an appeal to everyone that it is not nice when you see that your mother tongue name has been changed. Nevertheless, yea, it is also nice for black people to hear that Sharpeville Day is now Human Rights Day, Dingaan's Day is now Reconciliation Day. That is the path that we chose as South Africans. We must stick to the path no matter how difficult it gets. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

Question 78:

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, hon House Chair, and thank you hon Mhlongo for the question. The

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department supports the development of sports in rural areas, primarily through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, MIG, where 5% of the national allocation is ring-fenced, specifically for sports infrastructure. This funding enables municipalities working with provinces to build, upgrade, and rehabilitate sports facilities in communities that would otherwise not have access to such infrastructure.

The focus is on expanding access, promoting participation, and ensuring that young people in rural areas have facilities that allow them to take part in organised sport and recreation.

Over the past three financial years, a total of 109 sports infrastructure projects has been supported across all nine provinces. Of these, 50 facilities have been completed and are currently functional, with a further 58 projects still under construction and only one cancelled.

In terms of upgrades and refurbishment, 42 facilities have been improved over the same period, with provinces such as the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal receiving significant attention in line with rural development priorities. It is important to note that implementation is undertaken by

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municipalities in line with MIG conditions and progress, and it can vary depending on local capacity and project readiness. However, the programme is steadily expanding the footprint of sports infrastructure in rural South Africa and contributing to increased participation, talent development, and social cohesion in underserved communities. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you very much, hon Minister. In line with the Rules of the National Council of Provinces, the first opportunity for a supplementary question falls to the person who posed that question. I therefore invite hon Mhlongo to pose that question.

Ms L P MHLONGO: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, hon Minister, for answering my question. Minister, beyond the infrastructure delivery, can the Minister indicate what measurable impacts these facilities have had on sports participation rates, school-level competitions, and talent development in rural communities, and how this is tracked?

If such impact assessments are not conducted, how does the department determine whether its investments are actually improving access and opportunities for rural youths?

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The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, Chair. Hon Mhlongo, we do not build these things only to create champions, we build these things to keep our kids off the streets. The streets have become very dangerous. In the communities where I grew up, children are being shot. We have got so many kids that we bury because they are caught in the crossfire between gangsters.

We say a kid in sport is a kid out of court. Sports comes with certain disciplines that you get taught, disciplines that you might use in business, or you might use in everyday life. I cannot point to any person that in the year and a half that I have been a Minister has become a champion because I have built a sports facility. I hope I will be able to do that in three or four years, but for now, I cannot do that. Nothing gives me joy than to drive past these facilities a month or two months after opening them and I see the lines along which children want to play. It really brings joy to my heart. It really tells me that this investment is worth every minute and every cent that was spent on it.

Ms D W FENIES: Thank you, Chairperson. From my side, I would like to know, regarding the facilities built in the rural

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provinces, why do you think so few facilities were constructed in the different rural provinces such as the Northern Cape?

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you so much, hon Chairperson, and thank you hon Fienies for the question. I think the Northern Cape is the wrong example you would have used. It is the only province in this country without a stadium that complies with CAF standards. Many events bypass the Northern Cape; for instance, the Great Rugby Tournament is coming. This is really because of the stadium, its capacity, and its type. Therefore, in the Northern Cape, we have decided to accelerate the development of sports infrastructure. That is why, as I said, this week we are opening two facilities, and this is only the beginning, not the end.

It is partly a legacy of apartheid, but I think we are 32 years into the new South Africa, and we cannot always blame apartheid, as we have had 32 years to address this. However, I have full faith in the GNU, as I have seen a real desire to turn the corner, and we have indeed started to do so. There is a determination to fix things, and while I am here, I will ensure that places like the Northern Cape are no longer the stepchild of South Africa. Thank you very much.

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Mr J H P BRITZ: Minister, regarding allegations of irregular procurement of nearly R7 million renovations to the Gelvandale swimming pool in Gqeberha in 2025, can you confirm today that there was no political interference with your department's decision to select the ELD Empire Trading Pty Limited for this project, notwithstanding allegations of closed ties to your political party?

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you, hon Chairperson. Hon Britz, firstly, my department is not the one that gave out the tender. The tender was given out by the Sports Trust. So, how could I have been involved if the department that I oversee, the money came from our department, it was given to the Sports Trust to select the best. And for you, you might say it is a waste of money or whatever. I can tell you that swimming pool was not operating. The children in Gelvandale are the very same kids that must face gangsters.

