

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 1

FRIDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2024

PROCEEDINGS OF MINI PLENARY SESSION - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAMBER

Members of the mini-plenary session met on the virtual platform at 14:01.

The Deputy Speaker took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

VIRTUAL SITTING RULES

(Announcement)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, before we proceed, I would like to remind you that the virtual mini plenary is deemed to be in the precinct of Parliament and constitutes a meeting of the National Assembly for debating purposes only.

In addition to the Rules of virtual sittings, the Rules of the National Assembly, including the Rules of debate, apply. Members enjoy the same powers and privileges that apply in the sitting of

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 2

the National Assembly. Members should equally note that anything said in the virtual platform is deemed to have been said to the House and may be ruled upon.

All members who have logged in shall be considered to be present and are requested to mute their microphones and only unmute when recognised to speak. This is because the microphones are very sensitive and will pick up noise which might disturb the attention of other members. When recognised to speak, please unmute your microphone and where connectivity permits, connect your video. Members may make use of the icons on the bar at the bottom of their screens, which has an option that allows a member to put up his or her hand to raise a point of order. The secretariat will assist in alerting the Chairperson to members requesting to speak.

Lastly, when using the virtual system, members are urged to refrain or desist from unnecessary points of order or interjections.

The first item on the Order Paper is a Subject for Discussion in the name of hon G D Kgabo.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 3

**INCREASING ARTISAN SKILLS BASE THROUGH TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) COLLEGES TO ENSURE THE ECONOMY HAS
THE SKILLS REQUIRED**

(Subject for Discussion)

Mr S T D LOUW: Deputy Speaker, the hon G D Kgabo will be replaced by the hon Louw. Hon Deputy, hon members of the august House, fellow South Africans, kindly receive my greetings. Thomas Edison describes an ideal of diligence and preserves in which:

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work".

That resonates deeply what our mission today: Building the artisan skills based through technical and vocational education and training colleges, requires dedication, effort, and structured investment. We meet under the banner of a shared vision: Increasing artisan skills based through Technical and Vocational Education Training colleges to ensure the economy has the skills required - and building a South Africa where education is not a privilege, but a right where the post-school education serves as the engine of the socio-economic transformation and where technical and vocational education training colleges are

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 4

recognized as pivotable institutions in shaping our nation's future.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa guarantees every citizen the right to education. This is not merely a statement in law. It is a moral and a political imperative that demands from us as leaders and custodians of the state, the creation of conditions that allow our youth and our people to realize their full potential.

The ANC has consistently affirmed that sustained investment in post-school education is a central building and developmental and transformative education system that one does not merely reproduce inequalities but actively dismantles them. It is within this framework that embraces the President's pronouncement that TVET colleges must become primary institutions for occupational training and artisan development.

TVET colleges are not secondary or fallback options, but they are essential instruments for economic growth, innovation, and job creation. They provide practical skills on our economy needs to function, to expand and to compete in an increasingly complex and technologically advanced global environment. By positioning TVET colleges at the centre of the economy planning, we are not only

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 5

empowering students, but we are also strengthening the very foundation of our nation's industrial and technological future. However, we must also recognize the severe challenges confronting our TVET colleges to date, underfunding remains a systematic problem that places enormous pressure on institutional capacity.

Limited budgets mean overcrowded classrooms, poorly maintained infrastructure, insufficient workshop equipment, and inadequate learning materials. For students who aspire to become artisans, technicians, and industrial specialists, these limitations are not minor inconveniences. They are also direct barriers for acquiring the competencies required to thrive in the labour market. It is therefore imperative that funding allocations to TVET colleges be increased, not just in response to raising enrolments, but in recognition of the crucial role these colleges play in national development.

I think it is equally critical that the issue of student support must be emphasized. Many students' enrolment in TVET programs rely on the National Student Financial Aid Scheme that has been trying to improve and do well of late to meet the cost of tuition, accommodation, and study materials. Yet delays in funding disbursement and broadcasting bottlenecks in appeals processes hinder students' ability to fully participate in their

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 6

studies. It is unacceptable that talented, motivated young people, should be held back by administrative delays.

The ANC has consistently called for timeously and predictable National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, payments, faster processing of appeals, and dignified streamlined administrative procedures to ensure that every student, regardless of economic background, focus on learning and skill acquisition.

Beyond financial support, we must also confront the state of infrastructure across our TVET colleges, where many campuses face challenges that compromise the quality of practical training, inadequate workshop equipment, unreliable water, electricity supply, and outdated laboratories, limit the ability of students to learn effectively.

Hon members, these challenges are not merely technical. They reflect the broader structural inequalities in our society and our education system. Addressing them requires strategic investment, not an ad hoc solution. It requires that we view TVET colleges - not as supplementary institutions - but central pillars in our national development strategy.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 7

One of our critical challenges is the shortage of qualified and specialized lecturers. The quality of training and competence of graduates is directly tied to the expectancies of educators. When colleges lack qualified lecturers in trades, whether in engineering, automotive technology, construction, or information technology, students are unable to develop the skills required by modern industries. Hon members, we must therefore invest in lecturer development, incentive specialization in critical trades, and build a pipeline of educators who can mentor and train the artisans of our tomorrow.

As we look for a future, we must also embrace innovation, science, and technology as tools to enhance skills development. Our TVET colleges must integrate digital skills into traditional artisan programs, utilizing e-learning platforms, simulations and virtual labs to provide students with exposure to emerging technologies. It is not merely about keeping pace with global trends. It is about future-proofing our workforce, ensuring that South African artisans are not only mainly competent in current techniques, but also agile and adaptable to the evolving demands of the industry by leveraging technology.

We can enhance pedagogy, improve access, and equip students with the skills needed to excel in a rapidly changing economic

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 8

landscape. Moreover, the ANC policy positions on education emphasize that TVET colleges are key to addressing unemployment and inequality. When effectively resourced and supported, these institutions produce graduates who are employable, entrepreneurial and are able to contribute to their communities.

Expanding TVET colleges with specialized focus areas such as renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, digital innovation, and artisan trades will not only create jobs, but will also stimulate local economies. We must move beyond the outdated perception of TVET colleges as secondary solutions and rather recognize them as strategic engines of our socio-economic transformation.

