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*PROCEEDINGS OF MINI-PLENARY SESSION - GOOD HOPE CHAMBER*

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Members of the mini-plenary session met at Good Hope Chamber at 14:00.

The House Chairperson, Ms Z Majozi, took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Debate on Vote No 13 - Public Works and Infrastructure:

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: House Chairperson, hon members, the Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Sihle Zikalala, the Director-General of the department, Mr Sifiso Mdakane, colleagues, fellow South Africans. Also want to recognise a special guest of mine here today, Mr Neil de Beer, who, as you know, was the former

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security advisor to the late President, Nelson Mandela, and there I said, a real Umkhonto WeSizwe, MK, operative.

Today, I table Budget Vote 13 for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

We are determined to ensure that public assets are used for public good and in the service of economic growth, job creation and dignity. And this budget is all about ending a cycle of neglect and slow progress that has bedevilled the department.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has been allocated R7,6 billion for the next financial year, which grows to R7,9 billion in the 2026-27 financial year and R8,3 billion in the 2026-27 financial year, with a total expenditure over the medium term of R23,8 billion.

Of the current year's budget, R6,3 billion or 83% goes towards transfers and subsidies, including funding for our public entities and conditional grants to provinces and municipalities, particularly for the Expanded Public Works

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Programme, EPWP. The remaining R1,3 billion or 17% supports the department's operations.

In a constrained fiscal environment, every cent must be directed towards building a capable, ethical and accountable state that can deliver infrastructure, manage its assets efficiently and create real opportunities for South Africans.

This year's budget is focused on five key priorities: firstly, fighting corruption and strengthening governance; secondly, accelerating infrastructure delivery; thirdly, restructuring our asset management systems; fourthly, reforming the Expanded Public Works Programme; and fifthly, driving digitisation across the department.

Our task is to ensure every rand drives delivery and protects public value and strengthens governance.

Over the past year we've taken action to confront corruption and maladministration in our department. We've launched 400 high-risk official lifestyle audits, and we are finalising investigations into ghost employees who were irregularly paid

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by the department. Where wrongdoing is confirmed, action will be taken swiftly.

We appointed a permanent director-general for governance, risk and compliance. And this office will lead the department's internal reform agenda, ensuring governance lapses are identified early, procurement is monitored rigorously and fraud is reported and acted on.

Through the Construction Industry Development Board, 40 underperforming contractors now face delisting, with 15 already deregistered in June alone. In the past, since 2002, only one was delisted.

In this environment, I will be introducing a revised Council for the Built Environment Bill to strengthen governance, clarify regulatory powers and ensure greater accountability across the built environment sector.

We've also made clear that our public entities must be centres of excellence. The Independent Development Trust, IDT, long plagued by instability, now has a new board appointed, which

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will take up its full mandate in the coming days. This marks the beginning of a new chapter for this beleaguered entity.

We've also taken steps to address the threat of construction site disruptions by the so-called construction mafia, which has held back critical infrastructure projects, delayed delivery and intimidated contractors. We are tackling this threat head-on.

In just the first six months, we've had confirmation of an 80% reduction in work stoppages due to our actions.

We've fast-tracked the Integrated Social Facilitation Framework, now gazetted and heading to Cabinet, which embeds social facilitation in all project planning. And we believe early community engagement will reduce criminal interference and improve project outcomes.

We know that South Africa can't grow unless we scale up our infrastructure across the country. The department, through Infrastructure SA, ISA, has launched its second edition of the Construction Book, listing 250 pipeline projects worth

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R268 billion. This is a 100% increase on the year before, and a truly remarkable achievement in just a year.

These projects are fully scoped, prepared and ready to attract investment. And since its May launch, the book has already drawn overwhelming investor interest, which is a strong signal of market confidence in the work that we are doing.

The launch of the Project Preparation Facility, which was another first for us, received over 90 submissions for the R180 million in available funding that we brought to the book, further showing the serious demand and interest in the work that we are doing.

We're engaging international partners like Meridiam to scale up infrastructure investment and project planning.

We must now respond with delivery, with the Top 7 priority projects announced during Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium SA, SIDSSA, 2025 Conference.

Formalising Infrastructure SA as the single-entry point for infrastructure has been long become overdue now. I will soon

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be meeting with the Minister of Finance and the Minister in the Presidency to finalise this process. And concurrently, we are working to finalise the Infrastructure Development Amendment Act, which will aid us in this objective.

This Bill gives legal power to Infrastructure SA, enabling ISA to lead project planning and execution, hold entities accountable and ensure that every project is delivered on time and on budget.

I look forward to introducing this key piece of legislation as soon as possible, which will change the entire approach South Africa has previously taken to infrastructure delivery.

In another first, we've launched the Adopt-a-Municipality Programme to assist local municipalities with infrastructure delivery. And, we are forming a partnership with AgriSA and AgriBiz, together with Infrastructure SA, which seeks to guarantee food security for South Africa.

In the year ahead, Infrastructure SA will play a greater role in project packaging, preparation and execution.

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The Department manage over 88 000 buildings and 5 million hectares of land, and in essence, South Africa's largest property portfolio. The management of these assets falls within our Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE.

But for decades, this portfolio has underperformed and been underutilised. And we are going to be changing that.

We're overhauling the 20-year-old Government Immovable Asset Management Act to enable modern, flexible asset use and pilot innovation. With these amendments, we are able to make our assets to become revenue-generating, create investment opportunities for both domestic and foreign investors, as well as providing jobs and economic growth.

We are restructuring the PMTE to ensure that the asset base of the state is managed with professionalism, discipline and a return on investment mindset. In this regard, we want to develop a high-value asset portfolio which is investable and which generates returns for the state. This will be a difficult process, but, ladies and gentlemen, hon members, it is absolutely essential.

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We have already begun identifying government leases that can be migrated from private properties to state buildings. We cannot and we should not be paying R6 billion a year in leases when we have empty government buildings. And this can be better spent on upgrading our inventory.

We are also using public land to drive economic and social development. We've released properties for use as shelters in the fight against gender-based violence, GBV, and substance abuse. In the last year, we've released 17 such properties in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape, including two in Malmesbury this morning, with more to follow in the next few months.

We are also building partnerships to unlock large-scale infrastructure initiatives.

This week, I met the Minister of Human Settlements to finalise collaboration around Operation Vulindlela 2: Priority Housing and Land Release projects to ensure that we use idle land to expand opportunities for social housing, something that has not meaningfully taken place to date.

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In KwaZulu-Natal we are working with the SA Police Service, SAPS, to establish a state-of-the-art forensic laboratory. And this lab will accelerate DNA testing and support justice for victims.

And in Johannesburg we are partnering with the non-governmental organizations, NGOs, with an organisation called Jozi My Jozi, where at the end of this month we'll be signing a memorandum of understanding, MOU, for them to maintain and repair the Johannesburg High Court at no cost to the state. Fully privately funded, the project will restore one of South Africa's busiest courts to full function.

A central element of our asset modernisation programme is the creation of the Strategic and Special Delivery Unit, SSDU. Based in the office of the director-general, the SSDU is tasked with unlocking public value from underutilised assets where the department has been unable to implement the necessary change, or where projects have been stalled for a few years.

Its first focus is to overhaul leasing and to unlock revenue, investment and job creation. Specialists will come to assist

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to ensure all leases are value for money, corruption and collusion-free, and that we are able to track our leases in real time.

A second focus is the revitalisation of small harbours. In the Western Cape, this work has started with the advertising of the project manager, to begin, and imagine ... the renovation of the Hout Bay Harbour, which, conservatively, will bring in billions of rands of investment and will become the next version of the V&A Waterfront.

We are visiting small craft harbours across the country and we are expanding this project in the short and medium term. Our objective is clear, to turn these neglected sites into functional, vibrant economic hubs that support tourism, enterprise and create jobs.

