WEDNESDAY, 12 AUGUST 2026

_____

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

_____

The Council met at 14:00.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon delegates, I would like to remind you that the Rules, in particular subrules 21, 22 and 23 of Rule 103, will apply during the virtual sitting. The virtual sitting constitutes a sitting of the National Council of Provinces.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, permanent delegates, MECs, all special delegates and SA Local Government Association, Salga, representatives present here with us.

UNREVISED HANSARD

I would also like to remind delegates that in terms of Rule 229 of the Council, the time for reply by the Minister to the question is five minutes. Only four supplementary questions shall be asked to the initial question. A member who has asked the initial question will then be afforded the opportunity to first ask a supplementary question to the Minister. The time allocated for that is two minutes. Accordingly, the Minister will then have four minutes to respond to that supplementary question. May I also remind the delegates that the supplementary question should emanate from the initial question that was asked to the Minister.

Hon members, I now call upon the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities to respond to Question 201, which was asked by hon Fienies. The question, Minister, is with regards to the progress that your department has made insofar as strengthening the oversight and strategic direction of the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, just to ensure that its programmes do contribute meaningfully to the reduction of youth unemployment. And the second question attached to that: What measurable targets does your department set for the said agency to achieve during the remainder of the 2026-27 financial year? Over to you, Minister.

UNREVISED HANSARD

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

CLUSTER 3B - GOVERNANCE

Question 201:

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, hon Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, let me also greet all the hon members of the House.

To respond to the question ... maybe let me first apologise for what happened last week. We could not mute ourselves and we thought that the problem may have been with the venue where we were. We rushed upstairs and there was still a problem. I apologise sincerely for that.

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities continues to strengthen its oversight of the NYDA to ensure that the agency’s programmes contribute meaningfully to reducing youth unemployment and other challenges. In this regard, the Minister, as the executive authority of the NYDA, signed a shareholder performance agreement which clearly defines the facilitative role of the executive authority and that the relationship between the department and the NYDA is

UNREVISED HANSARD

conducted in an enabling co-operative manner with the context of applicable prescripts.

The department compiles quarterly monitoring reports on the quarterly performance information of the NYDA to track progress against the set targets. The report gets submitted to the CEO, which is therefore the management, but also the Minister, as the shareholder, writes the report to the board of the NYDA. The NYDA reports quarterly to the National Youth Machinery meetings that are convened by the department.

The department also oversees the NYDA’s development of the strategic and annual performance plans, APP, where measurable targets, including for youth employment, are set. For the 2026-27 financial year, the targets are to support youth-owned enterprises with financial and non-financial business development interventions, offering business development support vouchers to youth, providing life, job readiness and accredited technical skills training to facilitate entry into the job market, equipping youth with entrepreneurship skills ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Minister, we are losing you. Sorry to interrupt you; we are losing you. If you could, just switch off your screen. Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Thank you very much, National Chairperson. I was saying that as the department, we also oversee the NYDA's development of the strategic and APPs where measurable targets, including for youth employment, are set. For the 2026-27 financial year, the targets are to support youth-owned enterprises with financial and non-financial business development interventions, offering business development support vouchers to youth, providing life, job readiness and accredited technical skills training to facilitate entry into the job market, equipping youth with entrepreneurship skills and linking young people to job opportunities. These services also target young women and youth with disabilities.

The department ensures that the NYDA delivers on its expected mandate through its oversight work. At the beginning of our term, we ensured that we put governance structures in place, particularly the board of the NYDA, which represent the shareholder, the shareholder being the government of the

UNREVISED HANSARD

Republic of South Africa, represented by the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. I thank you very much, Chairperson.

Ms D W FIENIES: Hon Chairperson, greetings to you, the hon members and the staff. Thank you, Minister, for your response. One of the issues that we have noticed is the lack of cohesion and unity at the board level that will negatively affect the performance of the entity. My question is, therefore, whether any progress has been made in the appointment of suitable persons to the Audit and Risk Committee, ARC, of the NYDA?

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: In relation to the said lack of cohesion and unity at the board level, post the appearance of the NYDA to the portfolio committee and Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Scopa, the department contacted institutions such as the Public Service Commission, National School of Government and Institute of Directors SA to request their interventions for provision of capacity building on professional conduct, social ethics, good governance and communication, amongst others. All these are intended to enhance cohesion and unity at the board level.

UNREVISED HANSARD

With regards to progress on the appointment of suitable persons to the NYDA ARC, I must report that the ARC members have been appointed, except for the chairperson. The process to appoint the chairperson of the ARC was kept on hold because there are allegations of irregularities which still need to be investigated. We are finalising that report.

I must indicate that ourselves and as the Minister, we did have a meeting with the board of the NYDA. We met the unions and staff of the NYDA. At the level of staff and unions, what we saw appearing and happening in Parliament, it has not affected the staff of the NYDA. We're making sure that they remain insulated from such problems. We, therefore, had a programme with the NYDA board that was attended by the Minister and the chairperson of the Public Service Commission. We took the board through what is expected of them, particularly in terms of their fiduciary duties, which they are expected to perform honestly, ethically and professionally. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Hon Chairperson and hon Minister, youth unemployment increased to above 45% on the expanded

UNREVISED HANSARD

definition. How do you measure the NYDA’s success beyond counting workshops, beneficiaries and awareness campaigns?

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: The NYDA does not have all the resources that are required for them to deal with the crisis, as even defined by the President, of youth unemployment. I can indicate that they only have a budget of R1,8 billion and of that, R1,3 billion is earmarked for the National Youth Service Programme. So, what remains with the NYDA is R494 million to do the work that it has identified for itself during the financial year.

For the work that they are doing, we then look at the impact of what happened. For instance, if you look at the businesses that they fund, we look at those that remain stable and probably have the potential to grow. What we have discovered is that of the businesses that they fund, 68,8% remain stable and growing. If you look at the revenue that they give and disperse to entities, the majority of 83,3% report heightened over. Therefore, it means that of the 68,8%, they are able to make profit. That is how we measure the impact of the work that they are doing. Of course, you’re going to have some that will struggle at 31,4% and to some extent, they may even close

UNREVISED HANSARD

down. Looking at that, we therefore think that we can continue with the grants that we give to young people who want to open their businesses. You look at that.

The demand, however, is far above what the NYDA can offer to young people applying for funding from the NYDA. I can, if I have time, give the numbers. For instance, if you look at the grant programme conversion. The demand, for instance, for the financial year will be 8 500 people who apply but there will only be enough to assist and support 1 934, which therefore leaves 6 610 who apply for the grants not being met. This is because of the funding of the NYDA.

If they had money, enough to fund all this, they would have funded 8 544, because the majority of them will be meeting the criteria for the grant. However, the available resources are such that they can only fund 1 934. Of those, like I've said, the success rate will be at 68,8%. There will be those that will not be successful, and they will make some profit out of that. But of course, it will be the number, like I've indicated, that is too low. The gap, for instance, will be something like 77,4% of young people who will have applied, and we've only been able to assist 22,6%.