It is also quite crucial and important to highlight that inclusive education must remain a guiding principle. Access to TVET programs must be equitable, ensuring that students from historically marginalized communities, including rural areas, receive support mentorship and guidance to succeed. This will align with the ANC's commitment to a transformative education system that reduces inequality, promotes social mobility and empowers young South Africans to participate fully in the economy.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 9

As I close, building a skilled nation requires bold action, sustained investment, and a commitment to placing TVET colleges at the centre of national development. We must ensure that TVET colleges are adequately funded and resourced to meet rising student demands, guarantee timeously NSFAS payments, and efficient student support systems.

We need to address infrastructure challenges that are hindering to ensure that high-quality political training takes place, expand programs strategically to meet the demands of our growing economy, and we need to create sustainable jobs that are going to make sure that the economy grows.

By doing so, we reaffirm our continual commitment to education. We uphold the ANC vision for a transformative developmental education system, and we also positioned colleges as a centre and central building to a skilled, productive, and prosperous South Africa.

Setswana:

Ke lebogile thata wena Motshwara marapo.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Hon Deputy Speaker, hon members of Parliament, today we gather to discuss a topic that should be at the very

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 10

heart of South Africa's economic recovery, increasing artisan skills based through Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET colleges to ensure the economy has the skills required.

But before we congratulate ourselves for good intentions, which is what it is, let us be brutally honest about our situation, Deputy Speaker. We are failing spectacularly, and we have been failing for years in TVET colleges and in higher institutions in general. This is the truth.

South Africa does not suffer from lack of policy documents, or lack of speeches, or lack of slogans, or even lack of funds for that matter. What we suffer from is a complete collapse between intention and execution, between training and employment, between linking skills supply and linking skills demand.

Let us start with what is happening currently in our TVET colleges. We are training without purpose. Instead of producing plumbers, electricians, welders, fitters, boilermakers, and technicians, the very backbone of an industrial economy, many TVET colleges are teaching business studies and introductory computer literacy like Microsoft Office, MS Office and more non-artisanal courses.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 11

All that is left now in this country is for us to teach our kids how to watch the sunrise and the sunset. There is nothing wrong with business studies as well as computer skills or any other soft skills for that matter. But the fact of the matter is that our kids cannot fix a leaking pipe with a PowerPoint presentation. Also, they cannot wire a substation with a Word document. They cannot industrialise a country on Excel spreadsheets alone.

What we are doing currently is not artisan training. It is an academic drift disguised as vocational education. As things currently stand in our TVET colleges, we are lost completely. The second truth is that TVET colleges lack the infrastructure and resources to teach real artisan skills.

You cannot train a welder without welding equipment, without functioning workshops, and without compliant laboratories. Yet we continue to enrol thousands of students into institutions that do not have physical capacity to train them properly. Technical and Vocational Education and Training education is not done like this. We are offering false hope package as opportunities to our students.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 12

Now let's confront the real elephant in the room. The economy of this country is not growing enough, and the unemployment rate is skyrocketing. We are producing skills for a market that is not absorbing. This is a fundamental failure of planning, not of students, but of government in collaboration with business.

Artisans cannot be trained in isolation from infrastructure investment, municipal hiring pipelines, industrial expansion, energy, water, transport, and housing programmes. Skills without demand become certificates of frustration to our kids.

One other national embarrassment I want to quote that is a good example is the failure of the so-called war on leaks project. Young people were trained to repair water leaks and pipe systems; they received certificates and were told they were skilled and today many of those graduates are still sitting in the streets of Soweto and other townships unemployed.

Why? Because there was no linkage to municipalities, no absorption plan, no binding commitment from employees, no value chain planning. This programme did not fail by accident, it failed because TVET colleges were used as milking cows for corruption not as engines of development.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 13

This real sad part here is that kids were so excited on graduation. We raised their hopes for nothing, we offered empty promises to their parents and in this case as well, there was no value chain, no accountability and no consequence management. South Africa does not lack ideas, we lack discipline.

What is missing here is proper value chain planning, serious demand and supply analysis and a simple concrete binding commitment from every stakeholder to play their role in hiring our students without dropping the ball. Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges currently operate like isolated island producing graduates in droves and then hoping for divine intervention to employ them.

Hope is not a strategy, and prayer is not an employment plan.

Certificates do not create jobs but markets in collaboration with government do. What makes this failure even more painful is that successful models already exist out there globally. Countries like Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Slovenia have proven that strong apprenticeship systems, industry-linked training and shared accountability works.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 14

What's even more embarrassing is that the countries with fewer resources in South Africa like Rwanda, Kenya, Madagascar and Sri Lanka are doing far better in artisanal development than us. Let's stop playing ourselves. This is not about capacity, this is about political will, governance and seriousness.

The other global mirror that we avoided I want to quote, there is a reason why South Africa consistently year after year performs poorly in world skills competition. It is not because of bad luck or because of biasness, but it is evidence. It is evidence that our artisans are not trained to global standards, that our workshops are outdated, that our assessment systems are weak, that our curriculums are so outdated that we are nowhere near market competitive readiness. Instead of confronting this reality we continue with business as usual on a daily basis.

If we do not take ourselves seriously, the world will not take us seriously. If we continue to train without demand, to certify without absorption, to spend without accountability then we must accept that we are wasting these resources, wasting funds and wasting lives.

Doing the same thing repeatedly expecting different results is not progress but it's institutional insanity. South Africa does

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 15

not need more pilot projects, it needs binding partnerships between TVET colleges, industries, municipalities and the state.

Every artisan must have a workplace, a mentor and a clear employment pathway. Until then we must stop pretending because the young people sitting with certificates today in the streets are not statistics, they are living proof of our failures as a country. If they turn against us tomorrow, we must not be amazed or shocked as if we do not know what we have created for ourselves.

Deputy Speaker, the 2026 reform of TVET colleges that the Minister presented, when you read through it you can see it's a pipe dream. It's a reform plan that talks as if we are a third world, as if we have trainers of robotics, trainers of artificial intelligence, trainers of all advanced technology but in this country, we are still failing to have sufficient well-trained trainers for basic skills.

In that nutshell, thank you Chairperson, I thank you. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Motaung, I read right at the beginning that microphones are not just switched on. We will now proceed with the hon Govana.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 16

Ms Y GOVANA: Hon Deputy Speaker, Members of Parliament, South Africa stands at a critical crossroads. We are confronted by persistently high unemployment rates, deep inequality and a widening mismatch between the skills our economy demands and those provided by our education system.

Today, the ANC rises broadly not to pose more questions like the opposition, but to assert that the solution to the present unemployment challenges is placing basic education at the centre of artisan development and as a central driver for economic growth and inclusive development.