Over the past year, we have undertaken a deep review of the EPWP. And to be frank, the findings have been stark. We have found troubling reports of gatekeeping, irregular recruitment and even exploitation.

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With a budget of R2,2 billion, down 7,7% from last year, the programme is being redesigned around transparency, skills development and opportunity to ensure sustainability.

In partnership with Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, we are developing a new model that links EPWP participants to pathways for permanent work or entrepreneurship. However, we are in advanced stages of pilot this in two provinces, in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.

Participants must leave the programme with a trade, a certificate or a meaningful next step, not just a short-term stipend. And for the first time, EPWP participants will be able to create digital curriculum vitae, CVs, and link directly to job opportunities.

Within EPWP, R76,5 million has been budgeted to train over 23 000 participants, but we are also allocating funding for bursaries and graduate programmes in the built environment, including 3 000 internships and placements to begin strengthening the future pipeline of professions for our department and the built environment.

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Previously, bursaries were awarded without work commitments, costing millions with no return. Today, anyone obtaining a bursary from the department will be required to work in the department or the private sector for a minimum of two years. This will retain skills in South Africa and build internal capacity.

None of this will be possible, however, hon members, without a radical shift in how we use technology. We are investing in a fully digital, Geographic Information System, GIS-enabled asset register that will give us real-time information on every property, its location, condition, occupational status and cost to maintain.

When I took office, submissions were printed and couriered between offices and head offices. This meant that critical decisions could take up to five months before being actioned.

Last month, we approved a digital sign-off application, App, developed in-house, in our own office, at no external cost, that allows instant authorisations by myself, the director-general and staff members. This is testament that we have excellence in this department, we just need to nurture it.

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This will be the end of chaos ... the chaos of paper-based files and lost records, and this is the power of what digitisation does.

We're investing in building information modelling, predictive analytics and digital tools. These tools help prevent breakdowns, plan upgrades and forecast future maintenance needs.

Our goal is to turn Public Works into a smart delivery department, driven by data, informed by evidence and accountable in real-time.

However, there remains a serious challenge in us achieving our goals, and that is the non-payment by client departments.

As of 31 March 2025, the Department had invoiced R20 billion, and only R16,5 billion has been paid. R4,3 billion remains outstanding, alongside R10 billion in historic debt. This undermines our ability to pay service providers, maintain infrastructure and roll out new projects. This cannot continue any longer.

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In May last year, South Africa decided it needed change. We are delivering on our job-creating, growth-focused mandate. We are not here to preserve the status quo. We've tackled hard reforms and will continue cleaning house while delivering at the same time. But we are also now shifting to implementation. And we are now focused, religiously, on delivery. If this is in one year, imagine the next four could be like. The best is still to come. Thank you so much.

Mr M DLELANGA: House Chairperson, Minister Macpherson, Deputy Minister Zikalala, Director General, DG and the team, hon members, greetings. Let me on behalf of the ANC, first and foremost, confirm our support for this budget vote. We support this vote because we feel that it is the vital component to address challenges facing our people through the programs under the Department of Public Health and Infrastructure.

For us, to properly implement our budgetal obligations, we need to have a proper restorative framework for contraction and infrastructure development. Which lay a foundation for delivery of services for our people. In order to ensure safety, quality, sustainability while ... [Inaudible.] ... fostering economic growth and social fairness. A suitable

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regulatory framework is essential for South African infrastructure development and construction.

By establishing guidelines and ensuring adherence and encouraging openness and accountability among the sectors, it offers for responsible growth. A mix of national laws, policy directives and government agencies make up South Africa's regulatory framework for building and achieving targets of infrastructure development initiatives.

The Constitution, the Infrastructure Development Act, the Construction Industry Development Board Act and other laws pertaining to infrastructure development, acquisition and change in the industry are important components. In order to execute and monitor these regulations public organizations such as National Treasurer, the Construction Industry Development Board, CIDB, the Department of Public Works are also essential.

As we reaffirm our support for the budget, let me start with Agrément South Africa, which one of its duties; is to assess the suitability of nonstandardize system or goods used in the building sector, for which there is no national standard.

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The organization will concentrate on putting programs in place that will encourage social cohesiveness and safer communities in the medium run. It intends to accomplish this in the medium-term by issuing 45 ecolabelling schemes, certifying 45 products and systems through partnership with different organizations. Conducting quarterly, yearly quality and compliance inspections for certificates in use. And conducting yearly market usage analysis to complement the ...

[Inaudible.] ... and the use of the certified products and systems. Forty-five million, and 11,4 million respectively are allocated over the medium-term budget period to the Regulatory and Certification Services Program. And the proactive and the Pertinent Built Environment Interventions Program in order to meet those goals.

These allocations together make an estimated 48,6% of the entities overall budget from 35,9 million in 2024 to 42 million to 2027-28. And this total expenditures are anticipated to rise at an average annual rate of 5,4%.

During the medium-term period, staff remuneration is predicted to be account for the amount of 82 million of the entities budget.

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Let move to CIDB. This entity is also very important. It is required to oversee the transformation of the construction sector by promoting and facilitating the participation of historically underrepresented groups to establish and to promote best practices among the public and the private sector roles in the construction deliver the process. And providing strategic leadership to stakeholders in the industry, to stimulate growth.

The Best Project Assessment Plan, which aim to grow small and emerging ... [Inaudible.] ... in the industry and to increase capacity, is implemented by this board. Over the coming years, this program is anticipated to bring in an estimated 240 million and this board will carry out its developing strategies, including offering development finance with the use of these monies.

Let we move faster to the Council for the Built Environment, which is also a critical organization, which encourages and defends the public's interest in matters pertaining to build environment. It encourages and preserves a sustainable built and natural environment, while encouraging the continuous development of human resource in the built environment.

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It further promotes and encourages the prudent management of the built environment professions and make it easier for professionals in the built environment to participate in integrated development within the framework of national objectives. As a result, the Council intends to keep concentrating on facilitating and managing the built environment skills pipeline in the medium-term environment.

The Professional Skills and Capacity Development Program, which shares the medium-term budget of 2,9 million is anticipated to carry out these objectives. The Council intends to oversee the execution of the built environment structures.

Let me move to the Independent Development Trust, IDT. This is another important entity. And we need to look into this IDT. The IDT is a state development organization that carries out the projects. That are commissioned by the state and local governments. These projects are social infrastructure programs as the foundation for reaching communities and creating assets on those areas. The ITD's medium-term goal is to empower the underprivileged communities by offering project management services for the construction and renovation of social

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infrastructure, mostly in rural areas, including schools, clinics and community centres.

By doing this, it anticipates creating 43,000 jobs opportunities annually, over the course of the next years, primarily through the expanded Public Works Program. An additional 8637 jobs opportunities through the other program portfolios.

And the program management which has the medium-term budget of 681,6 million, will carry out all these tasks. From the 529 million in 2024-25, 655 million to 28. Expenditure is expected to rise at an average annual rate of 7,4%.

Employees compensation is projected to account for 935 million of the total spending during this time frame. The majority of the IDT's income, which is 2 billion over the medium-term, comes from the management fees pays to the clients of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Development, as well as other clients departments. It is anticipated that the revenue will rise from 520 million in 2024 to 731 million in 2027, at an average annual rate of 12,1%.

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Having said so, having confirmed our commitment and our support for this report, we say people need job. We say projects that are delayed must be opened and must be implemented as per the time frames. We say Public Works must manage properly. Thank you so much. We support the report.

Mr N I NXUMALO: Hon Chair, hon members, MK Party thanks before this House not to decorate failure ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majosi): Sorry, hon Nxumalo. Hon members, from the right site, the noise you are making ... Can get no assistance, please. Please, keep it down so that we listen to other members on the podium as well. Continue hon Nxumalo.