UNREVISED HANSARD

This is the challenge that we have. Indeed, if the NYDA is given all the resources, it could and has learnt to support and assist young people. With every year that they have been in existence, they have managed to learn how to assist and support businesses for young people. However, it happens at a very small scale because of the availability or non-availability of adequate resources. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: We are now taking the next follow-up question from hon Montwedi. Is hon Montwedi here with us?

Ms A M SIWISA: Chairperson, the question was supposed to be taken by hon Mampuru. I think the information was sent to the Table earlier on. Hon Montwedi is on an oversight visit, Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Mampuru, are you ready? The EFF doesn’t seem to be ready. We will now proceed to hon Mananiso.

UNREVISED HANSARD

Ms J S MANANISO: Hon Chairperson, members on the ... [Interjections.].

Mr M K MONTWEDI: I'm struggling with my network. My apologies, Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Okay, if you may pause, hon Mananiso; so sorry about that.

Hon Montwedi, you may ask the Minister.

Mr M K MONTWEDI: Chairperson, my sincere apologies. I'm struggling with the network where I am.

Minister, thank you for that response. I just want to find out from you whether you are able to provide evidence-based assessment demonstrating how the NYDA programmes have measurably reduced youth unemployment over the past two financial years, including the number of sustainable jobs that they have created and the extent to which the NYDA interventions have shifted unemployment trends in provinces with the highest youth joblessness? If not, what explains the

UNREVISED HANSARD

absence of such impacting mechanisms? Thank you very much and once again, my apologies.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Indeed, we do measure the work of the NYDA. Firstly, like I indicated in my first question, when they strategise, or sit in the meeting of their strategic plan, we attend as the department. We also invite them to our own strategic plan sessions so that they know what we are planning as the department. They can then take that into their own strategic plans. On the basis of that, like I indicated, they then report to us.

We also check and that is why I was talking about the number of businesses that survive. If you look at what we said, we're even able to know the number of people who get employed by those small businesses. For instance, it will be a minimum of two jobs per small business that gets established by any young person funded by the NYDA. We, therefore, are able to look at how that impacts on the livelihood of those young people who, probably before being provided with a grant, would have been very poor, how they improve and also how those young people who get employed in those small businesses by young people

UNREVISED HANSARD

improve their lives. We have seen a lot of improvement because we visit institutions and these small businesses, like hon members also do. To some extent, we even check whether those can be extended to families and communities and assist the surrounding communities.

Think about a young person who gets a stipend or a grant to start a business to repair cellphones. It doesn't only benefit the young person, but it also benefits the community. The local community would probably be spending money to go to town in order to have their cellphones repaired. But they don't have to spend any money when they repair their cellphones in the surrounding areas.

The Last Mile, for instance, is a service that is also being provided by the NYDA, where they train young people to ride scooters, get the licences for them and link them to jobs. We've observed that they are able to sustain their work. Indeed, it's possible that they have the motorbikes, maybe do it today, but the following day, maybe the motorbike is in an accident. What we have seen again is the success of that. It therefore tells us that if the NYDA had more resources, we would be doing more to assist young people.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The challenge, like I've said, is that they only have R490 million for them to do all these programmes that they have set for themselves. If you look at their APP, they have set numbers. However, if you look at the number of young people that are out there in millions, even the need group, the numbers that they can assist and support in terms of grants, etc. is just a drop in the ocean. Thank you very much.

Ms J S MANANISO: Good day, hon Chairperson and members on the platform. Chair, my question has been partly covered in the response by the Minister to hon Montwedi. I want to ask: Are there interventions in the department that deal with rural development and young people from the ages of 34 to 44 years? We know there's an outcry that we are always excluding those who are 35 and above. What are the interventions, what are the policy frameworks in the department that are making sure that we address this matter? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Immediately after its appointment, the current board of the NYDA sat and developed the National Rural Youth Development Strategy for young people. I must indicate that the NYDA is the implementing arm of the department, and they sat and

UNREVISED HANSARD

developed the National Rural Youth Development Strategy. They even articulated, when they appeared last year on 9 August in Limpopo, that they will be focusing on the rural areas and targeting young people in rural areas for the same reasons that the hon Mananiso has indicated. Indeed, they are doing that.

They are reaching out to them, and they have intervention types of engagement with young people in rural areas. They are using the internet to ensure that they have access to the NYDA. They also are giving young people free SIM cards that have all the information about the NYDA, without them having to buy data, etc. They are trying everything to reach out to young people in the rural areas. Of course, it’s vast, big areas. If you think about provinces such as the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, etc., they are vast and very rural. However, they are trying everything possible to reach out to them.

They would have been happier to have offices in every rural area. However, with the R494 million that they have for salaries, payment of rent, electricity, for the grants and the targets that they’ve set for themselves, sometimes it becomes

UNREVISED HANSARD

impossible to have offices wherever they want to have them. That is why they are using technology, including a SIM card and the website to ensure that they reach out to young people. Many of the activities that have happened so far have been in rural areas or townships. We think that this is another way of reaching out to young people. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Question 205:

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon Chairperson, hon Du Plessis, indeed, the department was announced by the President in 2009. However, in its current form, it was only established in 2019 following the reconfiguration of government. Before that, the department was reconfigured in 2014 as the Department of Women and no longer carried the portfolio of children. And, as it is right now, the department does not carry the portfolio of children. So, it is the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. The children are with the Department of Social Development.

The core mandate of the department is to advocate, to mainstream, to monitor, and to evaluate the work of government

UNREVISED HANSARD

in relation to these three sectors that I have mentioned - women, youth and persons with disabilities. And we do this through policy, frameworks, strategies, legislation, and, of course, through research, reports, and analysis we conduct as the department.

Looking at the question that was asked, I must actually account for all this, and looking at other questions that one will have to respond to, I opted to focus on persons with disabilities because there is no question on persons with disabilities.

From 2019, when disability was brought back to the department, South Africa ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2007 and deposited its initial state party report with the United Nations in 2014.

In 2015, Cabinet approved the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as the government’s policy framework for advancing and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Cabinet further directed that annual progress reports on the implementation of the White Paper on the Rights

UNREVISED HANSARD

of Persons with Disabilities be produced to monitor the implementation across government.

The department is currently co-ordinating the 10th annual progress report. We submitted and presented the ninth one last year. We are preparing the 10th annual progress report for this year.

In fulfilling its mandate to provide policy leadership, co-ordination, advocacy and mainstreaming, monitoring and oversight, the department has undertaken a range of initiatives to strengthen disability inclusion across government. These include disability analyses of the National Development Plan, which assessed the extent to which disability was reflected in the National Development Plan and identified gaps and opportunities to strengthen disability inclusion in government and government-wide planning and implementation.

The financial and economic cost of disability to households in South Africa was also assessed. A pilot study in 2015, followed by a second study in 2023 to expand the analysis to

UNREVISED HANSARD

include children with disabilities and persons with physical disabilities, was conducted.

