

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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VOTE NO 41 - WATER AND SANITATION

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE MINI PLENARY SESSION

Members of the mini-plenary session met at Good Hope Chamber at 16:30.

House Chairperson Mr C T Frolick took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation

The House Chairperson, Mr C T Frolick, announced that the mini-plenary sitting constituted a meeting of the National Assembly.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Debate on Vote No 41 - Water and Sanitation:

No audio recording. Reported from member's speech notes:

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[The MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: House Chairperson, Cabinet Colleagues; Deputy Ministers of Water and Sanitation, David Mahlobo and Sello Seithloho; Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee of Water and Sanitation; hon Members of Parliament; Director-General and senior managers of the Department of Water and Sanitation; leadership of our entities: chairpersons, members of the boards, chief executive officers and senior executives; leadership of various stakeholders in the sector and civil society; fellow South Africans.]

IsiXhosa:

Malungu eNdlu ahloniphekileyo, madithi, ngqanga neentsiba zayo. Ewe ke kambe akukho nkanga idubula ingethi. Namhlanje sikhumbula indedeba yakwaMshengu ...

English:

... the former Deputy President.

IsiXhosa:

Wanga umphefumlo wakhe ungaphumla ngoxolo. Lala. Umzamo omhle uwuzamile Tata uD D kaMabuza. Izwe lakowethu liyanxakama ngeli xesha kuba kaloku amanzi yimpilo, ...

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English:

... there is no substitute for water. Hon Chair and hon members, allow me to quote the President when he was addressing us as a nation.

IsiXhosa:

Ndiza kucaphula nje, ndivule ndizivale izibiyeli.

English:

An urgent priority is to ensure a secure and reliable supply of water across the country. Many people in our cities, towns and villages are experiencing more and more frequent water shortages as a result of failing water infrastructure. It is impossible to live without water, and it is impossible for the economy to grow without water.

IsiXhosa:

Mandidadele enzulwini malungu ahloniphekileyo ale Ndlu, bemi boMzantsi Afrika. Umongameli uthe amazi mawabe yinto ephambili yokuqala (Priority 1). Sima apha ke sisithi, makuphele ukuthetha kugcwale ukwenza. Kubalulekile ukuba qho ndisima kule ndawo ndingadinwa kwaye ndingabinamikhinkqi ekuchazeni ukuba thina olwethu uxanduva ...

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English:

... is water resource.

IsiXhosa:

Olwethu uxanduva kukuba senze ...

English:

... the regulation.

IsiXhosa:

Olwethu uxanduva kukwakha amadama siqinisekise ukuba amanzi njengoko eyimpilo ayakwazi ukusondela, aze ke umasipala yena athathe apho sishiye khona. Ayindisitheli ke into yokuba amalungu ale Ndlu kunye nabemi boMzantsi Afrika bafanele ...

English:

... to always think that it is the Department of Water and Sanitation that is supposed to supply water in your households and in your taps. The Constitution is very clear, that is the responsibility of local government and municipalities. If we all understand that we will be able to work together to assist municipalities. We must all of us put hands on the deck to assist municipalities to be able to provide water.

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Hon Chair, you will remember that we recently held a Water and Sanitation Indaba where we unanimously agreed on five pillars as the water. Public, private and everybody else was there. We agreed that the crisis of water is not a crisis in terms of the bulk water supply. The crisis is based on water that is unable to reach the communities. The five pillars are: Increasing investment through financing options. Ensuring the financial viability of the sector. Enhancing and strengthening technical and operational capacity and efficiency in the water sector. Fighting criminality and corruption in the water sector, as well as building partnership. That is just a summary of the declaration which you can get on our website.

What we have agreed upon is that in the next six months we are going to review and make assessments on how far we have gone on what we have agreed upon with municipalities who are supposed to provide water. What have we achieved this far. We are improving water and sanitation services, as you know that the challenge lies when it comes to reticulation. So,

IsiXhosa:

... kubalulekile ke ukuba sincedisane.

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English:

As Minister of Water and Sanitation, I convene meetings with premiers, Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs MECs and mayors. There is an improvement, I must say. Since the Indaba, there has been improvement. There is a municipality here in the Western Cape where they are at 40% in terms of closing the leaks. They were saying to me a month ago, we have seen what has caused us as the municipality not to deliver water. If all municipalities can be committed to that we can move faster.

As you know hon members, I stood here a year ago to say, municipalities are owing the water boards, and the water boards are in a verge of collapse. I must say standing here, we have moved out of being in the state of collapse for two water boards because certain municipalities are paying. Tshwane is not owing any water board, the City of Johannesburg is not owing any water board, eThekweni is not owing a water board as well as Mangaung. They are not owing water boards. If we move at that pace, it means things are going to change.

We are also on the track of assessing our water drops. Out of 144 Water Service Authorities, 105 are performing dismally.

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That will impact negatively on the reticulation and provision of water. However, we are assisting municipalities as an Inter-Ministerial Committee, IMC that was appointed by the President. All water users must pay for their services. All municipalities we've agreed they must insource water tanks and use those water tanks when there is emergency. But what they must focus on is to build the water infrastructure. They must also enter into partnership without privatising municipalities, but they must enter into partnership when it comes to water because water is affecting everyone.

We have developed the Water Partnerships Office to assist them. Soon we'll be tabling the Water Services Amendment Bill to this Parliament which is going to make clarity between the water service provider as well as the water security. We are also going to be bring into this Parliament the National Water Amendment Bill. Hon members, ladies and gentlemen, we talked about the three priorities in the 2025-25 financial year. Already, we are about to establish the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency which is going to ensure that all water-related matters are put together as well when going out on financial markets, we put everything together.

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The second one was to diversify water and also come up with water mix and increase ground water. I can report here Chair that when it comes to groundwater, we are working with these municipalities and already we are far ahead, Dr Ruth Sekgomotsi Mompoti District Municipality in the North West, Outdtshoorn Local Municipality here in the Western Cape, Tsantsabane Local Municipality, Dikgatlong Local Municipality and Calvinia in the Northern Cape and Thaba Chweu in the Free State.

These six municipalities are funded by us to say, once we water surface, let's go on the underground water. We are doing very well to tap on the underground water. But also working with the Water Partnerships Office we have assisted municipalities on water reuse projects. UMdloti, uMkhomazi, Northern and Kwa-Mashu waste management, eThekwini, Olifantsfontein, Rooiwal, Sebokeng, Tshwane, Emfuleni and many others. I can count up to 15 municipalities that are already on this programme because we are assisting them.

Chair, on the issue of Gauteng ...

IsiXhosa:

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... hayi, alihambi kakuhle eli ixesha.

English:

On the Gauteng and eThekweni Water Platform we are far advanced, and we are implementing that. We have completed the project on dams. When we build dams, these dams are built over five to seven years. We are already done with Hazelmere and we have also compensated the people of Hazelmere with R40 million in houses for 17 households. We are raising of the Clanwilliam Dam which you have seen outside here. This dam is now standing at 40%.

In Tzaneen through the fiscus, we are also raising this dam. In Clanwilliam we are funded by fiscus. UMzimvubu, we are funded by fiscus. In Limpopo, it is a blended finance when it comes to Mokolo River and Crocodile River. In the Coerney Dam we are also assisted through the fiscus, the Zalu Dam, Foxwood Dam, Nwamitwa Dam. There are about 14 dams that we are dealing with. Others are on the design stage. Others are already in construction stage. It means that people will be better off when we get this water.

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There are grant-funded projects of water and sanitation through the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant as well as Water Services Infrastructure Grant. There are 110 projects that are coming this financial year on Regional Bulk Supply and also 163 on the Water Services Infrastructure Grant. We are going to various areas in our country. We have broken them down. We are going to share this with you so that members when they do oversight can go and look. There are projects that are done and dusted that have assisted to augment water.

If we talk about Mangaung, last week I was there, where we were handing over a 33,7 ... water pipeline which is going to augment water in Mangaung and the surrounding areas. We have also refurbished. During the time of the closing of the tunnel, people of those areas benefited 39 boreholes as a legacy, At the time we closed the tunnel, we wanted to make sure that they get the water.

There are other projects that we are busy with, R2,4 billion for Maluti-a-Phofung and we have spent R3,5 billion for Matjhabeng. On that note of Matjhabeng, we have 30 kilometre sewer lines that we have completed. We have also a made it a point that the Extention 5 of Kestell and Nuwejaar are taken

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care of. Soon, we will be handing over all these projects, they are completed. UMngeni with the big uMkhomazi projects are also on track. At Giyani, I know hon members the issue of Giyani has been a thorny issue. Out of 24 villages, we have connected 23 villages. We are going to connect one by end of July, then the 31 villages are coming in for the next financial year.