Mr N I NXUMALO: Mk Party stand before this House not to decorate failure with polite language but to categorically reject Budget Vote 13 of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

Let us not sugarcoat the truth. This is not a pro-poor budget. It is the protection budget for the politically connected. It shields failing institutions such as the Independent

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Development Trust, IDT, and the Council for the Built Environment, CBE, just to name the few. Currently, CBE has got a vacancy rate of 30,7% and it has got 20% vacant positions. This is another way of showing that this department is not going into the right direction. And also, there is IDT that the Minister has not mentioned this fact that currently there is a fluctuating vacancy rate of 10 to 40% in IDT and there is also no plan from the side of the Minister as to how is he going to ensure that IDT does not heavily depend on the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. We are told infrastructure is the heart of economic recovery. But what does this budget do?

Real investment in capital infrastructure has declined. The Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE, which is the very engine of Public Asset Management has seen a cut of R124 million and the digitization programme which has already swept on already over R100 millions of public funds remain an empty promise. Where is the immovable asset register, Minister?

The Minister has just spoken about 88 000 properties under this department. But the truth of the matter is that even the

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Minister himself is not sure as to how many properties this department has. Again, the Minister is talking about the R6 billion which is being spend on private leases, but he is not coming up with the plan as to how is he going to stop that from happening over and over again.

Now let's come to the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, which this department parade as a job creation success. Let me tell you. This one is also in crisis. The budget for the EPWP has dropped in real terms. The department speaks of creating one million work opportunities per year but what it doesn't is that these are temporary. The people who are working there are poorly paid. Again, the Minister has not come out clearly and to tell this House and the rest of South Africans that look, the people who are working under EPWP are getting paid far less than what the Department of Labour has to pay. They are being paid something that is less than the living wage. Thank you. Yes, and are without upward mobility. The use is being recycled through poverty not lifted out of it and shockingly, while millions of South Africans are without shelter, clean water or toilet, the Minister has not said anything that the prestige portfolio receives R71 million to maintain VIP residences and elite comfort. That is another problem with the

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GNU. We are paying a lot of money to make sure that the GNU is well taken care of.

This is a speech in the face of the poor. The R7,2 billion allocated to the programme that aims to create 5 million work opportunities targeting women and children, is not backed by any tangible implementation strategies and yet is another empty promise by the ideologically incoherent GNU.

Hon members, let us speak plainly. This budget fails to align with the Expropriation Act of 2024, still clinging to the Repeal Act of 1975. It protects the property of the elite while ignoring land hunger of the majority. It starves transformation programmes while pandering entities that are not financially viable, like the ones I've mentioned earlier.

The Property Management Trading Entity is collapsing under its own debt and has failed to attract engineers, lawyers and skill staff. Again, the Minister has failed once more to tell this House as to how is he planning to make sure that this entity in particular is able to recover the monies that are owed to it. It can't even collect money owed to it by the government department. And yet the department offers no real

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solutions, only meaningless jargon like oversight and coordination. Why is R54,1 billion worth of funding allocated to this entity if there is no clear evidence of its contribution to efficient and cost-effective service delivery to our people? The IDT meant to bring dignity to infrastructure is limping from one audit to the next. I talked about that one earlier. Its work opportunities are declining, its finances are unsustainable, but still we are asked to rubberstamp this mess.

Hon Chair, the MKP represents the voiceless, landless and the working poor. We do not support a budget that prioritizes bureaucracy over building chooses prestige over its people and promotes empty targets over tangible changes. We demand an end to wasteful prestige until service infrastructure is stabilised, full alignments of departmental policy and reporting, with the 2024 Expropriation Act, a targeted allocation to rural cooperative black contractors and communities owned project an urgent recovery of every cent misused of failed digitisation scheme. This is not a revolutionary budget, it's a recycled elite consensus and we reject it without apology.

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Transformation of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure alongside its entities remains to be seen. We reiterate that the people of this country did not vote for more promises. They voted for delivery. The MK Party will not endorse a budget that protects comfort for the few and crisis for many. I thank you.

Mr E J MARAIS: Chairperson, the mandate of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure was reconfigured in 2019 when the President of South Africa announced that it will assume the responsibility of coordinating all public infrastructure development in the country. The department performs the infrastructure mandate together with infrastructure South Africa. The goal of the National Infrastructure Plan 2025 is to create the foundation for achieving the National Development Plan 2030 Vision of inclusive growth. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure must implement a sector wide infrastructure plan and focus on the impact of the sector towards economic growth, job creation, work opportunities and infrastructure delivery.

The Medium-Term Development Plan 2024 to 2029 outlines the following priorities relevant to the Department of Public

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Works and Infrastructure: Priority number 1 is inclusive growth and job creation. Priority number 2 is reducing poverty and tackle high cost of living and priority number 3 are capable, ethical and developmental state. Minister, Dean McPherson, has served with distinction since his appointment in June 2024. During this period, he has demonstrated exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment towards South Africa's economic growth and job creation through strategic infrastructure development. He has also prioritized transparency fostered meaningful public private partnerships and championed ethical governance.

Under Minister McPherson stewardship, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has embraced a renewed focus on turning South Africa in the construction site through the visionary #let's build South Africa initiative. Its dedication to creating and enabling environment for economic growth is evident in its proactive engagement with investors regarding policy, certainly culminating in successful hosting of the Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium South Africa, 2025 a platform that has strengthened investor confidence and position South Africa as a destination for infrastructure investment. The 2025 state of the nation address remains

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focused on job creation, the implementation of a large-scale infrastructure projects and maintenance. It highlights the aim of ensuring the public ownership of strategic ownership for public benefit. It is further focused on great efforts to move the country towards being free of corruption. The department received a budget allocation of R7,62 billion for 2025-26 which to accomplish these priorities. This represents an increase of "point 14 in nominal terms and a decrease of point 14 in real terms calculating the impact of inflation from the 2024 to 2025 adjustment appropriation of R7,61 billion.

The department's budget represents approximately point 1% of the national appropriation by vote, excluding direct charges. It is important to note the integration of the function of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission transferred from the Minister of Economic Development to the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure. This functioning came into effect in April 2020. The aim is to improve their mandate to grow the economy through inclusive integrated planning and investment.

The 2025 Budget Review outlines the government's aim of prioritizing infrastructure provision as follows: Plans to

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invest more than R1,3 trillion in public infrastructure over the next three years. Planned spend of R18,1 billion on the Southcorp government precinct, a mixed-use development that includes the construction of facilities for four national government departments in Pretoria's inner city, R7,1 billion allocation towards the implementation of the small harbour development project in four provinces.

Chairperson, the Expanded Public Works Programme is undergoing the 5th iteration, focusing on sustainable job creation skills and development. The programme operates across social and environmental sectors, aiming to create over R1 million work opportunities annually. It is funded with R7,2 billion allocated over the three years, including R6 billion for transfers to public bodies and R683 million for administrative cost. The programme also emphasizes training and capacity building to ensure participants transition into long-term employment of entrepreneurship. To the nation and control must be, however, be strengthened and supervision on a local level fell short of effectiveness.

The department aligned infrastructure projects with social economic priorities to create employment as a key factor to

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promote inclusive growth. It plans to mobilize R350 billion over the next five years for public sector infrastructure projects, including urban regeneration, transport, networks and energy solutions.

We support all the initiatives of initiative to stimulate economic growth and job creation to change South African landscape to a construction site in this 7th Parliament and as part of the GNU. The DA support this Budget Vote. Thank you.

Ms M S LETLAPE: The EFF rejects the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Budget Vote. This Budget is hollowed, directionless, uninspiring and provides no departure from the lethargic manner in which the department has approached its mandate over the past 30 years. This department is entrusted to be the custodian of our nation's immovable assets worth trillions of rands with the co-ordination of infrastructure development and the transformation of the built environment, yet, year after year what we see is a department wired with dysfunction underspending and policy stagnation.