The evaluation of the implementation of the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was done in 2023, which assessed government's implementation of the White Paper. Also, a research study on access to education support and services for children and young persons with disabilities was conducted. This study was conducted in the 2023-24 financial year and examined access to education support and services for learners with disabilities.

We also conducted a study on the impact of climate change on persons with disabilities in South Africa. This was undertaken in partnership with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and approved by Cabinet for disability-inclusive disaster management planning and climate change responses.

Practice notes for incremental compliance with minimum employment equity targets for persons with disabilities in the public service in 2026, which is a Circular 19 of 2026, was developed by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with

UNREVISED HANSARD

Disabilities and the Department of Public Service and Administration on the public service employment, which is targeting 7% by 2030, and Cabinet actually approved that the numbers and the target should increase every year. As such, this financial year, the employment equity target for persons with disabilities is 5%.

We can indicate that some departments have already met this target. The Department of Women, for instance, is at 5,36%, followed by the Department of Tourism, followed by the Department of Trade and Industry, and the Department of Small Businesses. Other departments are somewhere above 2% and 3%, and some departments are even below 1%.

The development of the Protection of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, developed in partnership with the South African Law Reform Commission, is at an advanced stage of consultation of the draft Bill, which will therefore be finalised for processing through Cabinet structures for submission to Parliament, and we are receiving a lot of support.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Minister, can you round up? You have exceeded your time allocated for the response.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Chairperson, indeed, I can just say the department champions the process towards ratifying the Africa Protocol, which we hope to do this year. That is the AU Protocol. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: I understand it is very difficult to respond to 2009 until now in five minutes. Thank you for the response.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Chairperson, hon Minister, thank you for that comprehensive answer. The year 2009 is, in fact, important, as it shows how long the Ministry has been around. However, when will South African women, youth, and people living with disabilities stop hearing that they are government’s priority and finally begin experiencing that priority in their daily lives? Every indicator shows that the lives of South African women, youth, and people with disabilities have not improved. There is an increase in GBVF. The unemployment rate of people with disabilities is dismal.

UNREVISED HANSARD

Youth unemployment is increasing, and the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, QLFS, shows that young black women have the least access to economic opportunities quarter-on-quarter. How do you justify the lack of on-the-ground impact of this department, which seems to be continuously creating documents and traveling? Thank you very much. [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon members, I got kicked out as well. So, I have been trying to get back. Hon Du Plessis, I am not sure if you managed to conclude your question.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Hon Chair, I concluded the question. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Minister, our sincere apologies.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Chairperson, hon Du Plessis, thank you for the question. I think you were asking an important question. It is just that you wanted to politicise towards the end. The issue of persons with disabilities in South Africa is, at least, on the table now. Let me just say, so that we don’t agitate our persons with disabilities. They like to be addressed as persons with

UNREVISED HANSARD

disabilities and not people with disabilities or persons living with disabilities. Just three words, as I always say. You are just persons with disabilities. They are comfortable with that, and we therefore have also learned to be comfortable with it.

It is also very true that the study conducted by the Human Science Research Council indicated that, of the women violated by men, women with disabilities are actually twice as affected by that. And therefore, it is indeed a problem.

The issue of unemployment is a reality, and the study on the impact of climate change on persons with disabilities and the availability of education to persons with disabilities confirmed that we are not where we are supposed to be. However, we would not be talking about it if we had not conducted the study and taken it to Cabinet, where Ministers took it to local government, where disaster management strategies are drafted. It indicates that, when you draft the strategy on climate change, you must know that something must go into the strategy about persons with disabilities, so that we don’t get the report and the statistics that 20 people died, and don't know who those people are.

UNREVISED HANSARD

We have said, in terms of the research that we have conducted, that information must be disaggregated, so that we know how many of those people were persons with disabilities who could not hear when people were told to run away. Maybe they had issues. I mean, maybe they could not hear, see, walk, etc. So, that is the important work we do as the department, and we take it to government to inform them what is happening.

We have also taken the research findings on gender-based violence to say we cannot be talking about women and think about a woman who is working. There is a woman who is in the house who is being raped every day by a relative because of her disability, and all those things are in our research.

Regarding travelling, as you have said, we only have a budget of R5 million for the year. Of that R5 million, if you have it for this financial year, it only pays for the Commission on the Status of Women, CSW, which is a statutory and compulsory activity that the department has to represent South Africa and present the status of South Africa on women’s issues. And that is our statutory international obligation.

UNREVISED HANSARD

Towards the end of the financial year, as is the case right now, we will not have a budget. Therefore, the R5 million we allocate for the new financial year is used to pay for the March activity. And as we continue into the months to come, we have no budget. And that is why you will have a lot of deviations, because then we have to take money from there and there and pay for international travel, some of which are compulsory.

Regarding the issue of the Commonwealth, South Africa pays towards the Commonwealth. As South Africa, we pay every year, and we do not benefit as other countries do because the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities representing the country cannot attend the Commonwealth. When we were attending, we were actually supported by the UK for the funding of gender-based violence response because they are the lead country when it comes to the Commonwealth. But we do not reap all the benefits because we don’t have the funding. So, it is only R5 million, hon Du Plessis. Tell me if we can travel, as a department, if we have that budget. Thank you very much.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Minister, we would really appreciate it if you could try and keep to your time as you respond.

Mr M F MOKWELE: Chairperson, hon members, I was recently told that I will be standing on behalf of hon Feni. If you are fine with your Table information, may I proceed with my question on behalf of hon Feni?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Can I request the front staff to apprise me of the changes that they are receiving? I have one for hon Breedt, but I have not received the rest. So, I will use my discretion to allow you, if I may be assisted by the front Table, to be furnished with those changes as well. You may proceed,

Mr M F MOKWELE: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, thank you for your response. My question is whether the various departments submit these monitoring reports. And what happens in cases where they are not submitted? And my last question is: What practical steps has the department taken in collaboration with others to reduce youth unemployment in South Africa? I thank you.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Chairperson, concerning the question, the number of departments participating in the reporting process has increased over the years, demonstrating improved institutionalisation of disability reporting across government. Where reports are not submitted within the prescribed timeframes, the department undertakes follow-up through, for instance, director-general correspondence, and when necessary, even ministerial correspondence, requesting the outstanding information.

In addition, when the annual progress report is submitted to Cabinet, Cabinet routinely requests a list of departments that have not submitted reports. This has indeed strengthened accountability and has resulted in departments submitting outstanding information before the report is finalised.

Our principal challenge is not necessarily departments' willingness to report, but the capacity of disability focal points appointed in departments to represent women, youth and persons with disabilities, to co-ordinate information across multiple programmes and compile comprehensive reports that accurately reflect departmental performance.

UNREVISED HANSARD

To address this, the department provides departments with standard reporting templates, technical guidance, and ongoing support throughout the reporting cycle to improve the quality and consistency of reporting. We also do this through training that we provide to our focal points. Indeed, may I respond to this when answering the question on youth employment? Can I stop there? Thank you very much.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Minister, you have compensated for the extra time you have taken on the other question, on a lighter note.