IsiXhosa:

Ndiyabona olu ncumo lwakho luyandincedisa.

English:

In Mandlakazi Bulk Water Supply, we are standing now at 40% of this project. Remember, we have also assisted uMkhanyakude District Municipality with 22 projects. All these projects that I'm talking to, if we've completed them, but there's no reticulation, members will come and say there's no water.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Minister just take your seat, please. Why do you want to be recognised hon member?

Ms M S KHAWULA: House Chair ...

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IsiZulu:

... bengithi ungqongqoshe angatatazeli kakhulu ngoba uNhlanhla Mkhwanazi akaze alibale igama lakhe. Akenze nje kahle siyamthanda.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, hon member, that's not a point of order, please. Please hon members, order. Continue hon Minister.

IsiXhosa:

Akazi kulikbala nanini na Mama uKhawula khululeka. Lixesha nje endilijongileyo.

English:

The Loskop in Mpumalanga is standing at 80% ...

IsiXhosa:

... siyayivula apha kuNovemba. Ndizama ukuthi ke, ininzi into esele siyenzile qha xa amanzi engaphumi etephini akubonakali ngokungathi ikhona into esiyenzayo kwaye ndiyayiqonda ukuba kutheni amalungu eza kuthetha loo nto. eMfuleni naseMidvaal

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oko besibancedisa phaya ngelindle ebelihamba nje. EMfuleni izolo elinye sityikityile phaya ...

English:

... with the Minister of Finance for them to have a special purpose vehicle ...

IsiXhosa:

... abantu abaza kubanedisa baqokelele imali ukuze bakwazi ukunika abantu amanzi. Thina ...

English:

... we can only oversight them, but we cannot take over ...

IsiXhosa:

... umsebeni woomasipala. Siyavumelana ke ukuba eHamanskraal ...

English:

... we are done and dusted with phase 1 and phase 2. Currently, they are getting 29,1 megalitres per day.

IsiXhosa:

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Kushiyeke inti ephaya kuma-21 esizakuyinikezela ngoAgasti nangoSeptemba. Sisebenza neTshwane ukuze ilungise ...

English:

... the Themba Water Reservoir ...

IsiXhosa:

... kuba yiyo esilibazisayo. Kule veki iphelileyo ngoku besiphaya bekubonakala ukuba inokungcoliseka.

English:

In Northern Cape we have assisted ...

IsiXhosa:

... phaya eDouglas kuMasipala weNgingqi iSiyancuma kunye noMasipala weNgingqi iSol Plaatje ukuba abantu bafumane amanzi.

English:

Hon members, the challenges that we confront us are immense, but they need all of us to put our hands on the deck. The issue of water is affecting the entire globe. But also, in Africa as a continent, we as South Africa will be hosting on

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behalf of the African Union, AU a Water Investment Summit because how water is funded is very skew. There is no priority that is given to water. The entire 55 countries of this continent have requested South Africa to host because there are good stories to tell.

Yes, we might not have covered everyone who we... [Inaudible] ... but when we say, the people shall govern, we mean calling all water users, the society, the private sector, traditional leaders and civil servants to protect our water, to protect our infrastructure, to participate in water committees. For us to be able to carry this mandate ...

IsiXhosa:

... yamanzi ukuze sikwazi sonke ukuba abantu bafumane amanzi, uhlahlo lwabiwo-mali esithetha ngalo kulo nyaka-mali ...

English:

... is R26 billion 678 and ...

IsiXhosa:

... sicinga ukuba kule Ndlu akukho mntu uza kuma apha athi ...

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English:

... I reject. You reject; we reject you. You reject; we reject you.

IsiXhosa:

Anikwazi ukungavumelani namanzi, ningavumelani nohlahlo lwabiwo-mali.

English:

When you need water, how are we going to work when you reject the budget? You reject; I reject you. Thank you very much.

[Time expired.]

Mr S L DITHEBE: Hon Chairperson, hon members, Minister of Water and Sanitation, Pemmy Majodina, Deputy Minister, David Mahlobo, Deputy Minister, Sello Seitlholo, Director-General of Water and Sanitation, Sean Phillips, all senior officials of Department of Water and Sanitation, all leadership, collectives and executives of Department of Water and Sanitation entities, fellow South Africans, the ANC vehemently supports this Budget Vote.

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As we gather here to deliberate upon and debate the budget of Department of Water and Sanitation, its strategic plans and annual performance plans, we do so on the back of a very strong mandate that this House gave the President and the national executive to commence the establishment of the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency. A brand-new state-owned company that will replace the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority, the Department of Water and Sanitation's Water Trading Entity and Infrastructure Unit. This will pave way for the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency, NWRIA, to borrow money on the market and finance the solely needed water resource infrastructure to protect and advance the economy and social well-being of all South Africans for their continued prosperity, quality of life and freedom.

We salute the ANC-led sixth administration for this forward-looking approach whose primary purpose is to give effect to Section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution which is about sufficient food and water. We venture to say the six sustainable development goals on water and sanitation finds expression through its domestication and unwavering commitment to the realisation of imperatives of the National Development Plan and the National Water Resource Strategy.

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I can hear the predictably naysaying and doom saying opposition shout that the people have no water. We of the ANC say that those who oppose this budget are disingenuous, delirious, hypocritical and cognitively dissonant because they claim to speak on behalf of the poor and various sections of the South African voters and the populace at large, while at the same time opposing the adoption of the very fiscal instrument that is set to improve their living conditions. Get this very clear, the people are not fighting for the crazy and warped ideas in your heads. They want clean, safe drinking water as and when they need it, and they want it now. They want a safely managed sanitation, and they want it now.

The NWRIA will build on the firm foundation of the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority, TCTA, the Water Trading Entity, WTE, and infrastructure unit of the department and safely secure our water resources. To this end, the ANC-led Government of National Unity, GNU, intends to eliminate all risk factors such as the water tankers mafia, and some of you know something about that, infrastructure, theft and vandalism ...

Mr S I GAMA: Hon Dithebe is ... [Inaudible.] ... and pointing fingers at us.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, no, no. Read the Rules, hon member. Continue, hon Dithebe.

Mr S L DITHEBE: Theft and vandalism, tender masterminds, invoice payment facilitators and 10% collectors. For its part, the ANC in 2025 irrevocably commits to work with communities, community organisations, traditional authorities and other progressive non-state actors to ensure that every drop of water counts. The ANC encourages struggling municipalities to pull their water and sanitation assets. To create special purpose vehicles that will ensure an efficient conservation management and reticulation of clean and safe drinking water, as well as safe management of sanitation. This is for purposes of retaining and sustaining the Blue Drop and Green Drop Assessment reports and the Non-Revenue Water Assessment reports respectively.

We say this while cognizant of the critical stage of the 105 water service authorities whose wastewater treatment plants, pump stations and water reticulation networks have aged and fallen into disrepair overtime. These are either being upgraded or replaced because many of them were designed during apartheid and served a minority of the white population, and

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they must now serve the entire population of 63 million South Africans.

In doing so, we choose to not wring our hands or resign into hopelessness, pessimism, cynicism, or simply cut on the sidelines. We choose to be resolute in finding solutions. To this end, the ANC refuses to be bogged down by obstacles. We choose instead to focus on practical solutions, thus bringing laser being focus, ingenuity and optimism to challenges by doing the following: Upgrade water and energy storage capacity, ensure infrastructure maintenance, deploy the right skill sets to maintain the water and sanitation infrastructure, ring-fence revenue from water, energy and waste.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Reddy, while you may interject, you cannot deliver running commentary. You are next on the list. Please continue, hon Dithebe. Desist from that please. Just desist from that. Continue, hon Dithebe.

Mr S L DITHEBE: Thank you, Chairperson. That is the typical noise and voluble, hon Reddy. I will continue with my speech. Ring-fence revenue from water, energy and waste, protect all

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our water and sanitation infrastructure from vandalism and theft by actively engaging communities and community organisations, as well as parliamentary oversight in support of what our security apparatus ordinarily does.

The ANC welcomes allocations of R26,7 billion, R25 billion and R23,3 billion in the 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027 financial years, respectively. The allocation to the main account includes conditional infrastructure grants for municipal water services totalling R36,93 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF. This includes R19,8 billion for the Regional Park Infrastructure grant and R17,1 billion for Water Services Infrastructure grant. That water as a resource is an essential condition for a sound jobs plan and an inclusive growth and industrialization, which our country so solely needs cannot be gainsaid, and that's sad.