Our assertion on the role of basic education in artisan moulding is foregrounded in the school of thought of sir Albert Einstein who said: "Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think."

The insinuation is that we must not simply produce matriculants armed with theory but cultivate capable, skilled and adaptable learners who can contribute meaningfully to the economy.

The ANC has made significant investments in shifting from a singular narrative education system to a three-stream model, a

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 17

model that leaves no one behind through the incorporation of vocational and occupational pathways.

Hon Govana, could you please just pause for a moment? I see there is a point of order by the hon Reddy. Hon Reddy, what is your point of order?

Mr V G REDDY: Hon Deputy Speaker, would you ask members that are speaking on the platform to please show us their face before they continue with their speeches? I think that would be the proper thing to do.

Mr W T LETSIE: No, order, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Letsie, let me take the point of order. Hon Reddy, if you were ... right at the start where I read the Rules of the virtual mini plenary ... you may switch on your video if connectivity allows. It is not an absolute requirement. So, we will proceed with the hon Govana. Please proceed.

An HON MEMBER: Amandla!

Ms Y GOVANA: Deputy Speaker, the transformative shift not only responds to labour market needs but also eradicates the system's

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 18

disregard of artisans. In essence, the three-stream model is an economic imperative, and broadens learning pathways and enforces an environment for all learners to succeed in the basic education system.

The introduction of the General Education Certificate, GEC, at the end of Grade 9 marks a pivotal moment in our education system. The National Qualifications Framework, NQF, Level 1 certificate asserts that no child exits our system without a certificate to illustrate they have gone through the system.

More significantly, the GEC broadens the pathways for Grade 9 learners' to postschool destinations such as Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, colleges, community colleges and other skills development institutions, thereby ensuring that learners are not trapped on an academic trajectory that does not respond to their academic strengths and desires.

It is also designed to dismantle the rigid one size fits all progression model and replace it with a flexible, inclusive system. This empowers learners to pursue vocational education and artisan training at an earlier stage, thereby reducing dropout rates and enhancing employability.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 19

Our approach in this regard resonates with the sentiments of the philosopher, John Dewey: "If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow." Through the GEC, we commit not to rob our learners of their tomorrow.

Furthermore, in a rapidly evolving global economy, artisan skills alone are not sufficient. Hence, we strongly advocate for the integration of entrepreneurship, innovation and technology into basic ... to develop fully fledged future artisans.

Through this, the training of learners will no longer be confined to traditional training methods, but instead equip them with a skill set, positioning them as future employers as opposed to being absorbed into the labour market. We are forging forward in creating a future artisan that will be responsive to global economic needs.

We, the ANC, dare to say that no education system can succeed without a strong foundation. Foundational literacy, numeracy and cognitive skills are the bedrock upon which all future artisans are built.

Thus, we continue to advocate for functional early childhood development education. This resonates with the sentiments of

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 20

Malala Yousafzai, a Nobel Peace Prize winner: "One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world."

This corroborates the significance of the internal role to be played by basic education in shaping future artisans of our beautiful land. It further underscores the urgency of sustained investment, teacher development, curriculum reform and inclusive access to quality learning opportunities across both rural and urban communities nationwide.

Career guidance is often treated as a peripheral function within our schools. Yet, it is one of the most critical tools for aligning education with economic needs. The ANC calls upon ... [Inaudible.] ... career guidance not only to Grade 9 as an exit grade but to the whole school ecosystem. Career guidance aligns learners' interests, skills, aptitudes with potential career pathways.

The success of career guidance in our education system demands a holistic approach, entailing training institutions, industry and labour so that learners can make informed decisions about their career path.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 21

Our learners must understand that becoming an artisan is not a fallback option but a viable and rewarding career path. Reframing the study and ... [Inaudible.] ... the perception against vocational education colleges remains critical for us involved in the education system.

Perhaps the greatest barrier to artisan development is not structural but cultural. There persists a deeply ingrained perception that vocational education is inferior to academic education. This perception must be dismantled.

We must actively work to elevate the status of vocational education and artisan careers in the eyes of learners, parents and society at large. We must drive campaigns that assure learners that it's cool to be an artisan. For instance, there are people whom we can quote who are artisans by nature or by virtue of studying, eg the chairperson of ... Basic Education, hon Joy Maimela, is an artisan in general.

Borrowing from the wisdom of the late former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan: "Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family."

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 22

The ANC implores us to recommit and support a basic education system that creates multiple pathways for learners – the system that liberates learners to become job creators, not only graduates but artisans, not only learners but innovators.

This is essential because we view education not only as a tool to transform but as a national development strategy that responds to domestic and global needs. Through basic education that advances multiple pathways, we strive to cater for millions of young people ... from becoming victims of unemployment. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Dr D C CHRISTIANS: Deputy Speaker, over the past two decades, successive administrations have consistently emphasised the importance of artisan skills development but has failed to establish a clear strategy to ensure that training results in employment.

Because right now, the system is not producing artisans, it is producing backlogs.

There is broad agreement in this House that South Africa must urgently expand its artisan skills base. The economy demands it.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 23

Infrastructure delivery depends on it. Youth unemployment makes it non-negotiable.

But agreement alone does not create artisans. A functioning and up to date training system does. And the reality, drawn from portfolio committee meetings, oversight visits, and repeated reports, is that the system is under strain. In many key areas, it is not working as it should.

Across multiple Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, colleges, a consistent pattern has emerged. Students are enrolling, but output remains a concern. Students are completing theoretical components, but practical exposure remains uneven.

And critically, students who are eager to become qualified artisans are being delayed by one of the system's most persistent bottlenecks insufficient trade testing capacity.

South Africa has 50 public TVET colleges and more than 360 campuses. Yet only a portion are accredited or equipped to conduct trade testing. This is not a new issue. It has been raised repeatedly in committee discussions and reflected in institutional engagements. And yet, apprentices still continue to

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 24

wait. Sometimes they must wait for months simply to access trade testing.

That delay has real consequences. It delays entry into the labour market. It undermines confidence in the TVET system.

And it weakens the very pipeline on which the economy depends.

The second issue is the quality and stability of the training environment itself. Oversight has shown that many colleges continue to operate with; outdated equipment, limited workshop capacity, and lecturers who are overburdened with heavy workloads and excessive administrative issues.