Ms A MATSHOBENI: Hon Chairperson, greetings to you, hon members and hon Minister, what challenges has the department faced in implementing its policies, and what initiatives have been introduced to reduce gender-based violence and protect women and children with disabilities, especially those women who are sitting at home and are being the victims of rape by their families, and those who their families abandon, have no place to stay and are living in the streets? Thank you very much.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon Chairperson, hon Matshobeni, can I also request to include the part on gender-based violence and femicide in the question on gender-based violence and femicide, because there is a specific question on that one.

However, on the challenges in implementing policies faced by the department, the first one is resourcing. As a department, we have a budget of R241 million for the year, and a staff complement of 143. I was at the Department of Transport. There are seven branches at the Department of Transport. One branch - the public transport branch - has a staff complement of 167. Our department has five branches: administration; MAC, monitoring, evaluation and research; youth; disability; and women. We only have a staff complement of 143 and a budget of R241.

That makes it difficult for us, even though we do a lot of work. And I think hon Du Plessis referred to that. We do a lot of work, such as oversight, advocating, and monitoring. We do a lot of work to ensure policies, and that people know what to do to ensure that women, youth, and persons with disabilities are included in their strategic and annual performance plans.

UNREVISED HANSARD

But then, of course, we monitor. Our work does not even end with the public service. We are also supposed to monitor the private sector. We are supposed to work with civil society. Indeed, we do it through mechanisms. We could not reach out to them because the resources are inadequate. Just imagine a budget of R241 million, and you still have remuneration and research worth R3 million for the whole year. And what research do you conduct at R3 million?

So, that is the main problem constraining the work of the department. We believe it is massive. It can be done. It can be scaled if we had enough resources, and we are engaging the Department of Finance in that regard. Thank you very much.

Ms T BREEDT: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, after 17 years of this department, can you point out one single measurable achievement that could not have been delivered more effectively by an existing line department? And if you cannot, what justifies this continued existence of a department like this? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: In fact, there are quite a few of them. We have the framework we

UNREVISED HANSARD

prepared, which is gender-responsive budgeting, planning, monitoring, evaluation, and auditing. This has actually enabled the department, when they plan and budget, to ensure that women, youth, and persons with disabilities are included.

It has not been the case. We can go to any other document in the past. It was not the case. Today, departments know that if they have not included this when monitored based on the framework, they would not ... In fact, their strategic plans and APPs will not even be approved by Cabinet. Even the medium-term development plan, when it was presented, had to have these three sectors for the first time. It would not have happened had it not been for the framework implemented.

We now have a National Strategic Plan, NSP, on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. And it is this department that ensured we have a document supported by all in South Africa, whether academia, business, or civil society. They all participated. And therefore, though gender-based violence is what it is today, we have a very comprehensive document, which is the NSP, that is being implemented. Had it not been for that, we would not be talking about the number of rapes. We would not

UNREVISED HANSARD

even know whether women are being raped. Today, we have statistics because the document is there.

So, indeed, there is quite a lot that one can say that has actually been the reason for this department. All administrations, as I close, have recognised that, indeed, despite the presence of line function departments, these three sectors need a catalyst department that speaks to everybody. Today, fifty per cent of boards are women, and that is because of the presence of this department. They are not going to approve a board presented to Cabinet if you don’t have 50% women representation there, and young people, of course. And we are now saying there must at least be one person with disability on any board that gets appointed and approved by Cabinet. Thank you very much.

Question 202:

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon Chairperson, let me welcome the question from hon Mokwele. I covered the mandate of the department, but I also want to say that the department will continue ... in fact ... my apologies for that. The department will, through programme two, which is advocacy and mainstreaming for the rights of

UNREVISED HANSARD

women, implement its remaining annual performance plan, APP, aligned economic empowerment interventions. These include the women in trade interventions, further sector and value chain interventions, enterprise support and the continued institutionalisation of the strategy for the economic empowerment of women, youth and persons with disabilities across national departments.

The women in trade interventions will connect women-owned enterprises, particularly those owned by young women and women from rural areas, with buyers, markets, finance, procurement information and business development support. The impact will be measured against APP targets and through verified records of enterprise participation, referrals, market and finance linkages, commitments and follow ups.

Government-wide progress will be assessed through evidence that departments have integrated ... economic empowerment priorities into their existing plans, programmes, indicators ... [Inaudible.] ... Thank you very much, Chairperson.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much. Hon members, can you kindly mute your gadgets? Let's not disrupt the sitting. The follow-up question is from hon Mokwele.

Setswana:

Rre M F MOKWELE: Modulasetilo, ke dumedisa Tona ...

English:

... hon Minister, thank you very much for your reply. Minister, without relying on the goodwill of other departments, my question to you is whether there are any enforcement measures that are taken by your department to ensure that government departments institutionalise the strategy on the economic empowerment of women.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: The department does not rely on goodwill alone. It applies formal institutional accountability measures and links the strategy to existing statutory and policy-based accountability mechanisms.

However, the strategy is a mainstreaming, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation instrument and does not confer on the

UNREVISED HANSARD

department a separate power to penalise or otherwise sanction another government department.

Where evidence is inadequate or integration has not occurred, the gaps are formally recorded and corrective actions and/or interventions are followed up or instituted.

Persistent nonperformance may be escalated, as I indicated earlier on, through director-general to director-general engagements or even at the level of the executive authorities.

For instance, the Economic Sectors, Investment, Employment and Infrastructure Development cluster and other relevant Cabinet accountability structures have at some stage been informed where departments have not complied. Once commitments are incorporated into approved plans, indicators and budgets, performance becomes subject to quarterly and annual reporting or auditing for that matter, and of course parliamentary oversight. The enforcement model is therefore layered.

The department establishes mainstreaming requirements, monitors verifiable evidence, identifies gaps and escalates persistent nonperformance, while the legally mandated

UNREVISED HANSARD

authorities apply the statutory consequences and converts the institutionalisation from a voluntary commitment into measurable and accountable government obligations.

We are indeed also working together, by engaging the Auditor-General, AG, on some of the areas that we believe are important and that should be audited ... that the AG should look into auditing. Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr N H PIENAAR: Chairperson, through you to the Minister, when you were sworn into office in 2024, the unemployment figure for women stood at 34,8%. Two years later, it has risen to almost 37%. Instead of giving us long speeches, just tell us why you have failed over the last two years, which has caused the unemployment figure for women to increase. Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: The issue of unemployment is indeed a problem, whether for the women of South Africa, the youth of South Africa or persons with disabilities in South Africa. It is indeed a challenge, not only for our department. It’s a challenge not only for

UNREVISED HANSARD

government. It’s a challenge not only for business. It’s a challenge not only for academic institutions.

It’s a challenge that requires an all-of-government and an all-of-society approach. If the economy is not growing, it cannot be blamed on the Department of Women, which is not even an implementing department. It is a policy department for that matter.