We strongly urge the Minister and the department to ensure that all projects are concluded on time and within budget to deliver impact and sustainable livelihoods in our communities. This includes but is not limited to the following: Bucket eradication programme, building dams, ensuring the liquidity of and growing concern status of water boards, by getting

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water service authorities to pay them on time all the time and recycling wastewater and desalinating it to expand our water mix.

The ANC remains acutely aware of the need to prudently deploy all resources at the disposal of the department to achieve all the objectives of the NWRS, that is the National Water Resource Strategy. To this end, we urge the department to relentlessly pursue the eight targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, each with its own indicator, as well as the National Development Plans, NDP, goals and targets in this regard.

The ANC is deeply encouraged by the department's collaboration with the Special Investigating Unit to recover hundreds of millions wasted in the infamous War and Leaks Programme, as well as those funds lost to the state through malfeasance and corruption on the part of Department of Water and Sanitation officials.

To conclude, this transformation and reform we will pursue side by side with every fibre of our being until we are fundamentally changed the social conditions of our multi

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forces and all South Africans. Have you heard? Thank you, Chair.

Mr V G REDDY: House Chair, I rise on behalf of the MK party and the people of South Africa to reject this budget with all the strength in my heart and in my spirit. It took a police general and not Parliament to expose the rot at the highest level.

Yes, Government of National Unity, GNU partners, you are sitting with Minister who are accused of being in bed with drug lords. Take a note of that. What General Mkhwanazi did when he exposed corruption involving the Minister of Police, Senzo Mchunu who was coincidentally the former Minister of Water and Sanitation, it proved that Parliament and the so called GNU have failed in their oversight duty.

When politicians start to chase Cabinet posts, blue lights and perks, they abandon their duty to hold Ministers accountable. Now, I'm deviating from my speech, and I want to respond to you Minister. The Minister constantly says, it's not my problem.

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In fact, when we first came in here, she says, when communities are crying out for water, it's not my problem. In her speech here today, she articulated the very same thing she has been saying ever since the seventh administration came into being.

Minister, our people are facing a deepening water crisis. From Hammanskraal to Giyani, from rural schools in Limpopo to KwaZulu-Natal to urban townships in Johannesburg, Cape Town and in Durban. Communities are dying of cholera. Schools are forced to shut their doors and millions rely on dirty rivers and unreliable tankers. Minister, this is a national disgrace

Just today as I entered here, I received an e-mail from a leader in Lusikisiki saying they're drinking water from a river that's infested with some sort of a disease and the entire village is affected. They're calling on Gift of the Givers to help them.

Now I'm speaking to you from a heart. If this doesn't move you as a national leader in this country, then I don't know what is going to move you. We can't be in denial and say this is not my problem.

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Today we have a Minister that's quoting Mr Ramaphosa, who laments the state of our water infrastructure, as if he were some shocked visitor, he is always shocked about things. You cannot lament a crisis that you created. You are the architects. You are the architects of this disaster. You are like the arsonists that's now crying about the fire. You started the fire and now you complain about the fire.

Minister, you hide behind the Constitution and the Water Services Act. You're telling municipalities that they are responsible for bringing water to the taps but let me educate you on your own mandate. You see, the Constitution Schedule 4, Part B, it may assign water supply services to local government, but section 1557 explicitly says national and provincial governments must support and strengthen municipalities to manage and execute their functions.

Moreover, section 3 of the Water Services Act 108 of 1997 guarantees that every person has the right to access basic water supply and sanitation. And who is responsible for ensuring this right? You, hon Minister and your department.

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Your department's own annual performance plans, APP's and budget frameworks talk about providing direct support to municipalities.

You talk about conditional grants, capacity building and emergency interventions. But when communities are crying out, you're pointing fingers saying it's not my problem. How do you go in the local government elections or national elections to the same communities that you are saying it's not my problem to. Are you going to ask them to support you. They're not going to support you.

The Sol Plaatje Municipality that you spoke about today, just this morning, I got calls from that municipality. They haven't had water for three weeks and you talk about producing 21 megalitres of water to Sol Plaatje. What is that? Where are you living in cuckoo land. When municipalities fail because of cadre deployment, corruption and under underfunding, you are duty bound to intervene. You cannot wash your hands like Pontius Pilate and say it is not my job, it's not my problem.

Our people do not drink constitutional clauses or fancy policy papers. They want water in the taps, safe and reliable. They

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want sanitation that works. The President's crocodile tears, and your selective constitutional lectures are nothing but political theatre. We have seen enough of this.

We reject this budget because it entrenches mediocrity. It rewards failure and continues to pour billions into projects that never deliver. Communities are dying. The one ANC member here spoke about bucket eradication. Show me one bucket eradication programme that has been completed. Absolutely nothing. And yet billions are being poured into this. Minister, the Constitution is not your shield. It is your marching order. Until you and your President stop playing blame games and start delivering, your lamentations will remain hollow echoes in a thirsty land. Now I'll be failing in my duty if I didn't go to what MK party will do when we take over.

You know what we're going to do? We're going to collapse all these water boards. We'll have only nine provincial water boards. Do you know that this department paid one water irrigation scheme board R1,4 billion this year in February for a project that has not even started? And you didn't even blink an eyelid.

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Yes, Minister, this is not about bad governance. It's also a betrayal of the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter declared. the people shall share in the country's wealth and promised housing and security for all. As MK party, we don't just talk, we act. That's why we table the Water Services Amendment Bill to abolish wasteful catchment management agencies.

We want to stop the private dam ownership. We want to guarantee only nine water boards. We will keep water under public democratic control forever. Under an MK government, we will declare a national state of emergency. We will not act like there is no crisis. We will create a centralised procurement system. We will ringfence water budgets. We will build desalination plants. We will deploy functional water boards and municipalities to fix infrastructure. We will prosecute corrupt officials, and we will blacklist tender fraudsters.

MK stands with the people. We stand with every mother that's spending our last rand on water. We stand with every child that is buckets instead of books. We stand with every community forced to beg for their basic human rights. We will fight in this House. We will fight in the courts. We will

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fight on the streets until every tap runs and every toilet flushes!

IsiZulu:

Amandla!

IsiXhosa:

Nksz F MBIKO: Sihlalo weNdlu ...

English:

... and hon members, good afternoon.

IsiXhosa:

Lo uthethayo nguMaDlamini uJama kaSjadu onkaba yakhe iseDutywa kwisithili saseGwadana phantsi koMaspala weNgingqi iMbhashe eMpuma Koloni. Ndime kweli qonga ngokuthunywa ngabavoti beDA, uninzi lwabo ingooqhiyankulu abangazange balubeka unyawo lwabo esikolweni, kodwa bazinxanelwe iinkonzo ezivela kurhulumente.

English:

Chairperson, before the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals were formally launched in 2015, on which the DA bases its socioeconomic policies on, the UN had long urged countries

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to not just treat water and sanitation provision as a mere governance exercise, but to focus on the potential of unlocking opportunities and providing human dignity. Sadly, the Department of Water and Sanitation in successive administration has not heeded this plea, as the rural communities in South Africa continue to live without clean water and access to sanitation.

IsiXhosa:

Uluntu loMasipala weNgingqi iMnquma alunawo amanzi kuba iDama laseGcuwa linomthamo omncinci kuba ligcwele isanti ngaphantsi. Loo nto yenza ukuba likhawleze ligcwale liphuphume xa kunetha. Abahlali bacela ukuba kugutyulwe le santi kweli dama.

Owayesakuba nguMphathiswa wezaManzi noGutyulo lweLindle uMama uLindiwe Sisulu sele esuka kuzibonela eli dama. Wemka ethembisile ukuba uza kulwakha alonyuse udonga lwedama ukuze libe nomthamo ongcono, kuba idolophu yaseGcuwa neelali zixhomekeke kweli dama. Uluntu lwaseMnquma lusajonge enkalweni lulinde ukuza kukaNxele.

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Le ngxaki yamanzi ayiphelelanga nje eMnquma. Abantu baseMakanda sele beneminyaka bekhazela amanzi angekhoyo. Uyakukhumbula ke Sihlalo ukuba ...

English:

... the Rhodes University and the Eastern Cape High Court ...

IsiXhosa:

... ziseMakanda kwaye nazo ziyachaphazeleka kukungabikho kwamanzi.

English:

Rhodes University accounts for the majority of Makanda's gross domestic product, GDP. Until there is an adequate supply of water, the town's economy will never grow to deliver necessary jobs. While water tanking has been introduced by the local municipalities to provide temporary or emergency water supply to areas experiencing work outages, it has been plagued by many challenges. This has led to the now known as the water tanker mafia. The Port St John's Water Scheme ...