This raises a fundamental question: How can we expect to produce world-class artisans in an environment that is inherently unstable? There is also a persistent concern, raised by those in the industry and by those within the sector, that there remains a significant gap between what students are taught and what the workplace requires. This is not a criticism of students; it reflects a system that is not sufficiently aligned with industry demand.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 25

Partnerships with industry therefore cannot be optional. They must be embedded into the system, from curriculum design to workplace-based learning. Because without this alignment, we risk producing graduates who are qualified on paper but are not absorbed into the economy.

A third and increasingly critical issue is student support. The challenges within National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS delays in funding confirmation, late allowances, and ongoing accommodation disputes are not abstract issues, they are daily realities for TVET students.

Students have reported that they do not know whether they are funded at the start of the academic year, they wait for allowances during the year and struggling with accommodation that is either misaligned between NSFAS and institutions or not paid on time. These are not small administrative issues. They directly affect student success. A student cannot focus on completing a technical qualification when they are uncertain about basic needs.

And this is where the contradiction becomes clear. On the one hand, the department speaks about expanding access and increasing enrolments. On the other, the support systems required for

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 26

success remain inconsistent. Access without support is not an opportunity, it is instability.

Another concern that continues to surface, including in engagements with organised labour, is the issue of long-term contract employment for lecturers. In some instances, lecturers have been on fixed-term contracts for years. This raises questions about; labour stability, institutional continuity, and ultimately, the quality of teaching and learning. A system that relies on prolonged instability within its own workforce cannot deliver stability for its students.

When one brings all of this together, a very clear picture emerges. The challenge is not that South Africa lacks a vision for the development of artisan skills. And the challenge is that the system is not consistently translating that vision into outcomes.

And this is reflected in a recurring pattern seen across oversight visits and committee engagements, the same challenges appear, year after year; delays in implementation, infrastructure constraints, capacity limitations, weak alignment with industry.

Now, the question that must be asked is: Where is the consequence management when these issues persist? Without accountability, the system does not improve, it only repeats itself. If this country is serious about building its artisan skills base, then the focus must shift decisively from inputs to outcomes. This requires several clear interventions:

Firstly, a time bound and measurable plan to expand trade testing capacity across TVET colleges, including accrediting more campuses and ensuring they are properly equipped. Secondly, targeted investment in infrastructure, particularly workshops and equipment, so that training reflects modern industry standards. Thirdly, strengthening partnerships with industry to ensure that training is relevant, practical, and linked directly to employment pathways. Fourthly, stabilising the academic workforce, because quality teaching requires stability, not perpetual contract uncertainty. And finally, fixing student support systems, including NSFAS processes, so that students are not set up to fail from the moment they enter the system.

Artisan skills development sits at the intersection of education and the economy. It is about more than qualifications. It is about dignity, opportunity, and young people's ability to participate meaningfully in the economy.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 28

But unless the systemic blockages are addressed, we will continue to see the same outcome; students who are trained, but not completed, completed, but not tested, tested, but not absorbed into the workplace. That is not a skills pipeline. That is a broken system.

South Africa does not need more plans for artisan skills development. It needs a system that works from the classroom to the workshop, to the trade test, to a job. Until that full pathway is fixed, the promise of artisan skills development will remain exactly that a promise. Thank you, Deputy Speaker

Ms B MATHULELWA: Commander in chief, commissars and fighters, Deputy Speaker. The call to increase the artisan skills based through the TVET colleges cannot be separated from the reality that the sector is largely dysfunctional.

The Department of Higher Education and Training, through its TVET branch reports and oversight processes of the portfolio committee, has repeatedly pointed to deep rooted challenges such as vacancies, weak leadership, corruption, poor infrastructure and an outdated curriculum that undermines the key objective of the sector.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 29

Across many colleges, key positions remain unfilled with principals and senior managers often serving in as acting capacities for extended periods.

Our oversight work has consistently flagged this as a major governance failure, when institutions are led by acting leadership with no long-term authority or accountability, decision-making and delayed strategic direction, is weakened and creates an environment for corruption to crime.

You cannot build a stable and a high performing institution on temporary leadership. It is actually our view that these acting positions are deliberately created to intimidate executive to bow to the correct wishes of the officials of the department due to the lack of job security.

There have been repeated reports on financial mismanagement, irregular procurement practices and misuse of funds within some TVET colleges, as highlighted in Auditor-General's findings and some work of the Special Investigating Unit, SIU.

Money that should be used to equip workshop higher qualified lecturers and support students, instead lost through corruption.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 30

This is not just inefficiency. This is theft from the future of our nation.

We must also confront the shortage of qualified lecturers in this same Department of Higher Education and Training, which has acknowledged that many colleges struggle to recruit and retain skill educators, particularly in the technical disciplines.

In some cases, lecturers lack both pedagogical training and industry experience. This creates a dangerous cycle of underperformance, the growing demands of enrolment without addressing this shortage, simply reproduce the problem at the much larger scale.

Moreover, many TVET colleges operate with outdated and non-dysfunctional workshops, limited tools and unintegrated learning facilities.

Annual report points out to underinvestment in maintenance and capital projects, leaving students unable to gain the hands-on experience required in trades. You cannot train an artisan in theory alone. Skills are built through practice and practices requires proper infrastructure.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 31

Equally critical is issues of curriculum mismatch. Many programs remain outdated and poorly aligned with current industry need. Courses are often too theoretical and disconnected from the workplaces realities, while emerging sectors such as renewable energy and advanced manufacturing are not adequately covered.

There is a broader mismatch between training and economic demand, weak coordination between colleges, Sector Education and Training Authorities, SETAs and industry, results in poor planning and misaligned outputs.

Without a clear demand driven strategy, increasing the number of artisans with no streamlined into meaningful employment. You simply cannot fix unemployment by expanding a broken system, increasing the artisan skills based in necessary ... built...but it cannot be that of the poor management of the department ... destabilizing leadership, investing in infrastructure and modernizing curricula.

It is only the TVET colleges that become engineers of economic transformation rather than symbols of system failures. This is why we keep lobbying this House to support the motion of the EFF to set up a parliamentary inquiry on the post-secondary education and training sector.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 32

As we sit here today, many learners who passed matric in 2025 are sitting at home without any prospect of finding spaces in the peers ... [Inaudible.] If we do not address this, we will render this Parliament into a talk show that prides itself in long and periodic speeches without producing any tangible solutions for the future of this country.