However, we are trying to hold every department accountable to ensure that women are employed. Like I’ve said, for ensuring that ... Even in the Public Service, we are looking at who is occupying a particular position.

We look at gender equity by saying, if you have so many directors and you have so many chief directors, you can’t only have males. You must have women as well. A total of 50% of them must be women. And, we monitor that.

However, the issue of unemployment requires an all-of-society approach of course. We are doing our part to ensure that whatever opportunities are there, including the trade fair that I’ve been talking about — which we had in Durban this

UNREVISED HANSARD

time around, where we brought together women in business, investors and funders, and allowed them to network. When they left, many of them already had somebody to assist in growing the business.

We do that, but of course we need others. As I've indicated, we don't have all the resources that we would wish for so as to actually ensure that women are employed or are supported in their businesses. Thank you very much, Chair.

Ms A M SIWISA: Minister, in light of the department's emphasis on the EmpowerHer Market Trade Fair and the 40% public procurement target during Women's Month in 2026, what clear punitive administrative sanctions or legal mechanisms will the department enforce against failing departments and local communities that continue to ignore gender-responsive budgeting? Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: I think I've said that we firstly receive reports. We train our focal points in departments, because sometimes we don't even receive quality reports or reports that give us the information we require. Therefore, we train our focal points.

UNREVISED HANSARD

However, more than that, when we receive the reports we analyse them. Where we think a department is not doing well, we engage the department ourselves. Furthermore, we write reports that we even take to Cabinet committees and to Cabinet itself, and present these to Cabinet. The President has actually said that those departments that consistently do not want to conform or to comply must be reported to the President.

So, that is indeed what we can do. We even write to Ministers — Minister to Minister — to say for instance, Minister, your department is not meeting employment equity ... for women. We have a lot of equity ... for men ... [Inaudible.] ...

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Minister, can you hold on? Hon Siwisa, can you please switch off your microphone? Thank you. Sorry about that, Minister. [Interjections.]

Ms A M SIWISA: It’s not me, Chair. It’s not me.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Alright, let me check who is ... Hon members, please do not disrupt the sitting. Can you mute yourself? Thank you very much. You may proceed, Minister.

UNREVISED HANSARD

Sorry about that. If the noise persists, front Table, can you please assist us in that regard?

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: On the issue of the EmpowerHer ... as hon Siwisa said, we found this to be very impactful on enterprises that are owned by women. That is also why we are being funded by Absa.

We are working together with Absa. So, many women have actually received a lot of support and experience, but also funding and even market ... for instance ... being linked to markets through the EmpowerHer Market Trade Fair.

If it was up to us, we'd probably have this every quarter of the year, but we can only afford to have it once a year. The provinces are now saying, please come to us. We've been to Gauteng, for instance. This time around we were in KwaZulu-Natal. We want to thank all the premiers of South Africa who actually ensured that women were sent to KwaZulu-Natal to attend the EmpowerHer Market Trade Fair. I can tell you that women have reported a lot of success in those ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

On the issue of the 40% procurement set aside for women, National Treasury has published the regulations and we are requesting everybody to participate. We are actually begging. We have been informing women in business to participate and ensure that they make inputs, so that those regulations do not actually establish barriers instead of actually assisting them to have access to funding as easily as possible. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, hon Minister. We are taking the last follow-up question on this question and immediately after that I'm handing over to hon Ryder. Hon Mhlongo, you may proceed.

Ms L P MHLONGO: Hon Minister, I believe my hon members have covered me in terms of most of the questions that I had. However, I'd like to know what different structural or operational changes ... implemented in ... the interventions from the previous strategic framework targeting women in poverty and unemployment in rural areas? Are women being empowered in e-commerce to promote sustainability? Thank you, Chair.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon Mhlongo ...

IsiZulu:

... uNjomane wena waseLangeni. Abantu abahle nje. Ngiyabathanda labo bantu.

English:

On the issue of e-commerce, we're not there, particularly in rural areas, because of the network that they don't access. The hon member is correct in saying that a person in uMhlabuyalingana in KwaZulu-Natal or anywhere in the Republic of South Africa must be able to sell her products to somebody sitting somewhere in New York, somewhere in Germany, etc through e-commerce. However, that only favours areas where there is a network which people are able to access ... who can digitise and are therefore able to sell their products from where they are.

What I have seen is that women in rural areas make beautiful products, but it is only known to them. Until you invite them to these trade fairs which we have, you get surprised to see the products that they make. Body ... whatever they are

UNREVISED HANSARD

making, is exceptional. What is this? Leather shoes and leather bags that they make can be sold anywhere in the world. However, they are only known in their vicinities because ... poultry, for instance, because they don't have access to a network.

That is the issue that we are dealing with and that is why we are happy that the Department of Communications is trying to ensure that the whole country is connected, so that even those women are able to access all these e-commerce opportunities that are there.

It's not even that they don't know how to do it. However, the issue is that the barriers are there in terms of network access ... them reaching out to those buyers in the country first, in the Southern African Development Community, SADC, on the continent and internationally. Where they get exposed, you find that their stuff gets sold anywhere in the world.

I just bought a gift here and those ordinary women are selling their stuff all over the world because they've managed to leave their homes to come to the city where there is network access. Others cannot do that. That is why the issue of

UNREVISED HANSARD

network is critical for us to enable women to sell their stuff. Thank you very much, hon Mhlongo.

Question 216:

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon House Chairperson, the process of standardisation of the Sanitary Dignity Programme across provinces has been achieved. However, there are certain peculiarities that each province would experience and want to address because they are not identical in all aspects. For instance, some would cover more learners than others because of budgetary circumstances.

The fact that five provinces roll out the programme through the Department of Basic Education and four others through the Department of Social Development, has nothing to do with the lack of standardisation. Both departments work within the parameters of the Sanitary Dignity Implementation Framework. The decision for two implementing departments was arrived at during the meeting of the Technical Committee on Finance and National Treasury ahead of the implementation of the Sanitary Dignity Programme. The debate was about which provincial department would be best suited to be the implementer.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The provincial heads of departments of finance were divided because some were of the view that in terms of their institutional arrangements, they are comfortable with either of those departments. Hence, it was eventually agreed that each province would decide on the department that is fit for purpose.

Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape provinces have indicated that they do not have storage facilities. The Sanitary Dignity Programme was implemented in 2019. So, it is a relatively new programme and there was no accommodation of storage facilities in the plans. Hence, they embarked on immediate distribution to alleviate the challenge of having no consignments storage.

These are matters that they are trying to address. But that is not a matter that can be achieved by using the equitable share allocation from National Treasury, because it is a ring-fenced and earmarked funding purely for the purpose of procuring sanitary pads. The money for storage facilities must come from provincial budgets. Both provinces have very functional provincial sanitary dignity committees. In fact, Limpopo always had the best functional committee and Eastern Cape improved over time. Thank you very much House Chair.