IsiXhosa:

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... ekwilali yaseGqubeni kwiWadi 12 yaqala ukwakhiwa ngowama-2003, ayikagqitywa nangoku. Sekuphele iminyaka engamashumi amabini urhulumente efaka imali kulo msebenzi kodwa akukho ziphumo zincomekayo

English:

Chairperson, where the DA governs, we have shown that we can deliver quality services. Overstrand in the Western Cape has the best drinking water in the country, having obtained 99% on its Blue Drop assessment as well as 101% in the lowest rate of water losses. Why not the rest of South Africa? It can be done, not overnight, but you can ensure quality water and sanitation to all of our 60 million people of this country.

IsiXhosa:

Intshontsho lerhamba lifundiswa ngunina ukufutha. Ukuba urhulumente kazwelonke urhuqa izithende akagxanyi ukusa iinkonzo ebantwini, kuza kubanjalo nakwaba bancinci oorhulumente bazakurhuqa iinyawo bebona kurhulumente kazwelonke.

English:

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Access to water and sanitation is a fundamental human right in our Bill of Rights. It is paramount to health and dignity. Thank you very much.

IsiZulu:

Nk M S KHAWULA: Hhayi, angikwazi ukuyesekela. Angibingelele uMongameli wami u-Julius Malema. Siyanimema ngomhlaka 26 la eKhayelisha. Ngiyabonga. Salani kahle. Sengingena endabeni engize ngayo, ... ngoba nina nifuna ukubukela enezithombe. Heyi, Heyi! Ngicela nithule! Uyabona la kuse-106, Waterloo. Akhona amamitha, kodwa amanzi aqanyuliwe ngoba kufanele kungene amaloli alabo abathole ithenda lokufaka amanzi. Ngikhuluma nani zigebengu ndini. Lana ...

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, the member has a right to make a speech. Your party will get an opportunity too if they haven't already had one to make a speech. Let's respect one another, please. Please continue.

IsiZulu:

Nk M S KHAWULA: Uyabona la, kuse-Vryheid, Sihlalo. Abantu babekhala bevale umgwaqo, bekhalela amanzi, kunokuthi

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usoDolobha aye ayolalela izikhalo zabantu, wathumela amaphoyisa, adubula abantu. Niyangizwa ukuthi ngithini? Anginaso isikhathi sokudlala mina.

La kuse-Ward 59 eNdwedwe, Sihlalo. Bafaka iphampu yamanzi, bafaka namathangi ngoba bathembise abantu, lezi zigebengu, bethi bazobafakela amanzi eminyakeni emihlanu eyedlule. Lona unyaka wesithupha abakaze babuyela kuleya ndawo. Abantu bakulendawo abanawo amanzi.

Sengingena odabeni ke manje. Lana sinenkinga yabantu abatholakala bashonile ngenxa yokuthi baphuza amanzi angcolile baphuza nezilwane. Uma sifuna ukwazi ukuthi ikuphi nendawo. Abafuni ukusitshela. Umbuzo wami uthi: Le miphefumulo eshonile izobuyiselwa kanjani kubantu?

Ezikoleni sinenkinga Ngqongqoshe nawe Sihlalo. Izikole zonke azinawo amanzi. Esikoleni sase-Waterloo amanzi awekho. Kuthiwa lezi zikole azikwazi ukufakelwa omasipala amanzi ngoba zikweleta uMngeni Water. Manje umbuzo uthi: Izingane kuthiwa kufanele zifunde kanjani? Bona othisha kufanele bafundise kanjani?

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Okwesibili okubuhlungu kunakho konke, amanzi ayimpilo. Le nto yalezi zinqola ezithela amanzi, iyona eyinkinga kakhulu. Akusho ukuthi amanzi awekho, amanzi akhona, ayanqanyulwa ngoba kwenzelwa ukuthi kungene lamaloli amanzi. Njengamanje kunamaloli amasha sha, yilo R26 billion enikhuluma ngawo nalamanikiniki angaphandle. Bajabule bafile bazohamba bayothenga ini, amanzi, ehe.

Lana kuseMbhashe amanzi awekho, eNqamakhwe amanzi awekho, eGiyani amanzi awekho. Kungani ngempela izwe lonke libe nenkinga efanayo? Aniboni ngani ukuthi lento yinto yangamabomu ngenxa yethenda. Thina sifika la ePhalamende ngonyaka we-2024, safika nomgomo wokuthi lento yamathenda ayiphele ngoba yiwona kanye enza ukuthi abantu bangazitholi izidingo zabo. Sathi ayiphele ngoba kuceba abantu abambalwa, bese kuthi ekugcineni kuhlupheke abantu. Le nto ibuhlungu.

Ngqongqoshe ngiphinde futhi ngiphatheke kabuhlungu ngoba uma uNgqongqoshe engena eMnyangweni obekade unomunye umuntu, akube kusashiwo ukuthi lowo wonile. Mina ngathi: Kungani uma umuntu enze ubugebengu eMnyangweni wakhe angalandwa abuye azojeziswa? Bazoboshwa nini labantu abaxaphaza izimali zabantu na? Futhi lento ingiphatha kabi ngoba sigcina lapha sesidlala abantu.

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Lapha kunezingane ezigulayo, ezimila izilonda. Izingane ziyadlala azinandaba ukuthi yindle. Manje asingazokhohlisana lapha. Mina iyanginyanyisa indaba yenu. Ngize ngifise nokuthi ngithathe induku ngivele nginishaye nonke ngoba nina nicabanga ukuthi kuzodlalwa lana.

Emitholampilo uma ngabe udokotela ubethinte isigulu akakwazi ukudlulela kwesinye isiguli engagezanga izandla. Uma amanzi engekho nithi abantu balashwe kanjani?

English:

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Chair.

IsiZulu:

Uxolo Makhawula, uxolo mama.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Khawula, will you just take your seat please.

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: We can't allow this thing that is happening. Hon Maduna just opened the mic and howled. Can he be pleased removed from the House.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No.

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Hon Maduna, Maduna, the young one. There at the back.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon member! Switch off your microphone now. Hon Maduna, you drew my attention to what?

Mr N MADUNA: I just said on a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, no, no. Order, hon members, order! I didn't hear that. But what is your point of order?

Mr N MADUNA: Chairperson, I want to check if 'nyanyisa' is parliamentary?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): We will check on it, member and we will come back. No, no, no, hon members! Hon members, settle down. Hon Khawula, will you now complete your speech. I'll come back to you.

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IsiZulu:

Nk M S KHAWULA: Ngiyabonga Sihlalo, kodwa ngicela ningabanaki, labantu abayi emiphakathini. Ababambi ngisho izingcingo laba. Lalelani ke emakhaya kunento ebuhlungu eyenzekayo, yingakho ngihlale ngisho eKomidini lePhalamende ukuthi lento yokuthi sihlale lapha silokhu sibamba inkulumo-mpendulwano engathi shu, asihambeni siyobona. Emakhaya ngikutshela ukuthi angeke ukholwe, uthi uma uhamba emgwaqeni ubone imigqomo, imiphongolo ihleli kanje. Ilinde iloli elizofika ebusuku lithele manzi. Kwamaphumulo eMthandeni bengikhona. Asizwani nalabantu laba.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order hon members, your time has expired. Thank you.

IsiZulu:

Nk M S KHAWULA: Uyeza uMkhwanazi. Phambili Mkhwanazi babophe!

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Khawula, hon member, take your seat.

Ms M S KHAWULA: We support Mkhwanazi. We are sick and tired.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Khawula, no, when you are told your time is up, your time is up. Yes, please take your seat now.

Mr N M HADEBE: Hon Minister, while we welcome the R46,6 billion allocated for the 2025-26 financial year, we are deeply concerned about the widening gap between infrastructure development needs and actual budget availability. The department acknowledges that over R80 billion is required for mega-infrastructure projects, yet only R2,4 billion is available, less than 3% of what is needed. At this rate, it will take decades to address current backlogs.

We note the section 63 interventions underway in areas such as Hammanskraal, Matjhabeng, Maluti-a-Phofung and uMkhanyakude. We commend these efforts, but we call for clear timelines, availability, accountability mechanisms and community engagement in these interventions. The continued reliance on surface water is unsustainable. We support the department's initiatives to diversify the water mix, but these efforts must be fast-tracked.

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While the department has done well to curb underexpenditure, with just 0,1% underspent in 2024-25, we are concerned that Programme 3, Water Services management, suffered a budget decrease of R796 million this year. This programme should be the backbone of service delivery and prioritised accordingly.

We must also raise the ongoing issue of municipal debt to water boards. This poses a severe risk to the viability of the sector. While we support the Treasury's consideration to withhold a portion of the equitable share from defaulting municipalities, this must be implemented with fairness and transparency.