The priorities are stagnant and each year is a rehashing of previous commitments with no one ever taking accountability

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for implementation. The digitisation of the immovable asset register, improved asset management and clean audits all of these are permanent features of this department's annual plans and yet nothing ever gets done. The so-called State Asset Information Management System has already costed taxpayers R100 million and yet it is still incomplete.

The Property Management and Trading Entity, PMTE, which is responsible for managing and maintaining state buildings faces a whopping R124 million budget cuts compared to last year. This cut undermines their ability to reduce the massive reliance on private leases and addressing the maintenance backlog in public buildings. This is while the administration programme budget grows by R45 million, a typical proof that bureaucracy is chosen and prioritised over service delivery.

There is no credible model to ensure that the entities of the department survive without permanent subsidies. AgrimaSA is wholly dependent on the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, DPWI, funding and has no concrete revenue plan. The Independent Development Trust, IDT, meant to be self-sustaining is in chronic financial distress and effectively functions as a bailout-dependent entity. To make

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things worse, the DA is now attempting to infiltrate the IDT in a similar way the ANC infiltrates state entities for corrupt ends.

The Construction Industry Development Board faces credible allegations that contractor grading is being sold and manipulated, yet, the department has absolutely no plan to hold anyone accountable. Eighty-two percent of the department's budget goes to transfers and subsidies and most of it going to agencies and entities that do not deliver measurable impacts. Less than 0,2% is spent on capital assets with no meaningful investment in new infrastructure.

The Infrastructure South Africa is spread across the presidency, National Treasury and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure with no clear governance, creating confusion and oversight vacuum over billions. This overlapping and duplication is a playground for corruption and inefficiency. Over R71 million is still allocated to maintaining prestige residences and events while schools and clinics decay. This is a clear demonstration of elitism and misplaced priorities. The so-called infrastructure investment

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plan has now become a public relations exercise rather than a genuine stimulus.

House Chair, to rescue this sinking ship of the DA and ANC stokvel at the cost of our people, the EFF recommends the following: That the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, be transformed into a permanent public sector employment programme offering decent wages, skills development and career progression. Also, to highlight the fact that the EPWP is now used by political parties particularly the DA and the ANC to curb and to corner our people in a poverty trap and ensuring that they run and they work for the elections campaign instead of giving them employment.

That the department immediately audits all leased properties and prioritise refurbishing and occupying state-owned buildings to cut costs and create decent jobs in refurbishment. The department is stretched out in its internal capacity to maintain infrastructure, especially schools, hospitals and government buildings which are collapsing across the country. That there must be consequence management to be enforced decisively with officials for irregular and fruitless expenditure to be dismissed and prosecuted.

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House Chair, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has the potential to be a backbone of radical economic transformation to build bridges, roads, clinics and with dignity. However, under the current leadership and with these flawed plans, no coherent strategy to expropriate land for public benefit and reliance on private landlords, fix decaying infrastructure, create permanent jobs or transforming the built environment meaningfully.

The EFF rejects this Budget Vote and the annual performance plans. We refuse to endorse the continued betrayal of our people's aspirations for infrastructure that works, jobs that are secured and the government that serves. Thank you.

Mr S L NGCOBO: Hon Chairperson, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure plays a crucial role in the development of South Africa. It shoulders the responsibility, a great responsibility which is to provide and maintain buildings and related infrastructure for the public sector in a cost-effective way among other things, while simultaneously attempting to provide these services in a manner that is beneficial to the development of the previously disadvantaged.

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This is what it does, Chairperson, and this is what it must be dreaming about every day.

The increase in the devastating floods in South Africa have demonstrated the great need to continuously invest in the infrastructure and maintenance. The IFP welcomed the Minister's plan to transform the country in the construction site. However, this was derailed by the need to address the threat posed by the construction mafia. Furthermore, this issue persists and as a result we are no longer closer to turning the country into a construction site. Moreover, on Sunday, it was reported that the Mpumalanga government intends to rescue public infrastructure projects worth over R4 billion that have been derailed by criminal interference and long-standing delays.

The failure to address this issue decisively has serious implications for the department's role in the medium-term plan particularly in supporting the economic growth through infrastructure investment and promoting social equity by creating job opportunities. Turning to the department's budget and annual performance, the IFP wishes to reiterate its concern over the slow progress in empowering the department to

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collect fees related to leasing, maintenance and other costs owed by the client department.

Accordingly, firstly, the IFP supports the resolution of the portfolio committee that the department must engage the National Treasury to resolve the persistent payment issues with client departments. Secondly, the IFP furthermore strongly supports the portfolio committee's recommendation that the department expedite progress in digitising procurement processes and managing state assets. However, we note the concern on the absence of additional funding for the digitisation project despite its critical importance and the urgent need for implementation.

The State Asset Information Management System and the broader digitisation strategy are essential to modernising asset management and enhancement transparency. The budget reduction raises significant concerns particularly regarding employee compensation. The cuts poses a direct threat to the department's ability to attract and retain qualified and experienced proper key professionals. It is deeply troubling that these skilled graduates whose expertise is in high demand

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are not being properly utilised given South Africa's staggering unemployment rate.

This situation is unacceptable. Furthermore, without adequate funding the recruitment and retention of these professionals will be compromised, further delaying the department and its entities in fulfilling their mandates. It is also concerning that the department has not presented a clear plan to address this pressing challenge.

In conclusion, the rebuilding of infrastructure and the implementation of structural reforms are critical not only to the Medium-Term Development Plan, MTDP, but also to the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. The IFP remains resolute in its commitment to closely monitoring the department's progress in fulfilling its mandate to the people of South Africa. The IFP supports the Budget Vote. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Thank you, hon member. I will now recognise hon Hendricks. Hon members, it is hon Hendricks' maiden speech. So, if we can just be more welcoming. Thank you.

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Mr E HENDRICKS: Hon Chairperson, hon members and my fellow South African patriots. On behalf of the PA, I rise today in support of Vote 13 - Public Works and Infrastructure for the 2025-26 financial year, not merely as a budget line item, but as a strategic investment in the dignity, safety, economic resilience of our people. We often speak of infrastructure as the backbone of development. But what good is a backbone if it is brittle, neglected, prone to collapse? Maintenance is not a technical afterthought; it is a moral imperative.

This budget rightly allocates R38 million for repairs and maintenance across the Eastern Cape alone. This includes renovations of the of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, DPWI houses and office accommodation. Maintenance of critical plants, infrastructure lifts, generators and transformers. Deployment of 264 artisans across districts to perform routine, preventive and corrective maintenance. These are not cosmetic upgrades, they are the difference between a functioning clinic and a condemned building. Between a school that inspire, learning, and one that endangers lives.

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We must confront the fiscal truth; deferred maintenance is a depth. Every pothole left unpatched, every leaking roof ignored ... [Inaudible] ... into litigation, emergency repairs and stored service delivery. The department has already faced costly legal judgments due to infrastructure failures. We cannot afford to repeat the cycle. This budget does more than fix buildings, it employs people. The Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP received R7,2 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF period, with maintenance forming a key component of labour-intensive delivery.

Artisans, technicians and young graduates are being trained and deployed. Not just to build, but to sustain. Let us be clear, maintenance is not a cost centre. It is a job programme, a skills pipeline and a community stabiliser. The department's rollout of a Culture Change programme centred on shared values and citizen centric services is a welcome shift, Deputy Minister.

Hon members supporting this budget is not for bricks and mortar, it is a Vote for accountability, efficiency and human dignity. Let us not build momentum to neglect. Let us build a

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legacy of care. I urge this House to support Vote 13. Not just for what it builds, but for what it preserves.

*Afrikaans:*

Ons baiza nie!

*English:*

We support.