We have an opportunity to act. If we do not act, then this debate, like many others, will gather dust in the corridors of Parliament. If we are serious about the TVET colleges and their peer SETAs as a whole, we must take decisive steps as this House. Talk is cheap and I thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, before we proceed, there are a few members, we think it's members on the platform, who want to enter the platform. They're in the waiting room, but they're only identified as anonymous. Could I please request party whips to inform your members that if they do want to join this particular platform, that they do identify themselves on their devices. Thank you so much.

Mr S S ZONDO: Deputy Speaker, the IFP rises to affirm the simple but urgent truth that South Africa cannot grow its economy without rebuilding its artisan skills base. For too long we have

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 33

spoken about industrialisation while neglecting the very people who build, maintain and empower that economy, our artisans.

Our Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, colleges must become the heartbeat of skills development in this country. Yet, today many TVET institutions remain underresourced, inadequately equipped and insufficiently aligned with industrial needs. This is not merely an administrative shortcoming. It is a direct constraint to economic growth, job creation and the delivery of essential services.

The IFP's commitment to education and skills development is not new. It is rooted in the legacy of action under the leadership of the IFP's late founder, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

The initiative to take ... [Inaudible.] ... opening of ... [Inaudible.] ... Mangosuthu Buthelezi University of Technology in Umlazi, enabling ... [Inaudible.] ... black youth and adults access to tertiary education and vocational training at a time when such opportunities were systemically denied.

This legacy reminds us that expanding access to meaningful education has always been central to empowering our people and building capacity ... capable nation.

Strengthening the artisan skills base requires deliberate and co-ordinated action. The government must invest in modernising TVET colleges so that training reflects the reality of a rapidly evolving economy.

At the same time, stronger partnerships with the private sector are essential to ensure that training is relevant, practical and directly linked to employment opportunities. Without this alignment, we raise ... producing graduates who qualify on paper but ... excluded in practice.

We must also restore the dignity of artisan careers. Our economy depends on electricians, plumbers, welders and technicians, yet these professions are too often undervalued. This imbalance not only discourages young people from pursuing technical careers but also deepens the skills shortage that continues to undermine infrastructure development and service delivery.

There must be a focused effort to ensure that students who enter TVET colleges are supported to complete their studies and transition into workplaces. Too many young people are left in limbo, neither fully trained nor meaningfully employed. This requires improved lecturing capacity, better student support

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 35

systems and structured pathways into entrepreneurship and employment.

We must also ensure that there's no one left behind. Rural and underserved areas must be prioritised to expand access to quality vocational training. If we are to address inequality and unlock inclusive ... [Inaudible.] ... skills development must reach out to who needs it most.

In closing, the IFP calls for a coherent, well-funded, industrially aligned approach to strengthen TVET colleges and expand the artisan skills base. South Africa's economic future depends not only on policy direction but on practical skills. Let us commit to building a nation where those skills are developed, valued and fully utilised in the service of our people. We thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr A SAULS: Hon Deputy Speaker, greetings in the wonderful name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Khoisan:

!Honkia u huniki.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 36

Deputy Speaker, before I start, I note with concern that the parliamentary staff has twice removed my Boesman name from my own profile. I hereby officially inform this House that after the PA ensured that the Department of Home Affairs reprogrammed its printers to print Khoisan names, I finally have my Boesman name with a click character on my ID card and on the National Population Register. My name is !Qhoeke. Can the staff retype my name as I logged in, please?

Afrikaans:

Julle raak mens lank gewoond. Julle moet ophou, nê?

English:

We are told that the Northern Cape is the new frontier of the South African economy, from the mirrors of the Square Kilometre Array, SKA, in Carnarvon to the massive green hydrogen ambitions in Boegoebaai. This province is being asked to carry the weight of the nation's energy and scientific future.

However, I must ask this House, who will be the artisans of this frontier? If we are not deliberate, these mega projects will become gated islands of prosperity, while the local people remain stranded on the shores. I speak specifically of the persistent

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 37

neglect of our Indian Africans in KwaZulu-Natal, our coloured Africans and especially our San communities.

For the San people, our first nations, the current TVET model is a failure of both geography and culture. We cannot expect a young person from a remote settlement in the Kalahari to thrive in a rigid, urban-centric system that ignores our heritage. We need mobile artisan academies that bring accreditation to the doorstep of the Nama and the Khomani San.

Similarly, our coloured Africans and Indian African youth in hubs like Phoenix, eThekweni, Kliptown, Klipspruit West, Upington, Kimberley and Springbok are tired of being told they are unskilled, whilst contractors bus in illegal foreigners to do the work. It is a tragedy that local hands are not the ones welding the steel for our wind towers or maintaining the delicate sensors of the SKA.

I call on three immediate interventions. One, mandatory localisation quotas. Two, racial economic redress in training. We must move beyond the one size fits all bursaries. We need a targeted artisan fund that accounts for the extreme transport and digital costs forced on rural Northern Cape students. ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 38

indigenous knowledge integration. We must bridge the gap between indigenous technical knowledge and formal Red Seal certification.

Let us not just build a new frontier in the Northern Cape and elsewhere. Let us build a just one, where the San, black African, coloured African, Indian African and white African communities are not just spectators of progress, but the very artisans who build it. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

Khoisan:

Aio.

Afrikaans:

Die pad is lank maar die Boesman is naby. Saluut!

English:

Dr W J BOSHOFF: Hon Deputy Speaker, I see that the interpretation ... is on, so I will proceed in Afrikaans.

Afrikaans:

Hierdie is 'n saak wat vir my baie naby aan die hart is.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 39

Oh dear, now I'm hearing my own interpretation. In that case, I will rather proceed in English, because it's a little difficult.

It's near to my heart, because I did my little bit of academic work on this. Why are school-leavers not ready to work in the employment market after school? The answer is actually clear. It is that most school-leavers just go into the job market after matric or whenever they leave school, at whichever level they leave school, and school is not meant to prepare one for the job market. It's actually meant to prepare one for further study, whether at a university of technology or at a TVET college, but not for the job market. So we send in people unprepared for the job market.

Now, that is where TVET colleges should come in, but there are so few TVET colleges that it is not possible for them to shoulder this responsibility. They are only in the biggest centres, not in the smaller towns, while every little town, every village and every hill in South Africa has a high school where you can do geography and history, but not be prepared for the job market.

Now, I did my research amongst two schools in a small rural town in the Northern Cape – a township school and an ex-model C school. In both of these schools I asked some questions. Who of

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 40

you can weld? Who of you want to be able to weld? Do you think it's valuable to have skills like plumbing, like doing electrical work?