The Blue and Green Drop reports serve as a vital diagnostic tool for the sector. These reports highlight serious challenges in the quality of drinking water and the state of wastewater treatment across the country. What is clear is that many systems are under pressure, often due to aging infrastructure, limited technical capacity and increased demand. Instead of pointing fingers, we must see this as a call to action for co-ordinated support.

IsiZulu:

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Ngesizulu uma ukhuluma njalo sithi wafelwa inkezo emlonjeni.

English:

We urge the department to use these reports not just as an assessment mechanism, but as a road map for targeted investment, capacity-building and sustainable partnership, particularly in vulnerable and underresourced areas.

As the IFP, we want to emphasise the need for this department to prioritise water infrastructure maintenance as much as it invests in water infrastructure development. We are of the belief that the majority of water-related challenges our country faces is due to ailing water infrastructure that simply needs large-scale maintenance, using modern materials.

On a positive note, we welcome the department's plans to complete 42 regional bulk infrastructure projects and create 580 job opportunities during the year under review.

We also support the prioritisation of projects such as the Clanwilliam Dam, the uMzimvubu Water Project and the uMkhomazi Water Project, all of which have the potential to unlock economic development and enhance rural water access.

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We support this Budget Vote and we expect rigorous implementation and oversight, and responsiveness from the department. Water must not only flow through pipes. It must flow through every corner of our policy consciousness.

We call for a water-secure South Africa, one where every community, urban and rural, has reliable access to safe water and dignified sanitation. We urge the department to prioritise rural development and restore decaying infrastructure.

Lastly, I know that the process through which many of you are brought here is ... to brainwash you into believing that you have never been to this House. I want to tell you, you once ruled, you once presided over this House. [Time expired.]

IsiZulu:

Nk M S KHAWULA: Sihlalo, yimina.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Who wants to be recognised? Order. Hon Mathopa, will you take your seat please?

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IsiZulu:

Nk M S KHAWULA: Ngikhohliwe ukusho ukuthi angisesekeli le sabiwomali.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you. Hon members, hon members. Order, hon members. Order. Order, hon members. I will request the Whips of the EFF to explain to the hon Khawula that the entire speech was focused on that. So what she said is not a surprise. The next speaker may now continue. Hon Mathopa.

Ms M L MATHOPA: Minister ...

IsiZulu:

... sanibonani ...

English:

... according to the government's policies, you oversee and are accountable for the department. Water is not a privilege. It is a fundamental right enshrined in our Constitution. Sanitation is not a luxury. It is the foundation of human dignity.

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On behalf of the PA, we support Budget Vote No 41, but we demand accountability. As part of the government of national unity, GNU, we insist that the promises made in the 2025 state of the nation address regarding water and sanitation must be upheld. The people of South Africa can no longer endure broken promises and broken pipes.

Our nation is not poor in water. It is poor in leadership. While administrative failures persist, nearly half of our water infrastructure is on the brink of collapse due to mismanagement. Millions still lack daily access to clean water. Pit and bucket toilets, a relic of apartheid indignity, remain in schools, clinics and informal settlements. This is not just a service-delivery failure. It is a violation of justice and under this GNU we refuse to accept this as normal.

The PA's mandate ... delivery without compromise. We will not endorse a budget that prioritises paper over people. The R139 billion allocated for strategic water infrastructure must be free from corruption, every rand accounted for, every project transparent, be a catalyst for jobs, ensure that promised employment opportunities for our people materialise,

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and be monitored closely for underexpenditure, wasteful spending or mismanagement with zero tolerance.

We note the priorities identified in the report, but we wish that strict discipline and monitoring measures shall be in place, ensuring that these priorities be achieved.

Seeing that water supply and sanitation services are a function over which municipalities have executive authority, we call on the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to intervene. Where there is a failure of municipal water and sanitation services, we call on the Minister to enforce strict oversight, ensuring that emergency interventions are prioritised, a public real-time dashboard tracking infrastructure failures and repairs ... rapid response teams ... deployed to crisis hit municipalities, climate-resilient solutions including rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling integrated into new developments ... consequence management that is not negotiable, performance-based contracts ... for officials, failure to deliver must have consequences, swift legal action against corruption not endless pending investigations, and an independent water ombud to hold government accountable.

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Transformation and inclusion must accelerate. The slow pace of change in water management perpetuates inequality. Historical disadvantaged individuals and communities must benefit from jobs, skills and contracts. We support this budget. [Time expired.]

IsiXhosa:

Ndiyabulela. [Thank you]

Afrikaans:

Mnr W W WESSELS: Agb Huisvoorsitter, daar is 'n groot krisis op die horison. Daar is groot moeilikheid op die horison. Suid-Afrika is 'n waterskaars land, met baie gebiede wat weens klimaatverandering al hoe meer woestynagtig word.

Gegewe dit en te midde daardie krisis, is daar terselfde tyd met hierdie meerjarige droogtes, dan ook 'n klomp lekkasies ... water wat net verlore gaan ... die skaars water wat net wegraak en wegsyfer weens swak instandhouding, veral op munisipale vlak uit die aard van die saak.

U is korrek, agb Reddy. Amper 40% van ons water gaan verlore as gevolg van lekkasies. Dan is daar meer as ...

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English:

An HON MEMBER: Chair?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, hon member, why do you want to be recognised?

An HON MEMBER: Chair, will you please tell the interpreters to assist us because we can hardly hear what the hon member is saying.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, thank you. May I ask the NA Table to attend to the matter immediately please? You may proceed, hon Wessels.

Afrikaans:

Mnr W W WESSELS: Dan, uit die aard van die saak is daar ook ons water rioolsuiweringsaanlegte wat nie funksioneer nie. Dit besoedel en veroorsaak dat rou riool in ons waterbronne inloop.

English:

The Minister is correct that municipalities and the failures of local government is responsible for this. They have the

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failure and they are to blame for the failures. They are irresponsible, they don't act when there's noncompliance and they just don't care about the livelihood, and the health and safety of their residents.

However, the hon Reddy is also correct that even if it is the failure of local government, it is the problem of the national department because it is all our problem. It is a collective problem, because one day in the very near future, if we don't act now and act innovatively, and really act to solve this crisis and plan ahead to address our water scarcity and our water losses, we will have a complete day zero. It won't be limited to one town as it is now or to a few towns. It will be the whole South Africa. If members thought that load shedding created a lot of problems and a lot of economic turmoil, complete scarcity and a complete day zero in terms of water will have a dire and complete negative impact on everybody. We need to act now.

That is also why it is unacceptable that the Lesotho Highlands scheme is still not finished, and that there is no transparency with regard to the money spent, the timelines and all the working that is taking place there. That scheme is

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necessary, especially to save Gauteng from a day zero. If that does not happen ... and that's why almost 14 years ago the planning was for that scheme to take place and the investment was done.

More needs to be done. More needs to be done with less. I want to repeat the call that I made to the Minister last year. Minister, yes, municipal officials transgress, but be the one who goes to the police station to lay criminal charges against them. I thank you. [Time expired.]

Ms M P KOBE: House Chairperson, ActionSA rises in support of Budget Vote for Water and Sanitation. Wait! Our support is rooted in critical assessment of the department's performance over the past year and the impact of the Ministry's work on the lives of ordinary South Africans. South Africa is at the precipice of a deepening water crisis with communities across the country experiencing ongoing shortages. At the heart of this crisis lies aging infrastructure and ineffective municipalities resulting in the loss of 47% of our water due to water leaks, illegal connections and poor management.

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The department has allocated R14,9 billion in the 2025-26 financial year to improve strategic infrastructure such as dams and bulk pipelines. While this constitutes 56% of the overall departmental budget, it reflects a real decrease R796 million. This reduction, we are afraid, will inevitably delay critical projects and undermine service delivery.

Equally worrying, is the skills deficit across water service authorities. A lack of technical expertise and weak process controls continues to cripple performance. Reform is essential to ensure that municipality water services are professionally managed and financially sustainable. We urge that significant investment be made in capacitating water service authorities with the necessary skills.

Three weeks ago, alongside Deputy Minister, Seitholo, who in the spirit of accountability and transparency invited us on an oversight visit to Mogalakwena Municipality. We witnessed firsthand there the impact of poorly managed and incapacitated water service authorities. This municipality is sitting at a vacancy rate of 36% in the water department. It is unable to comply with even the most basic water and sanitation standards

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and provide reliable water supply to this community despite an 85% collection rate from residents, businesses and mines.