The day when MEC Ngongo of the Eastern Cape and I went to open the swimming pool, we found 3,000 children outside in the sun waiting for it to open. So, spending several million to fix a swimming pool is a reasonable amount. If you saw the desert-like conditions there, you would understand what that swimming pool

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has endured. However, if anyone knows of any wrongdoing, I must point out that when people apply for tenders, we do not ask which political party they belong to. That is not what the Constitution requires of us. There is a tender form. I have never applied for a tender, but there is a tender form, and I assume it does not ask for your political affiliation.

I can tell you that many of my friends who live in the Western Cape are staunch supporters of the DA. Some of my friends live in Johannesburg and are staunch supporters of the ANC. They follow these processes in both provinces, and they are never asked about their political affiliation. I do not think your political affiliation is relevant to your constitutional rights.

However, if you know of any wrongdoing, the Public Protector, the Hawks, and the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, are available. But let us not come to such an august House and make accusations without a shred of proof.

Ms M KENNEDY: Thank you, House Chair. Minister, given that many facilities delivered under the municipal infrastructure grant are often prone to falling into disrepair shortly after

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handover, what maintenance compliance monitoring do you perform on local municipalities?

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Thank you so much, hon House Chair. What we have done is the measures I have introduced that I have mentioned earlier to say that we are meeting with the different ministers. We sat down with the different mayors. We said you got the money. You look at the mayor Jackie in George. She did such a good job. The money we gave her she makes sure every cent goes to the stadium. I even said to her before she was removed, I even said, you know what, just tell us which another project you still want so that we can do that. So, I do not play politics – and she is from another party, but she has done such a good job. Sometimes we fail because it is people from our own parties, I am talking about myself, that we do not want to address that. We should change that attitude.

To answer your question, we have now written, or are about to write, to the Treasury. It was decided a few days ago that we will withhold the grants of non-performing municipalities. We are asking the Treasury if we may be permitted to withhold the grants of municipalities that have not fulfilled their obligations. We are also seeking approval to redirect some of

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the funds so that these municipalities can address issues and allocate money for maintenance. This is a longstanding problem that we are trying to resolve. For example, by installing these materials in schoolyards and consulting with principals, we are implementing a combined course that includes a 20-year maintenance freeze. This means that, for 20 years, no maintenance will be required. That is the type of material we are now using. Thank you very much.

Question 89:

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: Hon House Chair, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture has both plans and programmes in place to support the development and promotion of South African Sign Language, SASL, as the 12th official language of the Republic as recognised in terms of section 6 of the Constitution.

This work is led through the National Language Service and forms part of the department’s broader commitment to multilingualism, language equity and a full inclusion of all South Africans, including members of the deaf community.

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In terms of our plan, the department is focused on strengthening the development and use of South African Sign Language across society, this includes supporting the development of language resources and terminology, promoting its use in public communications and service delivery, and working in partnership with academic institutions and organisations representing the deaf community to enhance its status and practical use.

In terms of programmes, meaningful programmes have been already made. Two major projects were completed in 2025-26 financial year, including the development of a digital South African Sign Language dictionary with approximately 15 000 video entries, as well as a creation of a computer readable language depository to support ongoing technological innovation.

Building on this foundation, the department is currently supporting new multi-year initiatives focused on digital learning tools, translation technologies, and training systems, all in the expanding access to education, services, information through South African Sign Language.

The recognition of South African Sign Language as an official language is a constitutional commitment that must be realised in

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practice. The work we are undertaking is therefore directed at ensuring that this recognition translates into real access, real inclusion, and real dignity for deaf South Africans. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you very much for that reply, Minister. Just to alert members, the spotlight was shifted from the Minister on to the Chamber so that the sign language interpreter could be visible to all those watching the session or those we are talking about now.

Hon Masumpa, if you can ask your supplementary question, please.

Ms S MASUMPA: House Chair, indeed, the 2023 parliamentary constitutional amendment was the revolutionary decision to recognise sign language as an official language. This rule governs distinct language that has evolved from a marginalised communication system in residential schools to a key component of inclusive education with ongoing standardisation to ensure equity. How is the government going to go about creating comprehensive policies in areas like health care, education, and justice, and to overcome key challenges like need for more interpreters and ensuring uniform interpretation of the language across all nine provinces? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: I can assure you this is something I take very seriously. Two days ago in the Western Cape, I called an Indaba for languages where we got all the professors, we chose top language practitioners, and we called the professors and we then got a task team to look at how we can accelerate. We had people from the justice system and professors who came and spoke to us. We had health care because one doctor was telling us that the importance of language is when a patient is injured and they can't tell you ... the doctor and the patient don't speak the same mother tongue, and the patient cannot tell you what's really wrong with them in a foreign language.