It was very interesting that at the ex-model C school, the learners were very positive about these skills. They would like to do so. Many of them were able to do so.

In the township school, there was very clear animosity to this whole idea. We were not liberated to be plumbers. Our fathers and our mothers didn't participate in the struggle to have us in trenches somewhere fixing pipes, in hot workshops welding pieces of iron together. What I want to do is to work with a computer. I want to be in an air-conditioned office. That was the general response from learners in the township school.

That is a problem. If there is no aspiration towards the trades and the occupations, and to artisanal jobs, then we can't throw enough money into it. It's not possible. There is not enough money to induce people to do a job that they actually do not want to do, or to study for a job, to do training for a job which they do not want to have.

In contrast, we have a private TVET college in the town of Orania called Bo-Karoo Opleiding. It does its training in Afrikaans and

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 41

the whole community embraces this college as being part of the community. It's not like some of the TVET colleges that we have seen on oversight visits, which is a little bit like a spaceship landing in a town and doing some things, and it can just lift off at any time and be gone again.

No, it's part of the community. It's a pride of the community and ex-students take pride in being alumni of this TVET college. That is the kind of community-centred approach that we need. I thank you.

Ms M P KOBE: Madam Deputy Speaker, let me greet you and outstretch my greetings to South Africans at large for joining us on this online platform. We as ActionSA welcome this important discussion, because South Africa's economic stagnation is at its core a skills crisis. If we are serious about inclusive growth, reindustrialisation and reducing unemployment, then expanding our artisan skills base through Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges must move from rhetoric to measurable delivery.

For too long, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET colleges have been treated as a second-tier option, underfunded, poorly managed, and disconnected from the real

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 42

economy. This has created a structural mismatch. While millions of young South Africans sit unemployed, industries from construction to manufacturing, energy, and even basic infrastructure maintenance report persistent shortages of qualified artisans. As ActionSA, we believe that TVET colleges must become engines of economic participation, not holding bays for discouraged artisans.

Firstly, we need a fundamental reset in how TVET colleges are governed and funded. Funding models must be linked to outcomes, graduation rates, artisan certification, and most critically, job placement. It cannot be acceptable that students spend years in the system without completing trade tests or securing apprenticeships. Secondly, the link between TVET institutions and industry must be institutionalised. Employers must not be passive recipients of graduates. They must, in fact, be active partners in curriculum design, training, and certification.

Countries that have succeeded in building strong artisan bases, particularly Germany being a prime example, have done so through dual training systems that integrate classroom learning with workplace experience. South Africa must adopt this very model with urgency.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 43

Thirdly, we must confront the collapse of apprenticeship pipelines. State-owned entities, municipalities, and large infrastructure programs should be the largest absorbers of apprentices. Yet too often, these opportunities are either absent or poorly managed. Every infrastructure project that's funded by the public purse should carry binding requirements for artisan training and apprenticeship placement.

Fourthly, the quality of instruction must be urgently addressed. Many TVET colleges lack adequately qualified lecturers with industry experience. Without credible trainers, we cannot produce credible artisans. Incentivising industry professionals to enter teaching even on a part-time basis, should form part of a national skills strategy.

We must also be very honest about governance failures, mismanagement, corruption and administrative inefficiencies within part of the TVET system have undermined public confidence. Students face delayed certifications, missing stipends and dysfunctional campuses. These are not abstract issues; they directly undermine skills development and perpetuate unemployment. ActionSA has consistently argued that accountability must be enforced across the postschool education sector. Where there is maladministration, there must be

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 44

consequence management. Where institutions fail, leadership must change.

Finally, we must elevate the social standing of artisans. A qualified electrician, plumber or millwright should not be seen as a fallback option, but as a respected and economically viable career path. This requires not just policy reform, but a broader societal shift, one supported by government, industry and education stakeholders alike.

In conclusion, increasing the artisan skills base is not a technical exercise. It is an economic imperative. If we get TVET colleges right, we unlock employment, support industrial growth and restore dignity to millions of South Africans. The question before us is not whether we know what to do or not. It is whether we finally have the political will to do it. I thank you very much Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr W M THRING: Hon Deputy Speaker, the crisis in artisan skills is not simply a matter of numbers. It reflects a deeper malaise in the culture of government itself. Weak accountability, poor work ethic and a tolerance for institutionalised complacency are now entrenched, exacerbated by what has been described as chaotic governance in the Government of National Unity, GNU.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 45

This culture seeps through every level of Department of Higher Education and Training. Plans are drafted, but implementation falters. Lecturers protest, but they are unsupported. Curricula remain outdated and oversight fails to demand excellence. This inertia is the greatest obstacle to building not only the artisan base our economy needs, but also the social and moral fabric of the nation.

The TVET colleges are producing only 20 000 artisans annually, yet 30 000 are required. Additionally, many of those who have graduated do not have the requisite skills needed by the business sector, as we have heard in a recent oversight visit to the East London Industrial Development Zone, IDZ Science and Technology Park recently. The Deputy Minister has conceded that TVET colleges must be repositioned as hubs of occupational excellence. However, the gap remains.

The ACDP has repeatedly stated that without a change in culture, no amount of policy tinkering will deliver results. Biblical wisdom urges that whatever we do, we should work at it with all of our hearts as working for the Lord and not for human masters.

The African Union's Continental TVET Strategy stresses employability and social justice. International best practice

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 46

shows us that artisans in Germany and Switzerland succeeded because they have embedded accountability and pride in workmanship into their dual training systems. Apprenticeships are treated as vital pathways to national prosperity.

The ACDP calls for urgent reforms. Firstly, binding performance contracts for TVET leadership with measurable targets. Secondly, industry-linked apprenticeships that hold colleges accountable for graduate employability. Thirdly, a national campaign to restore respect for artisanship as a career of dignity and value.

As kingdom builders, the ACDP cautions that unless we confront the culture of weak accountability head-on, South Africa will continue with a high rate of unemployed youth and the economy lacking the artisanal skills required. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I don't have speakers on the speakers' list for the following parties, but I will just make sure that there isn't perhaps someone on the platform. The UDM? Not. RISE MZANSI? The speaker for BOSA? No speaker, we then continue to hon Marawu.