Political appointments have become the order of the day in this municipality with former teachers and other civil servants being rewarded with jobs in a highly technical sector. This undermines service delivery. Sadly, this is not an isolated case, over 100 water service authorities across the country face similar dysfunction. Minister, we welcome the department's plan to intervene and provide support to these municipalities to ensure continued service delivery. We also welcome the commitment to implement the portfolio committee's recommendation to withhold equitable share from defaulting municipalities compelling them to settle their debts to water boards. This signals a shift towards accountability and reform.

As ActionSA, we believe that turning this crisis around requires strong leadership, political will proper oversight and effective legislation, qualities this department has begun to show. Minister, we look forward to the finalisation of the Water Services Amendment Bill, which we believe will strengthen accountability and end the ineffective

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intergovernmental practices that have plagued service delivery.

The work is far from over, Minister, even with these registered victories we still have a long way to go. Nevertheless, working with municipalities like the City of Tshwane, which has fully paid its debt to the water board and by and large capacitated its water department with skilled technocrats and invested significantly in its infrastructure, we can continue to have good stories to tell in our communities. ActionSA supports this budget.

UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

(Ruling)

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, before I call the next speaker I just want to make the following ruling. There was a point of order earlier about the ... [Interjections.] ... Hon member, I am busy addressing the House. According to the rules, you must listen.

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There was a point of order that was raised earlier about a particular word that was used by the hon Khawula. The procedural advice I received is as follows: The word used is interpreted as, and I quote: Disgusting. The hon member did not say any specific person in the House is disgusting but referred to a situation pertaining to service delivery. The hon member is thus not out of order.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION (Mr I S Seithloho): Hon House Chairperson; hon Minister, Pemmy Majodina; hon Deputy Minister, Mahlobo; the chairperson of the portfolio committee, Mr Leon Basson; hon Members of Parliament; the director-general; managers of the Department of Water and Sanitation and fellow South Africans, one of the most fundamental truths we must agree upon as leaders of the seventh administration is that, we cannot fix South Africa unless we fix municipalities.

Chairperson, from roads to energy, to water and sanitation, nothing will work unless we agree to urgently arrest the decline of municipalities. The high levels of nonrevenue water in municipalities coupled with the fact that there is no legal obligation for municipalities to use revenue from the sale of

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water for the water function, has resulted in some municipalities failing to pay their invoices to water boards as hon members have already indicated.

By the end of February 2025, the total debt owed by municipalities to the water boards stood at R24 billion including interests for long outstanding debt. We reported to Parliament that this situation posed a grave risk to the financial sustainability of the whole water value chain the Minister indicated highlighting the Vaal Central, as well as Magalies water. It is a risk that has to be mitigated urgently and with determination.

Chairperson, as the Minister indicated in the Budget Speech last year, to address this the department and the water boards put in place strengthened and standardized debt collection processes. She also indicate that one of our immediate priorities would be to work collaboratively with the colleagues in Cabinet, particularly, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to find sustainable solutions. This has been done.

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During the past financial year, we obtained the National Treasury agreement to withhold the equitable share of municipalities which refuse to pay their current invoices to water boards in full. The withholding of equitable share allocations is only implemented as a last resort when all other measures to encourage municipalities to pay their current invoices in full have failed. It is an undesirable measure but a necessary one in order to protect the water sector as a whole.

I must pause here, hon Chairperson, to indicate that the collapse of the water sector would have far reaching ramifications for our national security, as well as our economy. Therefore, every possible measure must be taken to protect the stability and viability of the sector. On the request of the department, the National Treasury started to withhold the equitable share allocations of 12 municipalities since December last year. This is starting to have a positive impact on the finances of the relevant water boards. These withholdings of equitable share allocations will continue until the worst paying municipalities regularly pay their current invoices to the water boards in full.

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At the end of the last financial year, we also obtained the approval of the National Treasury for a debt write-off mechanism for the long outstanding debts owed by municipalities to the water boards. All the water boards have been informed of this mechanism and the required processes to implement it. Some of the water boards will start implementing this in this current financial year. While these efforts are crucial, it is critical to work together to strengthen the regulation of the water sector overall.

Hon House Chairperson, my role within the department has been to oversee regulation compliance and enforcement in terms of the management of pollution of our water resources. I have since travelled to eight provinces and over 30 municipalities to assess the state of water pollution in our country. What we witnessed is nothing short of a crisis. Water pollution is a silent epidemic. A colossal iceberg lacking beneath the surface threatening to plunge us into a disaster if we do not change course. It affects the entire water value chain, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases and driving up the cost of treating water to meet drinking standards.

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This crisis jeopardises food security and undermines our tourism industry impacting the livelihoods of countless South Africans. We cannot ignore the stark reality that pollution has made many of our dams less profitable for recreation and tourism. The Hartbeespoort Dam, a once vibrant destination, now suffers from pollutions that deters visitors. Similarly, the closure of beaches in eThekweni Municipality, due to high E.coli levels from untreated wastewater has severely impacted the travel and tourism sector stifling growth and job creation.

We must unite and act urgently to confront the water pollution crisis. Regulatory responses require collaboration among various government departments, the private sector stakeholders and citizens. We have, for example, launched the Vaal River anti-pollution forum to improve the health of this critical river system through a collaborative approach. We are working hard towards publishing a polluters register to hold individuals accountable for their role in polluting our water resources.

Additionally, we are committed to establishing an independent water regulator and implementing key measures through the

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Water Services Amendment Bill and the National Water Amendment Bill to enhance regulation across the sector. We must continue to work together, unite in our efforts to build the thriving economy that creates jobs for all South Africans. Together, we can turn the tide and ensure sustainable future for our water resources and our communities. I thank you.

Rev K R J MESHOE: Hon Chairperson, the ACDP acknowledges the progress made in expanding access to piped water since 1994, yet water security remains a pipe dream for millions.

We have long warned that drought is not our greatest threat, systemic failure is.

In 2022 nearly 50% of water purchased by municipalities was lost to leaks, theft and decaying infrastructure. This is not merely inefficiency, it is negligence.

Expenditure under this vote is projected to rise only by an annual rate of 11,9% from R23,9 billion in 2024-25, to R26,7 billion in 2025-26.

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The ACDP supports the intent behind the National Water and Sanitation Master Plan. However, the plan is being undermined by criminal actors, water tank mafias, who allegedly sabotage infrastructure for gain. This criminality must be prioritized by law enforcement and eradicated with urgency.

Water is life. Without decisive and sustained reform our infrastructure will not just erode, it will collapse, dragging us back over 100 years.

The President declared water an emergency at the 2025 Water and Sanitation Indaba. Yet, his declaration rings hollow when 105 of 144 water service authorities remain in crisis.

South Africa continues to reject repeated offers of technology from Israel, renowned for its innovative water solutions, including the salination and water reuse.

Since 2016 these offers have been rejected, not for technical reasons, but for political ideology, at the cost of collapsing municipal water systems.

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The ACDP urges the department to embrace proven global technologies, pipe bots, mini robots that inspect and repair live pipelines internal, artificial intelligence, AI-driven leak detection systems and ... [Inaudible.] ... in place pipe technology, which restores pipelines without excavation.

And of that water we do receive, the 2024 Blue Drop Report reveals that nearly half our drinking water systems are unsafe, an alarming public health risk and a grave constitutional failure.

Urgent investment is needed in the salination, agricultural wastewater recycling and rainwater harvesting, licensing of water service provider ... [Time expired.] ... tanki rra [Thank you sir].

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: Chairperson, I think we must all admit that an idea of a water crisis at the scale of the energy challenges that we faced with Eskom and loadshedding is inconceivable. We can't afford it as a country economically, but more than anything, it would threaten the dignity of so many South Africans, which is already in the works, as we speak now.

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South Africa's water infrastructure is crumbling. We face the collapse of water boards and it's a deepening crisis. But despite the urgent need, the allocated budget remains insufficient, Minister.

The Minister recently disclosed that the department requires R89,9 billion over the next decade just to clear the infrastructure backlog. And that's not about new planned infrastructure, we're talking about refurbishments, upgrades and new builds to meet the growing demand. And when you look at the 2025-26 budget we're not seeing those values, and that risks further deterioration.

The audit outcomes for the past year are also deeply concerning, with over 747 of 5 453 targeted water supply projects completed, and that's only 13%. Bucket sanitation projects, less than 6% of their targets and dam rehabilitation almost entirely neglected. So, it was good, Minister, to hear about the progress that we're starting to see when it comes to the dams.

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We do have to note that a lot of this that we see is aided and abetted by corruption, and that continues to plague sanitation tenders, water maintenance and reticulation projects.

The department itself admits the core hurdles, which are poor maintenance, recurrent droughts driven by climate change, inequitable access and declining water quality and a shortage of skilled engineers. But this analysis is not enough, especially if we don't get to the root cause of corruption in the department.