Mr W W WESSELS: Hon House Chairperson, the reality is that inefficiency and criminality is deeply rooted in the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, that is the reality. There's also a very big conundrum or a paradox when one looks at public infrastructure. On the one hand, public infrastructure is the backbone of economic development. On the other hand, and at the same time, infrastructure and procuring contractors and contracting for infrastructure and maintenance can also be the biggest problem when it comes to corruption and losing money.

Hon House Chairperson, what fascinates me is that when one looks in general at how it works in any economy, if you are a bulk consumer or a bulk buyer, or you contract services in

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bulk from a certain contractor, then you usually get discount. You pay less. But in government terms, it works differently, almost opposite. Because Chairperson, when one acknowledges the fact that corruption is deeply rooted, the only way Minister through you Chairperson that one can actually rid this department and this whole sector of corruption is to relook at how we identify the indicators of corruption. If we just look and look at the normal, then we won't find the actual corruption.

The problem in public infrastructure procurement is that government is paying much more than it should. Let's look at something that's under our noses Chairperson, and that's the dome just here, behind us. That dome is costing a nauseating amount of money for a temporary structure. Something that Parliament, if the deadlines of the new building or the refurbishment of the National Assembly will be kept and if it will be delivered on, will only be used for less than eight months. We're paying more than almost R60 million for that dome, with, for instance, transport costs that were nearly R1 million. That's inflated costs that that's being paid to contractors.

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Hon House Chairperson, if that is not addressed and it's not limited to public works and infrastructure, it's throughout government. Whilst we have this fiscal crisis, we don't have enough money. Departments don't have enough money, including this department, to actually maintain and do and fulfil its mandate. More must be done with less. If you want to do more with less, then you have to go and look to pay market-related prices.

If you build a building in the private sector, then you will pay X-amount. If government does this, you pay X+100%. That must be addressed. We're losing money. Someone is getting richer and it's not the people of South Africa. The people are continuing to suffer because of court buildings, hospitals, schools that are falling apart. There's no money for maintenance, but contractors are getting richer and richer. That must be addressed. Minister, you committed to rid this country of the construction mafia, please do that urgently. I thank you.

Ms M P KOBE: Hon House Chair, since the ascension of the Minister, he has shared with us his vision a South Africa as a construction site. However, a year later economic growth

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remains below 1% and youth unemployment sits at unprecedented highs. Much like the Government of National Unity, GNU, this noble and very ambitious vision is fast approaching the end of its honeymoon phase.

While we agree that infrastructure investment is key to sustainable economic recovery, we do not believe that the R7,62 billion allocated to this already dysfunctional department will achieve this goal. The budget represents a real decrease of 4,4 from the 2024-25 adjusted appropriation. This cut threatens the department's ability to capacitate itself and deliver on its mandate. Public Works is South Africa's largest landlord, managing over 27 000 land parcels and 88 000 buildings through its property management trading entity.

This portfolio, valued at R154 billion, is a national asset but one in decline. The department has consistently failed to maintain its infrastructure, allowing assets to deteriorate and erode their economic value. Instead of leveraging these assets for financial sustainability, the Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE relies on a growing overdraft while struggling to collect user charges owed by client departments.

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The PMTE is allocated R4,4 billion for the 2025-26 financial year. On paper, this appears adequate, but in the absence of strategic planning and innovation, the entity has become a liability rather than an asset. But this is not what you will typically see broadcasted by the department to South Africans. You will instead be shown press conferences with the Minister handing out land parcels here and there in buildings, as we have seen recently with Social Development in Mpumalanga and quite recently in Nkandla.

Meanwhile, just last week, the department appeared before the SA Human Rights Commission, summoned to explain the appalling state of facilities used by SA Police Service and Correctional Services. Facilities which endanger the safety and dignity of those who live in them. It's a classic Kansas City shuffle, distracting us with ample social media posts and endless media briefings while deep institutional rot persists.

This, South Africa should serve as a serious warning about this department's capacity to manage its own responsibilities. The Expanded Public Works Programme receives R2,29 billion, 30,2% of the budget, yet it reflects a nominal decline of 3,2. With this decline, we can only hope that not one less

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beneficiary from our townships and villages will be denied the opportunity to participate in this programme. We hope that this investment will not fall prey to councillors who exploit these programmes for electioneering especially ahead of the 2026 local government elections.

The Expanded Public Works Programme remains plagued by poor human resource practices, unreliable funding and a lack of accountability. Hon Minister, it is not enough to offer people temporary work without real pathways to long-term employment. The department must equip beneficiaries with skills to contribute meaningfully to the construction site we are yet to see. Minister, for grand visions and lofty ideals, let's get the basics right. Maybe we can start with your plans to address the existing R8 billion maintenance backlog.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure does not need more public relations or media briefings. It needs competent, decisive leadership to transform the built environment into the economic driver that it should be. In light of the above, Action SA will not be supporting this report. Thank you.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Hon Chair, hon Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, hon Dean Macpherson, hon members, the Director General and all senior managers present, I wish to start by paying homage and respect to the late Deputy President of our Republic, David Mabuza. We send our heartfelt condolences to his family. Our hearts are also with the chair of the portfolio committee, hon Phiri and her family on the sad loss they've suffered.

Seventy years ago, the ANC led the South Africans society from all walks of life to adopt the Freedom Charter on 26 June 1955. One of the key demands of the Freedom Charter is found under the clause: "The people shall share in the country's wealth." During the watershed conference of Morogoro in 1969, the ANC unambiguously stated that:

In our country - more than in any other part of the oppressed world - it is inconceivable for liberation to have meaning without a return of the wealth of the land to the people as a whole. It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy. To allow the existing economic forces to retain

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their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation.

As we debate Budget Vote 13 of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, we are therefore called upon to remember the responsibility that history has bestowed on us to be the generation that delivers the injunctions of the Freedom Charter. As the Minister stated in his address: we are denouncing the business-as-usual approach in the department. Our pursuit for service delivery excellence and high tangible performance is part of our attitude to ensure that we restore the confidence of client departments.

Hon members, this Budget Vote offers to reflect on a transformation journey that started from 1994, especially to provide services to those who were denied. As we speak here, we have completed 48 bailey bridges in the year 2024-25. Additional 51 bridges are under construction. A total of 1920 Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, beneficiaries benefitted from this programme.

As a department, we are committed to ensure that the three provinces that were denied opportunity of small harbours are

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also serviced. It is because of that we have finalised the three Spatial Economic Development Frameworks which now paved the way for the implementation of small harbours in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and the Northern Cape.

As the department, we have no choice but to meet a number of national development goals. We are pleased to report that as per the Independent Development Trust, IDT, last performance report, this entity completed 315 new or replacement facilities worth R3,5 billion. More than that, the majority of people who benefitted are women, contractors, as well as youth. The impact of our work as the department is not mortar and brick alone, but it also to ensure that we build the nation.

As we continue with this work, we pay serious attention to Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, BBBEE, to ensure that blacks, and Africans in particular, benefit. By the year of 2012 in the property sector, blacks had only 10%, but now they are at 20%. We say this is progress, but it is not enough. We have to continue ensuring that we support black people in the property sector. We continue to ensure that contractor development programme impact in the development of those who

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were previously deprived. This include the Construction Industry Development Board, CIDB BUILD Programme which this year has been allocated R100 million to support emerging contractors if. You oppose this Bill, it means you are opposing the support to small contractors.

Among others, want to fast track and ensure that we remain committed to paying on time, pay within 30 days and this we are doing at a level of processing 12 000 invoices that we track per month. As the department, we are at 99% in terms of paying on time. We are also working to develop internal capacity to deliver on our own through the establishment of workshops that will ensure daily maintenance.