Ms T L MARAWU: Hon Deputy Speaker, South Africa is sitting on a paradox that we can no longer afford to ignore. According to official labour statistics, youth unemployment remains above 60%,

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 47

while at the same time industry bodies consistently report a shortage of qualified artisans, such as electricians, welders, millwrights and technicians, skills that are fundamental to keeping the economy functioning. This is not a marginal gap; it is a structural failure.

The problem is not a lack of young people, nor a lack of institutions. It is a failure to align education, training and the real demands of the economy. We have approximately 50 public TVET colleges across the country. Government has set a target producing around 30 000 artisans annually, yet we continue to fall short. The reason is clear, weak integration between TVET colleges, industry and sector education and training authorities, Setas, outdated curricula and limited access to modern equipment and workplace-based training.

What we have is a system that produces qualification but not always competence. At the same time, the structure of our economy is evolving. South Africa is not just a service economy. It is a resource-rich industrialising economy with three critical pillars that must shape our agenda. South Africa remains one of the most mineral rich countries in the world, yet we continue to export raw materials and import finished goods. This model exports jobs.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 48

If we are serious about economic transformation, we must build local processing capacity and that requires artisans trained in modern manufacturing, welding, fabrication and plant maintenance. TVET Colleges must be directly linked to beneficiation hubs and industrial zones, producing artisans who can participate in value addition, not just extraction. From energy generation to water system, transport networks to housing, artisans are the backbone of service delivery.

Without electricians, plumbers and technicians, infrastructure collapses. The current service delivery challenges we face are not only governance failures, but they are also skill failures. A strong artisan base is essential for a capable state.

The ATM is clear, TVET colleges must be repositioned from being an alternative pathway to becoming the primary engine of development and economic participation. We must institutionalise strong partnership between colleges, industry and Setas where training is demand-led, not supply-driven.

We must modernise the curriculum to align with economic priorities. We must invest in infrastructure within colleges themselves. Workshops must be properly equipped. Students cannot be trained as electricians without live systems or as welders

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 49

without modern machinery. Training without tools produces theoretical unemployment. If we get this right, we will not only reduce unemployment, but we will also rebuild the productive capacity of this nation. I thank you.

Sesotho:

Mof K L KHAKHAU: Modulasetulo, ...

English:

...Deputy Speaker, South Africa's Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges, or TVET colleges, exist for the ultimate purpose of providing practical and industry-focused training to all South Africans across its 50 public institutions.

The legislative mandate of these colleges is to provide specialised vocational training to equip students young and old with the practical skills needed to unlock immediate employment opportunities in skilled trades. Their goal is to reduce skills shortages and to tackle unemployment.

Technical Vocational Education and Training serve as the bridge between education and the workforce. Their goal is straightforward, to provide industry-relevant, hands-on training that emphasises the practical and technical skills of this

generation and the future workforce of our country and its economy.

In simple terms, TVETs are the make-or-break of our economic growth. They are the make-or-break of this country's aspiration of poverty-free households. They are what stands between us and our ability to put food on the table for every household.

While this is true, our latest unemployment rate rests at 31,4% for the general workforce and 46,1% for young people.

Yes, Deputy Speaker, we've witnessed green shoots and some relief in our economy, but the bottom line is that it's not growing as fast as we need it to be. This is largely due to stagnant industries. This is something a more focused skills development model can cure.

It is, therefore, only right that this administration, and more specifically this department, focuses all its efforts on strengthening TVETs and maximising skills development. This starts with the reimagination of how the post-school education and training sector, or PSET sector, is organised.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 51

House Chairperson, the legislative mandate of TVETS does not need to be diluted and duplicated by the existence of Sector Education and Training Authorities, commonly referred to as Setas. We already know that for years, Setas have performed only one duty, lining the pockets of ANC and SA Communist Party, SACP cadres instead of maximising skills development and training in critical job-creating industries for our Republic's youth.

This is evidenced by how former Minister Nkabane, and now ANC Deputy Chief Whip, sought to deploy ANC cadres across Seta boards. This includes the National Chairperson of the ANC's son and their Johannesburg regional chairperson; not forgetting the gravy train passengers of the ANC cadres from KwaZulu-Natal. An act the Ethics Committee of this Parliament found to be in breach of the codes of ethical behaviour by hon members of this institution.

It was further proven by the Auditor-General of South Africa's findings of fruitless, irregular and wasteful expenditure at all 21 of these ANC looting crime scenes for decades long of financial year after financial year.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 52

Since the 2015-16 financial year to date, Setas have racked up a minimum estimated R4,218,186 000 billion in fruitless, wasteful and irregular expenditure. Let that sink!

The latest proof is seen in the convenient disappearance of financial records worth R637,6 million of this country's taxpayers' money at the Education, Training and Development Practices Seta.

I, on behalf of the DA this morning opened criminal charges at the Cape Town police station to enforce accountability on this matter. Money and financial records do not just go missing. Those responsible for this mess must account for their actions before the full might of the law.

Hon Speaker, the bottom line here is that Setas are not maximising skills development and training in critical job-creating industries for our Republic's economy. We know this because the department itself has no idea who has been trained for what, by who, where, and at what cost.

Simply put, this government runs a wasteful R20 billion annual bill on a 21-Seta gravy trains. Not only do Setas not align to government's goal of skills development, but the work they do

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 53

also does not translate to the creation of jobs for young people. They do not contribute to economic growth. SETAs do not benefit the Republic. Sector Educational Training Authorities do not benefit young people. Sector Educational Training Authorities are a waste of our Republic's money.

The solution here, and the DA's call to Minister Manamela and President Ramaphosa, on this matter is simple. Scrap Setas and improve technical and vocational learning. Scrap Setas and strengthen TVETs. Scrap Setas and fill TVET vacancies. Scrap Setas and develop and maintain TVET infrastructure. Scrap Setas and upgrade the TVET curriculum. Scrap Setas and strengthen post-TVET job placements. Scrap Setas because Setas have caused our country enough waste. Deputy Speaker enough is enough. We do not need Setas. What needs to be clear if it is not been clear by now, let me repeat it one last time, we need to scrap Setas and strengthen TVETs.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR (Mr N M Sibiyá): Hon Deputy Speaker and Members of Parliament, who are part of this debate on 6 October 2025, His Excellency President Matamela Ramaphosa announced the 10-point Economic Recovery Plan which was

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 54

designed by the ANC to tackle poverty, inequality and unemployment. Hon Deputy Speaker, the President said:

We have seen the great strides over the recent years on addressing challenges facing the economy specifically in the logistics and energy sectors where there has been a steady recovery performance but the impact of this work is yet to be felt in our growth and employment figures. The intractable impact of poverty, unemployment and high cost of living on the daily lives of South Africans is unacceptable. We are therefore announcing these interventions that are intended to support the government's proposed implementation plan on growth and inclusion and inform the annual performance plans of various government departments.