As BOSA we call for a significant investment in infrastructure maintenance, merit-based appointments of qualified engineers and leaders to water sector authorities, ensuring that we have skilled leadership and the development of localized wastewater treatment for community and businesses, paired with training and capacity building. So, we put that power back into communities. And of course, the acceleration of the construction of new dams and the improvement of those that already exist.

Finally, as BOSA we initiated litigation against water shedding in hospitals and schools and we are proceeding with

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that. Because we condemn water cuts to these institutions, they are unconstitutional and deeply, deeply harmful. Our courts will be asked to compel municipalities and the departments to ensure that these institutions have water. I thank you.

Mr S J MOORE: Hon Chair, hon Minister, hon Deputy Ministers, hon members and fellow South Africans. Water crises across South Africa describe the country inherited by the Seventh Parliament.

For years, hard-earned taxpayer funds have funnelled through broken infrastructure only to leak into the hands of the undeserving.

The Seventh Parliament inherits a country where water and sanitation, essential to dignity and development, have become luxuries in one of the most unequal nations on earth.

Should we not have changed this, colleagues, when we next rise to face the electorate again, voters will not be kind to us?

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Water and sanitation are more than the sustenance of life, they underpin our entire socio economy. Every dry tap means a business not open, workers not earning, patients denied the dignity of hygiene.

Every sewage spill is a community that cannot enjoy its environment, where residents cannot even leave their homes.

In the past year we have seen setbacks and progress. We face the choice. Tolerate failure or commit to rebuilding services that work.

We can live in a country where politicians fold their arms in resignation, pointing fingers or one where public service lives up to its name.

Describing our water services as self-inflicted by municipalities, as the Minister has, we need to see them enforcing consequence management. And if you are accused of nefariousness, you belong nowhere near public resources.

Years of neglect and municipal failure have eroded our infrastructure. Water supply reliability stands only at 68%

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and almost half of our wastewater systems are in critical condition.

Municipal debt to water boards has passed R24 billion, threatening the institutions that provide bulk water to millions. This collapse could devastate communities and sabotage growth.

If we continue down this path, our country will become more unequal and less prosperous. But there is another path where we confront crises directly. An example is, as mentioned earlier, the Vaal River Anti-Pollution Forum, launched by Deputy Minister Seithloho. This was not a symbolic gesture, it was a clear intervention to rescue a critical water resource.

The Vaal has been degraded by years of sewage spills and weak enforcement. Now 16 catchment forums are being unified into a single platform that brings together municipalities, industries, civil society and regulators to coordinate action, monitor polluters and restore accountability.

The DA welcomes this initiative. More than that, we support the Deputy Minister's message from his speech earlier. Unless

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local governments get their houses in order, our national efforts will fall short. Minister, you said the same.

We applaud the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation, led by Leon Basson, for driving collaboration between National Treasury, Department of Co-operative Governance and traditional Affairs, CoGTA, and the Department of Water and Sanitation.

This multi departmental coordination has led to decisive action. Municipalities that fail to pay their bulk water bills are facing real consequences. And because of this, Magalies Water and Vaal Central Water Boards were saved from collapse.

Equitable share allocations have been withheld, where necessary, but this kind of joint action is what we need to preserve service delivery and protect jobs.

We are further encouraged by the department's decision to appoint water boards like Vaal Central Water Board to assist municipalities like Maluti-a-Phofung and Matjhabeng.

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These municipalities were in freefall, but now through targeted interventions, R5,4 billion in projects will now upgrade water and sanitation infrastructure. This means jobs in construction, improved reliability for residents and a foundation for investment in fragile towns.

In Giyani we have seen how we can turnaround the wrongs of corruption. The bulk pipeline from Nandoni Dam to Giyani was completed last year and the people are finally seeing progress. It shows that persistence and oversight can overcome failure.

We trust that the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, and law enforcement will hold those responsible to account.

And while the DA remains concerned about delays to departmental mega infrastructure projects like the Lesotho Highlands project. If done right, these projects hold enormous potential. Projects like the Lesotho Highlands project, Olifants River and uMkhomazi Dam represent, amongst others, R139 billion in investment. And are expected to create 20 000 construction jobs and 14 000 operational jobs. These are not

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just engineering feats, they are economic catalysts, if done right.

Hon members, we all acknowledge that big challenge in our sector is not at a national level, there are problems, but we are working, it is at the municipal level.

So, I must say, that we have seen that where the DA governs, we show what is possible, where infrastructure is maintained and forward planning is respected. In Cape Town pipe bursts have fallen by 55% over the past decade due to consistent preventative maintenance.

In Whitsun the DA-led government built South Africa's first reverse osmosis solar powered desalination plant. Producing 140kilolitres meters per day.

And in Nelson Mandela Bay DA-led governance drove down water losses and expanded borehole networks during drought.

These successes are not partisan victories, they are national examples of what can be achieved with accountability, professionalism and innovation.

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The DA is committed to sharing these models and to working across government to get things right. But there is more to do. Water boards remain under strain, the infrastructure backlog estimated at over R80 billion cannot be closed without new funding models.

Many municipalities are still unable or unwilling to collect revenue, manage staff or maintain basic assets, and that is why we are eager to engage, madam Minister, with the department's proposed amendments to the Water Services Act to push for a performance-based utility models, and to enable firmer intervention when municipalities collapse.

Chairperson, if we say the cause, we can rescue South Africa's water sector, we can make clean, reliable water the norm, we can restore faith in government. But that will require consistent oversight, honest leadership and political will.

The DA stands ready to support any initiative that brings dignity to our people and unlocks jobs and growth.

The signs of progress are real, but the road ahead is still long. Let us walk it together. I thank you.

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Ms B M KEGAKILWE: The ANC-led government guarantees fully functional, capable, and active water and sanitation institutions, water delivery quality, basic services to all South Africans, as enshrined in our progressive and right-based democratic Constitution. House Chairperson, hon Minister Pemmy Majodina, Deputy Ministers Mr David Mahlobo and Mr Sello Seithlholo, hon members, the ANC in this august House wishes to declare its support for the Budget Vote as tabled by the Minister of Water and Sanitation. We recognise the challenges facing the water and sanitation sector, which includes, among others, the need to increase funding and the restoration of functionality for the water services authority to operate effectively and provide water and sanitation services as per department's norms and standards.

However, we are confident in the budget and the department plans and, in particular, the commitment by the ANC-led government to prioritise restoring the functionality while also building the capacity and the capabilities of public entities to deliver on the mandate of providing quality basic services to all South Africans. The ANC acknowledges the department's efforts to match the water trading entity and the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority, paving the way for the

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creation of the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency.

This agency will function as a crucial tool to stimulate significantly more investment in water projects, encompassing financing and investment in raw water infrastructure projects. As the ANC in this august House, we will ensure that the establishment is completed as per the timeframe announced by President Ramaphosa. As a country, we need this important public entity in the water and sanitation sector, not only to drive infrastructure development, but also to achieve the government's strategic objective of eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable and equitable development, which includes promoting fundamental transformation of the water sector.

As part of steps towards the transformation of the water sector, the department is in the process to amend the National Water Act as a mechanism to provide for the equitable and sustainable use and protection of water resources for the current generation, while also making sure water security and future generation is also achieved. As an organisation dedicated to social justice, the ANC-led government welcomes the legislative reforms to ensure the prohibition of

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discrimination and redress by allocating trading licenses for water to historically disadvantaged households and communities. As the ANC, we have prioritised improving water service authority to better serve their communities.

We support the proposed amendments to the National Water Services Act because they provide for legal requirements, such as licenses ...Comrade ... for water services authorities to operate. You behave like one, not like an hon member. And if they fail to meet their requirement standards, their license will be withdrawn.

In addition, the amendments provide for a mechanism to enforce compliance with sanitation regulations and the consequence thereof. These steps are basis for our support for the budget vote to fix water services and to better our service to our people. We must congratulate the department for successfully reducing their under-expenditure from R2,5 billion during 2021-22 and then in 2022-23, it was reduced to R860 million and then to R44 million in 2023-24. In the previous financial year, to less than 1%, we must congratulate the department. They are busy dealing with this. This is a clear demonstration

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of the ANC commitment to what is improved financial management and audit outcomes.

As the ANC, we wish to encourage the departments to focus on improving the quality of spending on water and sanitation grants while also advocating for a review for a local government funding model to enable the ring-fencing of water revenue. As the ANC, we believe that only through ring-fencing water revenue will the water service authorities be in a position to maintain, refurbish and rehabilitate the local water and sanitation infrastructure. For the ANC, it is imperative we build capable and functional public institution that can best support the mandate of the department and its constitutional obligation.