Hon members, the signing into law of the Expropriation Act by His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa, remain a seminal and a ground-breaking moment towards achieving the vision of the Freedom Charter. We therefore need to move forward with the development of regulations that will guide all entities responsible for expropriation to execute this task.

One of other challenges that we face is climate change. Climate change is real and must be treated as an urgent

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threat. In this regard, sustainable infrastructure development is a necessity, not a luxury. In addition to our policies that support sustainable infrastructure delivery, the department is proud of the work that is being done by Agreement SA in certifying eco-friendly building material to build climate resilient communities and promote local economic development. Let us support innovation, green industrialization, and above all, plant trees to preserve our planet for our future generation. We do not inherit this environment, but we borrow it from the future generation. Ours is the commitment to the transformation of this country for the creation of a real, non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous and democratic South Africa for all. I thank you.

Mr W M THRING: Hon House Chair, the ACDP notes the budget allocation to this Department of Public Works and Infrastructure of some R7,9 billion for the current financial year. The department is the largest real estate owner in the country managing some 29 955 land parcels, totalling 4,7 million hectares and yet produces poor economic returns or outcomes in comparison to the private sector.

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Since 2012 the Property Management Trading Entity, PMTE has been unable to fully implement ... [Inaudible.] ... in developing a comprehensive asset register, a requirement from the Auditor-General. The department cannot function effectively without knowing what it owns, and this deficiency opens the door for corruption and hijacking of government buildings.

The ACDP supports the department's urban regeneration efforts as well as the repurposing of hijacked and under-utilised buildings into affordable social housing or public use facilities. Noting that many of these properties are controlled by criminal syndicates and are unsightly posing safety and health risks.

Minister, for as long as the construction mafia are not arrested, South Africa will not become a construction site. We support the strategic repositioning of the Expanded Public Works Programme as a skills-based employment pipeline.

In this regard, the shift from welfare to workforce is commendable, aligning with the ACDC's belief in restoring dignity through meaningful work.

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The Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme announced by Mr Ramaphosa in 2022 offered promise as a catalytic intervention in rural infrastructure, with the potential of this programme to connect communities to clinics, schools and markets. However, despite the ambitious target, only 11 bridges from the total target of 288 have been completed. This raises legitimate concerns about delivery capacity and project oversight.

The ACDP notes the department's ambitious infrastructure pipeline, including over 250 projects valued at R268 billion, as outlined in the Construction Book 2025. These projects must not remain paper promises. The hundreds of millions of wasted rands during the Telkom towers procurement process and the tender corruption at the incomplete Jersey Barrier wall in Jozini have continually been raised by the ACDP.

As Kingdom builders, we refuse to be silent. Thank you.

Mr S M GANA: Hon House Chair, hon members, fellow South Africans. Let's say it like it should be said. Public works is not working. We must say it like it should be said. Let's not say it otherwise. This afternoon, I rise for a judge, for a

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magistrate who wants to deliver justice but has no courtroom to do it.

I rise for a traumatised South African who wants to report a crime but must do so in a dilapidated police station. I rise for the families of the 34 individuals who lost their lives in the George building that collapse in 2024.

Successive committee reports on other departments serve as evidence of this department's failure to deliver on its mandate. Our public buildings are dilapidated, our infrastructure which remains insufficient for our growing population and economy is collapsing. Regulatory bodies are not speaking to one another on vital construction projects, and South Africans are suffering.

Almost all projects that this department embarks on are delayed and have cost overrides. Finding a Public Works project that's delivered on budget and on time is as rare as finding a white person that supported apartheid.

The dome across the road is just but one example. Don't tell us Minister and Deputy Minister. Don't tell us that you are

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changing. There's a project just here across the road, the dome. Can you promise all of us as Members of Parliament, that one, you are going to deliver it on time and two, that it will be on budget?

I dare you to say it here. I dare you, Deputy Minister. I dare you, Minister to tell us as Members of Parliament that the dome across the road will be completed on time and on budget. I doubt you will. I doubt you will.

The failures of this department are written in failed service delivery, diminishing public trust and blood. And I must say, you are the luckiest department because even when you fail to deliver, no one marches to your offices because they don't know that you are the cause of failure. You are the reason there's no service delivery. Thank you, House Chair.

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: Chairperson, my name Nobuntu Hlazo-Webster. We debate this Department of Public Works and Infrastructure budget on the backdrop of decaying infrastructure in South Africa. State owned buildings across the country are crumbling, clinics and schools are deteriorating and the public land that is available lies idle.

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No way is this dysfunction more obvious than in this National Assembly precinct, where it's been over 1 200 days since the fire gutted the Chamber, and still, we get delays, excuses and shifting timelines. Last month, we were told that only 11% of the funds came up for the rebuilding of the National Assembly had actually been spent.

We see an even, lazier approach by government departments where instead of fixing government owned property, departments spend billions of rands in renting private office space to operate. The figure is estimated at approximately R5 billion. Make that makes sense. We reject this trend, Chairperson.

The Department of Public Works is meant to function as a state property manager responsible for maintaining the assets that underpin public service and delivery. Yet year after year, this is the same department that underspends on critical infrastructure while returning unspent funds, while we are in a country where schools operate in unsafe buildings, where clinics lack basic infrastructure to deliver healthcare and rural roads are unusable.

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We cannot talk about infrastructure without talking about spatial justice. It appears that this department remains allergic to championing spatial justice. In Cape Town large, well allocated parcels of state land sits and used and mismanaged, while housing crisis in the city deepens. Among these are Acacia Park, Ysterplaat and Wingfield.

In March this year, I submitted a written question asking the Minister when and where these land parcels would be released, and there was no reply. It is not the only question that the Minister has not replied to. There are numerous, over months not replied to. I want to remind the Minister that he is not only accountable or answerable to his party bosses, but that he is answerable to this House and through this House, to the people of South Africa.

Chairperson with over R150 billion in property under the control of Public Works, we expect better, and in fact, we demand better. Until this department stops holding land, wasting public money on rentals instead of fixing state assets and returning unspent funds while infrastructure crumbles, it will remain part of the problem. As my colleagues said, you are the problem.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Webster, why are you rising?

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: The Minister is making signs and signals and pointing. That is completely unparliamentary, Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): I did not see that, but I would urge the Minister not to do that. Even that, can you please refrain from doing that? No, no, no. I'm not going to go there. I did not see that. Hon members, order. Hon Mkhize? Hon members? Hon Dlamini? Hon Dlamini? Hon Dlamini? Hon Dlamini? Hon Letlape, I am calling you. I will do that. Don't help me. Can we please have order? Hon Minister, can you stop this exchange with the hon members on the left. It will cause disorder. The next speaker will be the hon Bath.

Mr E M BATH: Hon Chairperson, I find it very alarming that members of this House still do not understand that the rebuilding of Parliament does not fall within the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure purview. Also, that hon members do not understand what national public works and the provincial Department of Public Works are responsible for.

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Clinics and hospitals are not the purview of the national Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

Hon Chairperson, anyways as hon members know the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure is personal to me. I joined the department in 2012 through its bursary programme and spend over a decade in its administration. From graduate to director witnessing both its bureaucratic frustration and its immense untapped potential.

This time last here I stood here to support a budget inherited from the Sixth Administration. This year we debate a budget shaped by new leadership. Minister Macpherson's fears fest turning South Africa in a construction site blueprint. If the past year was about clearing the rubble and designing the blueprint, then this budget is about laying a new foundation. Strong level and ready to support a department capable of driving growth, creating jobs and rebuilding public trust.

Hon Chairperson, in previous budgets the department's plans sought to chase seven national priorities but only managed to address a few. This year's budget narrows the focus to three brought priorities. Inclusive growth and job creation, the

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cost of living and building a capable and ethical public service. This signal, a department aligning itself to realistic outcomes.

Hon Chairperson, change is most visible in a struggling property management trading entity. Rightly so as it oversees more than 88 000 government buildings owned by the state.