UNREVISED HANSARD

Ms M KENNEDY: House Chair, members on the platform and hon Minister, greetings. Minister, following recent health product safety studies where trace levels of endocrine-disrupting chemicals in multiple brands of sanitary pads and pantyliners were found, what stricter quality assurance and safety standards are being enforced for the distributed sanitary pads? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon Kennedy, thank you for the question. I think the issue of endocrine whatever, was well addressed by the Department of Health together with experts. It was indicated that the trace for instance, is not unsafe and the fact that, that endocrine can be found in other than the pantyliners or sanitary pads for that matter. So, on that one issue, the matter was addressed properly. We therefore have no problem with that as South Africa.

Then on the issue of the safety of dignitary pads, all of them must meet the standard of SA Bureau of Standards, SABS and they are checked and assessed in terms of that. We do not distribute pads that do not meet the standard as set out by SABS in South Africa and that can be done. The department has

UNREVISED HANSARD

no power to know whether this meets the standard because we do not have such expertise and competencies, but we do have the SABS that is responsible for that. Thank you very much, House Chairperson.

Mr M P SIBANDE: Minister, thank you for your fabulous response. This framework speaks to the dignity of women, especially young women in school. We are happy that all provinces have managed to implement it albeit via two departments. Minister, do the two provinces, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape, have any contingency measures to manage the challenge of storage and ensure that there is no shortage of supply to the learners? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon House Chairperson and thank you hon Sibande for the question. Both provinces, that is Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape, roll out sanitary pads to learners once off annually and learners take them home and administer on their own because they do not have storage facilities. It is always expected that there will be discipline in the family setting and the best interest of the child would be paramount on the part of parents and guardians. Small manageable consignments of

UNREVISED HANSARD

sanitary pads are also kept in schools in case learners forget to bring theirs from home.

School authorities and school governing bodies communicate and urge parents and guardians, to ensure that learners use the products responsibly for the rest of the calendar year and further remind them that, there would be no additional pads to distribute. That is the situation in the two provinces. Thank you very much.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Hon Minister, menstrual dignity allows a girl child to attend school and the money that has been spent on this has not had the same on the ground impact and it does not equal the spend. People who remove this right should face the consequences. Please name one name of a person who has been found guilty to have stolen the dignity of a girl child in this project through the audit or investigation.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Chairperson, I can’t name any person. However, we have been assessing the impact of the product. The reason why we even have this sanitary dignity was out of recognition that many young girls, particularly from rural South Africa and poor

UNREVISED HANSARD

families will miss school because of menstruation. Therefore, that is why we then said as government, let's deal with the issue.

What we have observed is that there is improvement in the attendance of girls to school. That is what we have observed, which was the aim and the purpose of the project itself. Then we would have provinces that took long to implement the programme. We've been to those provinces; we have assisted them. Now at least all provinces are implementing.

What was happening is that they would send back or return money to National Treasury without it being spent because it is a conditional grant. Therefore, that is why we said we need to intervene. I must also indicate that the committees of the National Assembly at some stage, invited all provinces to come in account. That also had a positive impact and the National Council of Provinces is within its right to invite all provinces also to come in account before them.

But we will also even request that when provinces appear for such programmes, such questions be asked, particularly departments that are responsible for that. So that if the

UNREVISED HANSARD

Department of Basic Education in the province x is responsible for the sanitary dignity, the members also get to ask those questions. So, that is what we have actually done to monitor the implementation and the impact thereof and the improvement in the attendance of schools by young people, which the purpose of the sanitary dignity was about.

Ms T BREEDT: Hon Minister, effectively, in the last question, I believe you have very neatly moved the responsibility from yourself to Parliament in terms of performing oversight onto these provinces. So, let me ask you, hon Minister, sanitary dignity has become a postcode lottery, and we've seen it.

A girl's dignity should not depend on her postal code, but neither should national governments use provincial autonomy, as you have done today, as an excuse for repeated failure. What accountability measures are you and the department putting in place for provinces that consistently fail to deliver? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: House Chairperson, with the provinces, if we were the ones that were distributing the grant, we would probably withhold

UNREVISED HANSARD

the grant in transferring it to a province that is not meeting the requirements. However, there is improvement. In our oversight that we do, we conduct, we've seen improvement to the extent that almost all provinces now are providing the service.

The levels may not be the same. There are quite a number of reasons. The amount itself is not the same in provinces, but also there's an expectation, like other grants, that a province, if you give them five rand, they will then also from their National Treasury add five rand so that you then have R10. It's not all provinces that are doing that.

As a result, yes, indeed, the pads may not be adequate for all learners that are in need of it. But otherwise as a department, we have assisted many provinces, not only just to oversee them, but to even assist them to come up with strategies of ensuring that young people do receive these sanitary pads. In most provinces, even those that for quite some time, were not doing it are now doing it. Of course, the levels are not the same.

UNREVISED HANSARD

There might still be challenges here and there. If there is any issue of corruption in one way or another, we are not, as a department, equipped with such skills of investigating corruption. It can only be other entities and bodies that are equipped to do that. Otherwise, we do the work, we train, we assist, we support, we report where we should, and we sit in meetings and account for that. Of course, Parliament also has a responsibility to hold all of us accountable. Thank you very much, Chair.

Question 221:

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Thank you, hon Mhlongo for the question. Internships and learnerships are work readiness programmes intended to prepare young people for full-time employment. They expose them to real areas of work, help them to meet their graduation requirements, help them build professional connections, and enable them to gain experience which makes them employable.

To address South Africa's escalating youth unemployment crisis, various government departments and entities, including the Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, offer young people internships or learnerships which bridge

UNREVISED HANSARD

the gap between school and full-time jobs. These opportunities combine classroom theory with practical on-the-job training.

The Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, through the National Youth Development Agency, is part of the design and implementation of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention. This is a multi-stakeholder intervention which offers learning and earning opportunities for the youth. The programme secured over 1,57 million earning opportunities for youth, placed 82 378 youth in service opportunities, and provided 4600 young entrepreneurs with financial and non-financial support by February 2025.

The National Youth Development Agency also implements the Job Programme that offers training in CV writing, interview preparation, and job retention skills to improve employability. The Job Placement Programme links young people with contractual and permanent job opportunities. The National Youth Development Agency, NYDA's grant programme provides financial and non-financial support to young entrepreneurs, that is from 18 to 35, to start or grow their small businesses. Thank you, Chairperson.

UNREVISED HANSARD

Ms L P MHLONGO: Thank you, hon Minister. Minister, given that the state continues to use temporary Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, schemes as a baseline, can the department state the exact number of young persons' successfully transitioned into permanent, sustainable employment during the 2024-25 financial year? Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, hon Mhlongo. Minister, that question asked for an exact number. I'm not sure that you will have that number handy, but if you can respond as best you can, please.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Indeed, Chairperson, I may wish to get the exact numbers because I don't have them with me here. However, I take it that the hon member would want us to tell them exactly as to whether these EPWP jobs do translate young people into permanent jobs. Indeed, we can actually get those figures. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you very much indeed, Minister. Let's now look to the Hon Feni for his contribution with a supplementary question. I noted earlier

UNREVISED HANSARD

when Hon Feni was not available that hon Mokwele took the opportunity. Do we have any member from the ANC wanting to pose a supplementary question? Yes, hon Mokwele. Hon Mokwele, your signal is failing you. We are not hearing you. Can I suggest that you turn your video off and try again?