We then immediately set up, within two days, a task team that will deal with issues even economically. While we were speaking about tender documents, I learned that tender documents only come out in English and in Afrikaans. Now that is economic exclusion and marginalisation of people that speaks languages outside those two languages. That's why sometimes when people are told to bringing a certified copy of ID, they just see ID and bring their ID instead of a certified copy, because it's not in their language.

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I can assure hon Masumpa that it is something we take very seriously. Hence, we've got a task team now that will guide the Minister. Thank you.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Hon House Chair, the National Language Unit for South African Sign Language falls under the Pan-South African Language Board, PanSALB. In spite of the adoption of South African Sign Language as an official language in 2023, no increase in budget was made available for the Pan-South African Language Board in that year or subsequently. If you will forgive the pun, is the acknowledgment of South African Sign Language just lip service? Or will you commit to real funding increases in the future budget?

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: House Chair, the issue of no budget increases should not speak to disrespect or unwillingness to promote a certain language or a certain task in government. Sometimes we are victims ourselves of budget decreases, budget cuts, the fiscus, or we are not in a very strong position at that particular time in South Africa. So, when somebody has not received more money, it should never be viewed as the programme is less important or is not being taken seriously.

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I think you must be very hard of heart if you do not understand that we still have a long way to go when it comes to sign language. Sign language is top of the agenda, as it should be. I've learned so much during the Indaba, where one of the speakers was telling me during lunches that when there were floods in Limpopo and people were told to evacuate, she didn't know what to do because nobody told her in sign language that it's time to evacuate. At the airports, we have work to do at our airports where we take it for granted for the deaf and the blind that they'll know if the flight has been postponed or the flight is late or there's been delayed. I can assure you these are things that are very close to my heart, and I will personally look at PanSALB.

What you should know regarding PanSALB is that I had a six-month fight – it was my first fight when I became Minister - where I fought for the fact that there was not one white person on the PanSALB board. I said, that's not the South Africa that we want to build. That's not the country I want to be part of. All languages and all races should be represented on the board. I can tell you that I will look at the budget and there is more money, I will make sure they get more money. Thank you so much.

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Mr K CEZA: Given the massive shortage of accredited South African Sign Language interpreters, What programmes have you put in place to provide bursaries for hearing and deaf youth to qualify as professional interpreters so as to meet your constitutional mandate? And what measures have you put in place to ensure that the South African Sign Language receives the same level of institutional support and funding as English and Afrikaans rather than being treated as a token addition to the Constitution? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: The issue that we have, as I said, we had an Indaba and a task team. The task team will now advise the Minister. What I have done in the meantime ... there are a lot of bursaries in the department, and upon my appointment, I asked them to show me the successes of these bursaries that we have been giving out. Who has graduated, what are they today. I have asked the DG to say the ones without success stories, let us keep that money and we'll channel it into a worthy cause. That worthy cause will be exactly what, hon Ceza, you just said. As I said, it's on the agenda.

You question has a very good advice in it that we should prepare for the revolution that is coming when it comes to sign

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language. The interpreters, I call it a revolution because the stories we heard were horror stories from them. So, I will use part of your question as advice so that I can implement some of what you have asked me. Thank you so much.

Ms T BREEDT: House chair, to the hon Minister, there is a lot of talking involved, a lot of Indabas, a lot of talk shops, a task team to advise, a task team to do this. It's really quite frustrating because the fact of the matter is that we need practical accessibility to sign language. It cannot continue being the stepchild of the 12 official languages. So, I want to know from you, hon Minister, what measurable targets and timeframes exist to address sign language and to make it an actual worthy language in South Africa that gets acknowledgment? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: House Chair, to the hon Breedt, I know what I know, and I know what I don't know. If you know what you know and know what you don't know, you can save this government a lot of money. Instead of coming two years down the line and realising, I didn't know what I was doing. I go to professionals like the professors and ask them, in the shortest space of time, advise me on how I can go from A to Z, instead of

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guessing along the way. Most of our problems come from people that thought they knew or didn't know they didn't know.

Government is serious about ... I mean the President will speak and there will be sign language interpreters, but we are so far from ... and my job is to accelerate that. I heard you say lots of action, if you know me, this would probably be my first task team that I put together to advise me on a certain matter. I am an action man. Next time I appear in this House again, there will be tangible results and answers regarding that matter. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): thank you very much, Minister.

Hon delegates, I would like to thank the Minister McKenzie. I would like to thank the MECs, all special delegates that have joined us online, all permanent delegates, Salga representatives for availing yourselves for this meeting.

Hon delegates, that concludes the business of the day, and the House is therefore adjourned. Thank you very much.

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The Council adjourned at 17:57.

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