For over two decades the Property Management Training Entity, PMTE, has existed more on paper than in principle. However, under this budget we are finally seeing a small movement. It now manages R54,1 billion with R3,9 billion or 7,2% allocated to maintenance. A welcomed shift though hon Minister, through you hon Chairperson, this shift must continue to grow.

Importantly, 12 600 hectares and over 55 state-owned properties have been released to open market including commercial land in Nkandla just this Monday with a potential to unlock billions in private investment and stimulating new economic activity. It is so refreshing to hear something positive coming from Nkandla for once.

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The DA also welcomes transfer of properties to capable municipalities and provinces enabling local delivery and saving the department money. These highlights putting public assets to public good. We support this trajectory, but we also urge the department to fully unlock its commercial mandate and sweat all underutilised assets and start generating revenue.

On the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, change is also taking shape through tangible policy shifts following the nationwide listening tours. A full reform of EPWP Recruitment Policy is underway and to do away with political and other interference. The programme is also targeting over one million opportunities this year.

Hon Minister, we support your vision for economic inclusion that is transparent, fair, skill generating and that which produces market ready artisans.

Hon Chairperson, infrastructure delivery is also gaining traction. This year with R11 billion been committed to 24 major catalytic projects while Infrastructure SA R180 million Project Preparation Fund is already fully subscribed. Clear

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evidence of the demand for a well-planned strategic infrastructure.

Also, a new special projects' unit modelled on the best practice from the Western Cape government now leads the planning and delivery of complex projects. Through the Durban Declaration, public works, the SA Police Service, SAPS, and National Treasury had united to confront the criminal extortion that has long plagued our nation's construction sites.

We also welcome the launch of a private investigation into the R1 billion Telkom Towers Disaster. The committee eagerly awaits outcomes. We must ensure that accountability prevails and that we prevent this reoccurrence in this Seventh Administration.

Hon Minister Macpherson has also prioritised strategic reform in oversight, a Voluntary Construction and Asset Management Advisory Board has been appointed bringing valuable private sector expertise into public policy direction.

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The department's digital transformation is also underway supported by a new information technology, IT, strategy and stronger cyber security measures to guard against fraud and hacking.

The introduction of lifestyle audits, skills audits and a long-overdue ghosts employees audit must also be welcomed. Ethical leadership and political will is the backbone and bedrock of delivery. Hon Minister these are promising early interventions. Cabinet's approval of a new Board of the Independent Development Trust, IDT, effective from 4 July marks a vital reset for an entity that has long been in turmoil. The IDT must now prove that it can become self-sustainable and corruption free or face being cut as part of government's fat if it fails.

The Construction Industry Development Board, the Council for the Built Environment and Agrima SA are showing slow signs of progress with stronger contractor support tighter enforcement and renewed focus on women young professionals and innovation. The relevant boards and their executives must now double down to meet the demands over South Africa under construction.

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As a former bursary recipient myself I also welcome the awarding of 63 bursaries to young built environment professionals this year.

Hon Chairperson while challenges remain this department is starting to turn the corner and deliver where it matters most. However, with a budget of only R7,6 billion, we are seeing what can be achieved when there is political will, clear focus and ethical leadership.

To the hon Minister and the hon Deputy Minister, and the administration keep doing what you are doing because when public works work, South Africa works. The DA supports this budget. I thank you. [Applause.]

Ms N E NKOSI: Hon House Chair, as the African National Congress, under the Government of National Unity, we see the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure as a fundamental tool of South Africa's growth because this is where we facilitate economic activity and provide necessary services to our people. Policy direction, which encourages government, is of imperative importance as it takes the lead and provides guidance in the execution of increased National Public Works

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programmes. This becomes essential for social and economic advancement, which includes building and maintaining essential infrastructure such as energy, telecommunications, water and sanitation and roadways. This infrastructure raises economic activity while supporting necessary services and improving the standard of living for our people.

It must be mentioned and affirmed that the ANC supports this budget. We support this budget as the ANC because, amongst other things, it is anticipated that spending will rise from R7,6 billion in 2024-25 at R8,3 billion in 2027-28 at an average yearly rate of 3%. Approximately R19,7 billion of the department's overall budget for the upcoming three years will go towards transfers subsidies for the operations of its entities, nonprofit organisations paying wages to those working under the Expanded Public Works Programme and conditional grants to provide and municipalities for programme implementation. Employee remuneration will be at an amount of R2,1 billion and goods and services will amount to an amount of R2,1 billion, which will account for an estimated R4,2 billion of expenditure over the next term.

*IsiZulu:*

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Emuva kocwaningo loMnyango weZimali lonyaka ka-2024 ukuya ku-2025 kanye nohlelo lwezenhlalakahle, oluqhutshwa uMnyango wezeMisebenzi kaHulumeni obhekelela izibonelelo zezifundazwe luhlanganiswe njengezibonelelo esisodwa ngaphansi kohlelo olulodwa olubizwa ngokuthi izibonelelo ezeNgeziwe zeMisebenzi zikaHulumeni, ezihlelelwe izifundazwe.

Lokhu kwenziwa ngenhloso ngoba kwenziwa ngcono imikhiqizo ukushesha kokunikezelwa ngosizo futhi kuncishiswe izihibe ekunikezeleni kosizo lwezibonelelo oluhlelelwe izifundazwe. Lesi sibonelelo esisha esihlanganisiweyo kulindeleke ukuthi sibhekelelwe ngesamba sika R2 bhiliyoni eminyakeni emithathu ezayo. Ukuqinisa amatomu ezinhlelweni zokukhuliswa kwamakhono kudinga ukuba sihlomise umbuso ngamandla ukuze le lizwe lidlondlobale. Leli gxathu liyingxenye ebaluleke kakhulu ekudlondlobaliseni nasekuthuthukiseni le lizwe.

*English:*

A competent state can more accurately identify skills gaps, design training programmes and guarantee a steady supply of pertinent talents to meet economic demands, and advance growth if it has strong institutions and knowledgeable workers. This can then result in inclusive economic growth, less

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unemployment, and poverty reduction. Through a skills pipeline strategy, the department intends to boost the productive capacity of built environment graduates over the next three years in order to enhance infrastructure delivery in the Public Works sector.

*IsiZulu:*

Lokhu kuzoba usizo ekwethulweni kohlelo oludidiyelwe futhi oluhlelekile lwezokuqeqeshwa kwabasebenzi bakahulumeni ngokushesha. Ukubhaliswa imifundaze ebizwa ngokuthi ama-bursary, ukuvulwa kwamathuba okuqeqeshelwa imisebenzi, izifundo zokuqeqeshelwa ukusingatha kwezakhiwo kanjalo nokuthuthukiswa kokuqeqeshwa konjiniyela. Loluhlelo olwengeziwe lwemisebenzi kahulumeni kuhlelwe ngalo ukudlondlobalisa ukwakha amathuba emisebenzi ezinhlakeni ezintathu zikahulumeni. Luzoqhubeka ngokuholwa futhi luqhutshwa uMnyango. Izibonelelo ezihlelelwe izinhlango ezingaphansi kukahulumeni ezizoqhuba lezinhlelo kulindeleke ukuba zibonelelwe ngesamba sika R6 bhiliyoni kulethemu yamaphakathi.

*English:*

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The department intends to create yearly monitoring and evaluation reports as well as impact assessments on the programme execution in the coming years as part of its ongoing efforts to make it better. Additionally, it intends to offer technical assistance to 200 public agencies in the areas of infrastructure, society, the environment, and culture.