Mr M F MOKWELE: Thank you very much, Minister, for your thorough response. Minister, my question to you is whether your department has plans to introduce policy initiatives to ensure that departments have an obligation to employ a certain percentage of interns into permanent employment. Are timeframes envisaged in this regard? Thank you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Thank you, hon Mokwele, for the question. Currently, there is no policy that encourages or requires government departments to absorb a minimum percentage of interns into permanent employment after completing their internship programmes. The department plans to lobby the Department of Public Service and Administration for development of practice notes that will facilitate employment of young people into permanent employment, prioritising earmarked entry-level posts for unemployed young people and set aside 30% preferential

UNREVISED HANSARD

procurement for youth-owned enterprises. This would ensure that investment made in developing young people translates into meaningful and sustainable employment outcomes.

We did look at probably also lobbying the Department of Public Service and Administration to say at least 5% to 10% of young people who do interns in department should therefore be employed. But we then said it would mean that you have something like 95% that is not employed. And what then happens to those that would have been waiting outside as part of 95% or 90% not been employed when those that are within already get employed. So, we thought that could create a problem of young people who have had the opportunity of being interns or undergoing learnerships and were not part of the 5% to 10% who would probably be employed and therefore would be disadvantaged in that regard.

Otherwise, our position is that young people must be prioritised irrespective of qualifications because what we are seeing, hon Mokwele and hon members, is that when young people apply and they are applying for an entrance job, they have master's degrees, they are not shortlisted because they are said to be overqualified for the job, but also when they apply

UNREVISED HANSARD

for a senior job, they are told that they don't have experience. We are saying if a young person is qualifying and she has applied for the entrance job, irrespective of the qualification, they must be shortlisted, they must be interviewed, they must be employed if they qualify. They will grow within the system. If it is private sector, if it is public sector, they will grow within the system. The private sector is also encouraged to strengthen youth development programmes that provide clear pathways to permanent employment by being provided with tax incentives. That is one other issue that we want to see happening. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Ms J M ADRIAANSE: Minister, Minister Dean Macpherson of Public Works has made it clear that Expanded Public Works Programmes must become a pathway to permanent employment, not a revolving door of temporary jobs. What comparable reforms has your department implemented to ensure that its youth programmes d deliver sustainable employment? And what evidence do you have that participants are securing lasting jobs instead of simply moving from one government-funded short-term programme to the next? Thank you.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Thank you very much, hon Adriaanse. I fully agree with the view that says any short-term job must have an exit programme that leads a young person to permanent job. I fully agree with that because what we are seeing is that young people are now made providers of cheap labour because they move from this position to the other and they are paid for learnership or internships to the other. Therefore, they don't get permanent jobs. So I fully agree with that.

With the National Youth Service, for instance, we are looking into that, which is provided by National Youth Development Agency to say it also should have an exit plan that leads to permanent job. Whether a young person is being trained to own a business or enterprise, that training must lead to the young person being provided with the resources, with the grants, so that they're able then to start their businesses. So indeed, I fully agree with yourself, hon Adriaanse.

When people talk to me about the training and they don't tell me about what is going to happen to that young person at the end of the training, I just simply don't even get interested in that because there's been so much training provided to

UNREVISED HANSARD

young people, but they are sitting at home with such opportunities.

Even with the State Information Technology Agency, Sita, we are now saying you rather train less and give them the stipends for them to start businesses if they want to start businesses or link them to businesses that can employ them than to train them for the sake of training and give us a record that you have trained so many people when after the training they are sitting at home. So indeed, that for me is a strategy that definitely I would support, and in fact, I've been very articulative about it. Thank you very much, Chair.

Question 203:

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Chairperson, I thank the hon Masumpa for the question. The role of the department in respect of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, NSP-GBVF, is to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the strategy. The department provides leadership in implementing pillar one of the NSP on accountability.

UNREVISED HANSARD

In line with this pillar, departments reported against the NSP monitoring and evaluation framework with clear indicators in an effort to hold them accountable in terms of implementation. Furthermore, the department was supported through the End Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Collective and co-ordinated the work of government and the whole of society in the absence of a national council on GBVF.

During the 2026-2027 financial year, government classified gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster. The department led the strengthening of co-ordination of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide through the Natjoints GBVF Priority Committee, the Interministerial Committee on GBVF and Substance Abuse, its director-general's technical task team, and the End GBVF Collective. During the period under review, 32 national departments, three provincial governments, and one municipality were monitored on the implementation of the National Strategic Plan. Five gender-based violence and femicide structures, including GBVF rapid response teams and other co-ordination structures, were also capacitated.

UNREVISED HANSARD

The department has been implementing prevention interventions and has developed a prevention strategy. Further guidance was offered by the Human Sciences Research Council and the NSP mid-term review that government programmes are more responsive than preventative and recommended a paradigm shift in this regard. Programmes implemented by the department included the 100 days challenge, positive masculinity, working with churches and traditional leaders, as well as partaking in men's marches led by traditional leaders and other leaders of communities. The government has a Cabinet-approved action plan on the classification, comprising five priorities, with priority one being prevention priorities set out to turn the tide of GBVF and focusing on elimination.

In terms of improving accountability, quarterly reports are being received and, of course, we report to the President. I thank you very much, Chairperson. I think I'm out of time.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): No, you still have substantial time, but thank you, Minister, for your reply. Now the hon Masumpa has a chance to follow up with a supplementary question as well. Hon Masumpa.

UNREVISED HANSARD

Ms S MASUMPA: Greetings, House Chair and hon Minister. Thank you, Minister, for your response. One of the pillars of the national strategic plan against gender-based violence and femicide relates to prevention and rebuilding social cohesion. What progress has been observed or achieved in shifting toxic social norms and promoting gender equality in South African society? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Chairperson, I thank the hon Masumpa for the question. Prevention interventions were always an integral part of the department's programmatic intervention. During the G20 session, the department massified its interventions on positive masculinity. Learners were targeted during that period and even now, and these will be intensified during the remainder of the financial year. This has become a G20 legacy programme, the positive masculinity programme. We will be launching it in October and rolling it out across all provinces, despite the fact that we're already doing it.