As this august House, we have the responsibility of overseeing the work of departmental entities that have in this Medium-Term Expenditure Framework allocated R20,8 billion to such entities as the Water Trading Entity, the Catchment Management Agency and the water board among others. The Catchment Management Agencies which have been allocated an amount of R247 million for this financial year have an important role to play in helping ensure fair and equitable access to water for

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socioeconomic development in the expansion of water user rights for historically disadvantaged communities and in guarantee sustainable access to small household farmers. As much as we advocate for equitable access to water for socioeconomic development, we are equally concerned about the pollution of the country's water ecosystem by the municipalities.

We recognise the strides of the department working with Catchment Management Agencies to institute legal actions against noncompliant water service authorities, but also for initiating and supporting community-led forums to address water pollution. We, in this committee, including EFF and MK party, must welcome the measure that has been put in place to monitor adherence to the department's regulations concerning disaster management and water pollution, ensuring the health of rivers and the restoration of the country's water ecosystem.

The department has allocated R244,3 million in the current financial year for the water service regulation programme, which is responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing regulations related to water resources, especially

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those concerning compliance, monitoring, and enforcement, dam safety, resource protection, and waste management. The department and its entities have a full support for the planned enforcement of compliance measures and consequence management against municipalities that do not comply. We implore you, hon Minister, to expeditiously provide the needed support to struggling water services authorities, either by invoking the secondary function of water boards or by adopting special purpose ...

Setswana:

O ne o le mo botong wena Reddy, didimala.

English:

... by invoking the secondary functions of the board or adopting a special purpose vehicle to take water over the sanitation. As the ANC, we support this, and then we hope that ...To the EFF, if you are so concerned about lack of water to the clinics, schools, then you must start doing the right thing of accepting the budget. And then to the MK party, you hon Reddy, you were confused. Because you said ...

[Interjections.]

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The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Kegakilwe. Hon Kegakilwe, please take a seat. Please take your seat. Before you come to the podium, hon Mente, hon Reddy, you are seated just in front. Your gestures are really... You are allowed to howl, but your gestures... If you are holding something, you can hit a person there. I am not arguing with you. I am not arguing with you. Yes, please heckle, it is allowed, but limit your gestures, they are too much. Hon Mente? [Interjections.] Hon Kegakilwe. Hon members, can I listen to hon Mente?

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Thank you very much, Chair. Chair, I think if the speaker on the podium ... on a point of order. If she wants to join the EFF, there is an online form. We have an online membership form.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Mente, there is no point of order there. Can you proceed, hon Kegakilwe?

Ms B M KEGAKILWE: Thank you, Chair. Through you to the hon Reddy. Hon Reddy, I am still saying that you are confused. You said the Minister is responsible for the provision of water - that is not the case. That is not. And later on, you said that

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the department is responsible for supporting the provinces.
Don't say that. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Thank you. [Interjections.]
Hon Reddy, can you switch off? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION (Mr M D Mahlobo):
Hon Chairperson, Minister, Deputy Minister, the Chair for our
portfolio committee, Members of Parliament, I do join all
those who are mourning the passing of His Excellency, Comrade
D D Mabuza. The debate today in terms of the terrain, the
world is facing a number of challenges and a number of crises
that are happening simultaneously that are threatening our
collective existence.

We are quite aware that in terms of the world is taking time
to recover from COVID-19, issues of trade wars, issues of
security challenges and climate change and most of the
Sustainable Development Goals are not going to be achieved. As
we stand today more than R2,2 billion people have no access to
water, 3,6 billion people have no access to sanitation and
then 2,4 billion people are living in areas that are actually
in a dry space. In our own country, we have a number of

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challenges. We have made strides, 90% have access to water. There's still a 10%, but more importantly the reliability has dropped to 68%. It must be increased to more than 80%. In terms of non-revenue, water is at 45%. It must be reduced to around 20%. We want to confirm that when it comes to water security in our country, the country remains in water balance around the question of 2030. We are currently at 17 billion cubic metres per annum and the yield is currently at 15 billion cubic meters per annum. But there is a deficit in various catchments. It was absolutely correct when the Minister and the President, they made water a priority area hence we convened the Water Indaba to respond to the challenges we face around water security, but also the reliability of supply in terms of water and sanitation.

What is more important is that many members have spoken about the challenges of local government, the 105 municipalities that are not doing well were identified by our own report by the Minister, Auditor-General of South Africa, AGSA, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. and others and we are intervening in terms of fixing local government, but more importantly, dealing with the water question. That is our response as a country. We are quite

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aware that we are going to require a united and a bold action and avoid fragmentation. We are also going to require that we mobilize expertise and technologies and resources from all the societies that are here. But what are we doing? What do I doing, we're going to proceed with deep reforms. One of the matters of the deep reforms is to ensure that the institutional architecture around the delivery mechanism must change. In 30 years, it has worked, but it can't work going forward. Hence the decision of the ringfencing in terms of the trading entities for water and sanitation is, and most important, decision we're making, but more importantly is to ringfence the budget so that we can be able to sweat the assets

The second intervention, what you are doing is to ensure that we are building issues of concessions as part of the delivery model in terms of water security for protection. We are putting institutions like the SA National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency, but we are also putting the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, CCMA. That is our response. But how are we going to finance all these issues? The traditional financing is not adequate; grants and all these other matters will never solve all the problems. The

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budget of more than R212 billion combining the trading entity and the main account is not sufficient. That's why we are looking at issues of blended finance where the state uses the infrastructure with National Treasury budget facility, our water partnership office. We have raised more than R23 billion just to respond to these issues and many of these organizations and municipalities are putting the business turnaround plan, World Bank in terms of metro leading services issues of non-revenue water. This is our response. When it comes to private public partnership, issues of your Olifants Management Model Programme is an example of working with the minds, Vaal Magala project and many of them. These are the ones where electricity and us, we can be in a position to go to market. There is also a possibility like Minister should be hosting the AU-Continental Africa Water Investment Programme to deal with the question of the USD 30 billion deficit per annum to raise the necessary finances, not for us. But even for our own continent, therefore, the issues of World Bank, International Monetary Fund, IMF, Brics Bank, the Development Bank of Africa, they are all willing and in August here in Cape Town we will be raising the flag because globally we need up to USD 7 trillion. We don't have that particular money for the issues of dealing with the issues of water and sanitation

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because it remains a problem. International collaboration on water is important. Water knows no boundaries. It has no ideology. We share the rivers with our own neighbours. We are very thankful that the Lesotho Highlands Scheme is back on track, 44% right now is the progress that is being made. Years, 2028-29, the water will be delivered here in South Africa. We are working with the Zimbabwe around the question of Mussina. We're working with Batwana and the Namibians.

There are many of these projects that we are doing together because we have a shared water system, and we have a shared destiny that all of us we must be able to do. We are also working with the issues of partnership, working with private sector in a form of a structure called SA Water Partnership Network. We have all your bigger water users, your Coca-Cola and others. The minds are working together to find a solution. More importantly, those who think that the Minister has not intervening, we have intervened with a lot in a number of municipalities. A number of interventions from KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and elsewhere, we are going to do that. If municipalities failed, we'll support them. But if they continue to neglect their job, we will intervene in terms of section 63, but we need legislative amendment so that it

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becomes an enable tool. Fixing local government is everybody's responsibility.

On behalf of our Minister, we want to support this budget that has been appropriated. There are two accounts. There is a water trading account. In the main is for water security, all the dams, the canals, to ensure that we don't run out of water. It has R136,309 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF. When it comes to the main account, we have R74, 941 billion that is over the MTEF. In total we are having R202, 25 billion that we wanted to support. The one on the main account, it has issues of transfers to support local government. In the main that's our intervention. We are supporting them. We will not allow them to fail but they must take responsibility because constitutionally they have a responsibility.

As I close, in the next eight days, we shall be celebrating the International Mandela Day who dedicated his entire life in championing the struggles of freedom, democracy, justice, peace and equality and change. He left an incredible mark for the future generations and a better world. As the democratic representatives here in Parliament, we are called to work side

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by side with all our sectors of our nation, leaving no one behind to ensure that we are ensuring water security and reliability of supply for all. His ways that are timeless and profound, they must continue to propel us when he says: "What counts in life is not the mere fact, that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead".

Let water flow in each household, let water ensure food, energy and environmental and social security. Let's decent sanitation restore human dignity, preserve our environment and show food and energy security. Let's sanitation create new opportunities in terms of wealth of the green and the blue bonds. God bless South Africa, her sons and daughters. I thank you.

Debate concluded.

The mini plenary rose at 18:21.