The department is intended to report on 1,000 000 plus job opportunities in 2025-26 and up to 1,000 000 plus job opportunities by 2027-28, as well as providing input on the efficacy of employment policies in order to increase the employability of the workplace over the medium term. An estimated R7,2 billion will be allocated to EPWP for all associated operations. An estimated R689,1 million of this sum is set aside for personnel salaries, for managing the Increased Public Works Programme, and another R532,3 million is allocated to goods and services specifically for data collection, verification, monitoring and assessment. As a result, the department intends to assist 3, 800 recipients taking part in skills pipeline intervention programmes in the medium term. An amount of R91,3 million has been set aside for this purpose for the coming year under the intergovernmental co-ordination programme, professional services subprogramme.

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On 23 January 2025, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the South African Expropriation Bill, now known as the Expropriation Act 13 of 2024 into law. This new law describes the processes and circumstances under which the state may expropriate property for public use or in the public's interest, replacing the preconstitutional Expropriation Act of 1975. The 1975 Act is still in force until the President declares the new Act to be in effect. Even though the Act has been signed, the Act has generated a lot of discussions, with some arguing that it should be used to correct historical injustices, while others are worried about how it will affect property rights and economic stability.

To assist the department in facilitating land acquisition when we deal with public goods and infrastructure development, the Expropriation Act becomes key. The Act permits the expropriation of land when willing-buyer, willing-seller discussions are unsuccessful in securing land for projects. This can be extremely important. Expropriation is allowed for both public purposes and public interest, which specifically covers Land Reform and land access. Expropriation can be used to meet social demands like rural development and cheap housing because of this expanded meaning. We need to improve

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on our streamlined processes where the Expropriation Act provides clarity and certainty by outlining the expropriation procedure, including compensation and dispute settlement, which we have seen a backlog on such matters in the past.

Through this Act, there is emphasis on Land Reform that it must be consistent with the constitutional obligation to ratify previous land ownership inequalities. This can be especially important for infrastructure initiatives that help underserved communities. Correcting the historical injustice of apartheid is not negotiable for the majority of South Africans. There must be no confusion between private property, property value, and expropriation in the public interest and public purposes. This is within the rule of law, both locally and internationally, as all countries have expropriation legislation.

We want to invest in infrastructure development where we will be provided with mechanisms on how to get land and improve economic development through investment in essential infrastructure like roads, schools and hospitals. We believe that industrial development and job creation cannot be achieved without access to land through expropriation to

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improve economic growth and development of our people. The Expropriation Act will encourage and assist municipalities to acquire land for the purposes of important public projects which are aimed at uplifting our people who are mainly economically marginalised.

We reaffirm our support for the budget because Public Works and Infrastructure Development in South Africa has been emphasised by both the ANC and the National Development Plan as being essential to social advancement and economic progress. In its long-term vision for the nation, the NDP places strong emphasis on infrastructure development as a means of generating employment, raising living standards, and fostering an inclusive economy. As the ruling party, we support this budget. I thank you.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Thank you very much, and thank you to those hon members who spoke in support, the Deputy Minister, members of the portfolio committee and other hon members.

You know, there were some strange issues put here on the table today. On the one hand, the MK Party would say that there is

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no plan to fix and stabilise the Independent Development Trust, IDT, yet it has been the MK Party and the EFF that have fought me at every single turn to fix the IDT. But, you know what the good thing is? I beat them and we won, and we have a new board that is going to be starting next week. We have to ask ourselves who benefits. Who benefits from chaos like that?

Then they come and complain about payment and the lack of training in the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, but that's exactly what we are seeking to reform in the EPWP. They can't have their cake and eat it.

However, there is one thing where I would agree with them. Maybe it is time that we start looking at the costs around prestige, and there's a good place where we can start. It's called Nkandla, which costs us millions and millions of rand to maintain. So, offer your President's home as a place where we can cut costs, and I'm all for it.

Then, the EFF comes here, and it was difficult to actually fully understand what their gripe was, because when it comes to engineering, the EFF does not have a good track record. They once promised to build a house. They didn't do it. They

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promised to build a school. They didn't do that at all. The one thing that the EFF is consistent at is breaking promises they make to their voters, and that's why in the last election they dropped support. When you are only used to breaking things, the concept and the thought of building things is completely foreign to you. So, the MK Party and the EFF are happy to break while many of us are on the road to build. That is what we are committed to doing.

Then, Action SA come here and start talking about the budget, as if they've even read it, because when the meeting took place to consider it, they weren't even there. They didn't offer an input, they didn't offer solutions. They've offered nothing.

However, let me tell you about a Kansas ... Shuffle. Let me tell you about a Kansas ... Shuffle. ... a party that blusters and seeks to distract the public from the terminal and utter decline that they are in at the moment. This was the same Member of Parliament who reposted fake news about the IDT on Twitter. Fake news, hook, line and sinker, she fell for it, and never once, never once, never once apologised. What the Kansas ... Shuffle is, is trying to distract people while

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protecting corruption in entities. That's what that hon member was doing.

Now, now let's turn to Rise Mzansi. Let me tell you something that is rare about Rise Mzansi ... is finding a voter who admitted that they voted for them. That is rare. I'm actually not entirely sure what the point of that party is. They come here, they moan, they complain, they don't attend any committee meetings.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Minister, can you please take your seat? Hon Reddy, why are you rising?

Mr V G REDDY: Hon Chair, you know, the Minister, and I'm saying this with respect, is not focusing on ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Dlamini?

Mr V G REDDY: ... [Inaudible.] ... he's playing politics. He should not ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Can you hold on? Can you hold on? Can you hold on? Hon Dlamini, I'm trying to listen to

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hon Reddy's order and I am not hearing anything because you are making a noise. Hon Reddy?

Mr V G REDDY: House Chair, the hon Minister ... Rule 86, is not focusing on responding to the substantive issues that have been raised. Instead, he's playing politics. He's just talking politics ... [Inaudible.] ... and focus on the issues, please.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Reddy? Hon Reddy, can you please switch ... the microphone? Hon Reddy, that's not a point of order. Can you please proceed, hon Minister?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: It astounds me that the hon Gana, who has been in this House before, does not know what Public Works does. So, he wants to criticise us for clinics. He wants to criticise us for schools.

That's not our mandate, which ... goes to the hon member from Bosa. I'm going to tell you and your leader with respect for the very last time. This department is not responsible for rebuilding the parliamentary building. We are not, and if you had actually listened ...

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The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Minister, can you please take your seat?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: They want to argue with facts.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Hlazo-Webster, why are you rising?

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: Is the Minister willing to take a question?

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Minister, are you willing to take a question?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: I'm not prepared to take a question because I've answered this question repeatedly.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Can you please proceed, hon Minister?

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The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Public Works is not responsible for building the parliamentary building. Please go and cry at the right funeral because you are repeatedly attending the wrong funeral. It is amazing, because I have repeatedly told this to both you and your leader. We do not build schools. We do not build clinics. Please go and focus your attention on the right thing.

However, let's contemplate for a moment what all of these parties are actually against when they vote against this budget. They are against infrastructure development to communities to provide water and electricity. They are against bursaries for young people to become engineers. They are against EPWP participants finding a pathway to long-term employment. They are against young entrepreneurs having access to projects. They are against supporting women in construction. They are also against transforming our assets into revenue generation to build social infrastructure. They are also against fighting corruption and ensuring that people go to jail. Lastly, and think about this for a moment, they are also against fighting the construction mafia, but maybe, just maybe, that's exactly what some of them in this room want to stop. Thank you so much.

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The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Thank you, hon Minister. Hon members, you are reminded that two debates are scheduled simultaneously for 16:30. Hon Kobe, I'm speaking. You are reminded that two debates are scheduled simultaneously for 16:30 today. The Water and Sanitation Budget Vote debate will be held in the Good Hope Chamber, while the Justice and Constitutional Development Budget Vote debate will take place in Committee Room M46. That concludes the debate and the business of this mini-plenary session. The mini plenary will now rise.

Debate concluded.

The mini-plenary session rose at 15:50.