The interventions will include positive masculinity programmes targeting men and boys, men's marches, learner-led prevention interventions, digital and online safety programmes, community

UNREVISED HANSARD

mobilisation, and targeted interventions in identified GBVF hotspots. Current prevention programmes focus on addressing harmful social norms, substance abuse, economic vulnerability, and other underlying drivers of violence. The research conducted by one of the institutions outside government has actually told us that, regardless of what we are doing, for as long as we don't deal with the issue of the abuse of alcohol in South Africa and the abuse of drugs in South Africa, it will be very difficult for us to reduce gender-based violence. This is extremely concerning for us as the department, as we are the lead department when it comes to gender-based violence and femicide. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Chair, I would just like to check, because my Internet dipped, whether this is Question 203.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Correct.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Thank you very much, House Chair. Apologies for that. The Internet is not always the best. Hon Minister, the GBVF rate in South Africa has increased to an alarming rate and has been mentioned many times. Why do you, according to a written answer for written Question NW1103, mention that

UNREVISED HANSARD

you have spent R9,497 million on international travel as of November 2025 for you and your department? However, it has had no real on-the-ground impact on the GBVF scourge.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: I'm not very sure about the question, Chairperson. If it is the question about the travelling that was asked by the hon member, that question was about the travelling of the staff, of the protectors, and of the Ministry, that is, the Deputy Minister and the Minister, that we responded to. So, I'm not very sure about the figures because I don't have the answer right now with me.

It was about the domestic travel we do from Pretoria or Gauteng to Cape Town and to other provinces, as we are the national department, not only me but also the Deputy Minister, the staff, including even the protectors, on how much we are paying them for travelling. It was an all-inclusive amount that we used and spent.

As a matter of fact, it was much less than any other department because, as I have indicated, if we have a budget of R5 million for international travel for the year, I mean,

UNREVISED HANSARD

it is difficult to say we're spending money travelling. There are some statutory travels that we have to undertake overseas, not for ourselves, but for the good of the department, as expected by other departments as well, by other provinces as well, and by other municipalities as well. It may not be correct that, because we are underfunded, we must neglect our international work.

In other countries, there is a minister for women, and women only. There is a minister for disability. Just yesterday, I had a meeting with the minister from China who is responsible for disability, and disability only, here in South Africa. They are still here in South Africa. I think they will be leaving tomorrow. There will be a minister for persons with disabilities. If you go to Europe, you will find in Italy a minister responsible for disability, and disability only, and they have resources we don't have. If you go to Zimbabwe, there is a minister for women and also a little bit of small business for women. In South Africa, it's one Minister for all these, and the budget does not take into account all these sectors we're responsible for that have international obligations.

UNREVISED HANSARD

We are waiting for the United Nations, UN, to invite us to come to Geneva and respond to the report we submitted last year on how we are implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Whether we like it or not, we'll have to undertake that trip. We are waiting for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, UN committee to invite us to come and respond to the report that we submitted for South Africa.

Whether we like it or not, whether we have the money or not, we'll have to undertake that because, if we don't, the country will be found guilty, and they can actually come to South Africa and do whatever they do. So, there will be those international trips that we are obligated to undertake as a department.

However, when we get invited by the President or the Deputy President to accompany him to the UN General Assembly, for instance, because the focus that year is on women or it is on youth or it is on persons with disabilities, it cannot be correct that Members of Parliament who approve our own budget can't actually see that our budget is not adequate for us to actually perform our function and our duties. So, it's not

UNREVISED HANSARD

about us wanting to travel. It's about the work we do. Thank you very much, Chair.

Ms A M SIWISA: Good afternoon, Chair and hon Minister. Minister, despite your department's endless reporting and performance agreements, South African women and children continue to be slaughtered daily because frontline departments treat the GBVF targets as a box-ticking exercise.

Given that your monitoring reports consistently show that rural police stations lack basic victim-friendly rooms, DNA backlogs remain unacceptably high, and Thuthuzela Care Centres are chronically underfunded, why has the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation not advised the President to fire Ministers who fail their GBVF performance audits, and what urgent legislative teeth will you give your monitoring frameworks to ensure that underperforming department budgets are frozen until they deliver a safe environment for survivors? Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Chairperson, I thank the hon Siwisa for the question. The issue of gender-based violence and femicide is real. It may

UNREVISED HANSARD

begin with emotional abuse and escalate to financial abuse, to assault, to rape, and even to murder, and that is why we speak about femicide in South Africa, which is actually questioned by other countries. So, it's real, and the questions and the concerns members have are real. A lot of work has gone into that. The classification of gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster was actually acknowledging the fact that we do have a problem.

In response to that, hon Siwisa, we sat down as a department and actually drafted an action plan with timelines, with targets on who should do what, what legislation should be amended, and what should be strengthened in terms of courts, in terms of Thuthuzela Care Centres, and building more. At time we had 50 — in fact, we had 60, I think 66 Thuthuzela Care Centres just last year. We're at 68 now because what we have seen is that cases that go through Thuthuzela Care Centres are strong, that they can stand the test of time in court, and that they lead to conviction.

Let me also say that we took that action plan to Cabinet; it was approved. We invited the civil society organisations. We presented it to them, and it was approved. We presented that

UNREVISED HANSARD

to the private sector and academic institutions, and all of them approved it because, indeed, it actually talks to who should do what, where, and when, by what time, and what the impact of that should be. That we have, and it is being implemented, hon member, on the ground.

The study that was conducted by one of our universities on how we are implementing the NSP indicated, as I said, that we are emphasising responding over prevention. Therefore, the action plan is actually emphasising now on prevention, then on responding. That is why we're talking about positive masculinity, positive masculinity being a programme that says your masculinity, your strength as a man, must not make you want to abuse a woman. We're targeting young boys because it starts there. We are targeting families, we're targeting Sunday schools, and we're targeting primary schools in trying to ensure that that message, that socialisation is the one that actually says to a boy that you are not to abuse your younger sister, or a neighbour, or someone's daughter. That is what we are doing.

The issue is that that action plan is not funded. Therefore, you can only do so much about it. We were very happy to hear

UNREVISED HANSARD

the President say on 9 August that the gender-based violence and femicide NSP will be funded, particularly that action plan, because we believe that it can make a difference.

I think this one, the issue of gender-based violence, is an all-of-society thing. It begins with the family, how we ourselves are socialising our children, ourselves as Members of Parliament, as Ministers, and everybody. How are we socialising our grandchildren? What are we doing to the neighbouring child? What do we do when we see a child not going to school? Do we talk to these children about bullying that happens in our schools? The issue of drugs, the issue of abuse of alcohol — when 13-year-olds, when 15-year-olds, are drinking alcohol, they are in taverns, etc. That has a serious impact on gender-based violence. If you look at the incidences of gender-based violence, they happen over the weekend, when people indulge themselves in alcohol like there is no tomorrow. That you can actually ... Thank you very much, Chairperson. [Time expired.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, Minister. As indicated, your time is up. Thank you very much indeed. Hon Minister, the last opportunity for a supplementary question on

UNREVISED HANSARD

this falls to the UDM, but the hon Peter has submitted an apology, and we haven't had a replacement offer from the Office of the Chief Whip. So, that is the end of your session in the Chair today and brings the session to an end.

Hon delegates, I would like to thank the Minister for attending today and answering all of the questions as she has done. I'd like to thank all permanent delegates, MECs, all special delegates and, of course, the SA Local Government representatives for availing themselves for the sitting. That concludes the business of the day.

The Council adjourned at 15:44.

UNREVISED HANSARD