This is the ANC here just giving a direction and its thoughts and what it wants to see happening in this country. In this deliberation, issues of Tvet Colleges were at the centre and currently the President is hard at work in turning around the Tvet College sector, under the Minister Buti Manamela which all of us, we agree, there have been challenges, but again, we cannot say it is all doom and gloom.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 55

Hon Deputy Speaker, a lot has been done over the years. Some of us can tell the lived reality of what we have seen and what we used to see. I remember when I was once a general worker at Transnet where a high number of artisans, welders and of technicians were white. Today, when you go to those entities and private sector, you will find that the picture has changed altogether. The training colleges were reserved places that were dominated by white people. But further to that, we have seen the rise in terms of the black artisans, black millwrights and art technicians who are currently playing their role in many different sectors. That shows that we are moving forward. It is not true that nothing is being done.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this reminds me one thing that has been said here, which I think I need to address before I even continue. I might forget it. What has been said by hon Boshoff in this House is very disappointing. I want to say, really, I never expected that in Parliament in 2026, we will have people who think like this. He says he went to do research in some township schools and former Model C schools. Obviously, township schools are black schools. He says the learners in Model C schools are well capable. They understand the system.

They understand why they must be artisans, why they must do artisanal work and all that stuff, plumbers and everything. And

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 56

then he says, when he went to township schools, learners there said, we were not liberated to be plumbers and welders. Our mothers and fathers did not struggle for us to do that.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this is an insult to the black society in South Africa. He further went and said, they said they want to work in offices wearing suits and ties. In short, what he is saying here is that black learners are stupid. They cannot think. This is so racist and diabolical, I must say. It is so racist and diabolical to have a Member of Parliament who can say this. It just shows that we have not moved forward. We still have people who have evil views. These views really show that some of the Members of Parliament still hate black people and still believe black cannot think. They still believe in white superiority, which is something that is very disappointing.

I must tell hon Boshoff that the black child is capable, very bright and very smart. After many hundreds of years of being oppressed and isolated, they are taking their rightful space in this country. They are achieving high marks, rural schools are performing better. They are leading in many sectors and many industries. You find them leading. Something that was never there because of people who think like him.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 57

That is why, if I can give him an example of what I am saying, that a black child is smart and is capable, much better than what he thinks. You look at Eskom today. Eskom collapsed under André Marinus de Ruyter. Today, you have the Minister who is black, studied in a township school and is leading Eskom, with the CEO, currently Dan Marokane, black, studied in township schools. They understand so well a very critical and specialised field of energy which is very technical.

I want to challenge hon Boshoff to take me with him to go to these township schools where he did this research and I want to know the methodology that he used to do it. I really want to challenge him if he is honest, to this country so that we unmask his racist tendencies because this is an insult and it must be condemned for what it is.

I want to assure hon Sauls that the Boegoebaai and the Square Kilometre Array, SKA, in Northern Cape will definitely be led by young South Africans, blacks, Indians, coloureds and whites. They are the ones who will be leading in that frontier and we are deliberate in producing artisans and millwrights but also going bigger in terms of producing them at a scale because we understand what the economy needs currently. So, I am assuring him on that, that he should not panic. The President has given

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 58

the mandate. The Minister is working tirelessly. All departments understand what needs to be done as the country in making sure that the economy grows.

Hon Speaker, with this debate today, we provide a progress update on the comprehensive work that has been undertaken by the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities in partnership with various...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Minister, if you could just pause for a minute, it seems that there is a point of order from the hon Sauls. Hon Sauls, what is your point of order?

Mr A SAULS: No, Deputy Speaker, it is not a point of order. I just raised my hand to make an input on what the Minister is saying around the commitment that he is making. I wanted to thank him and say that the emphasis should also be on including ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Sauls, it is not your turn to speak. It is not a point of order and we will now ... No, it is not a point of order. The hon Deputy Minister will proceed.

Mr A SAULS: It is not a point of order, Deputy Speaker. I am saying it was not a point of order. It was not a point of order.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 59

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Sauls, you cannot just raise your hand and start speaking during the speaking time of another member.

Mr A SAULS: I apologise. I tried to explain it was not a point of order, Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is still not allowed. You are out of order and you are falling foul of the rules. You may not interrupt the speaker.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Sauls, please.

Dr T K S LETLAPE: Do not waste your time, Sauls. Do not waste our time. Please protect us.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have now ruled, hon Sauls, that matter is not allowed.

Mr A SAULS: No, just to be clear, I was not trying to interject. No, folks, do not waste your time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Reddy ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 60

Mr V REDDY: He is out of order and he still continues talking after you instructed him to stop.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Reddy, you cannot interrupt whilst rulings are made or after a ruling has been made. We will now proceed. Deputy Minister, please proceed.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR (Mr N M Sibiya): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Khoi and San community is part of and are at the centre of the society that we live in in South Africa. We have interest in them. We want to see them getting better opportunities. The President is very much focused on making sure that the Khoi and San community is being uplifted and they do get what is due to them like any other South African that deserves the best. We are working tirelessly every day to make sure that all South Africans are uplifted out of poverty, out of unemployment and all of them live a better life. That is the commitment by the President of South Africa and the ANC.

Hon Speaker, as I said earlier on that, we provide a progress update on the comprehensive work that has been undertaken by the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities in partnership with various government departments towards

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 61

increasing artisan skills based through technical and vocational education and training colleges to ensure the economy has the skills that it requires. The foresight of the President in 2019 to expand the mandate of the then Department of Labour to the Department of Employment and Labour has proven to be the impetus that was needed to address a number of structural challenges that have been facing the economy, specifically the labour market.

The Department of Employment and Labour's mandate includes monitoring the labour market to identify gaps and this is done through conducting research into scarce skills and critical skills. This ensures that the artisan pipeline that is being produced by Tvet colleges actually matches what industries are looking for and will be looking for into the future. Under the capable leadership of hon Minister Meth, we are working closely with the Statistics SA to improve the quality of the labour market formation to ensure that the department becomes the premier source of information on the labour market. We continue to do this as to proactively identify occupations in high demand to guide Tvet focus and curriculum. This work we are doing it because we know that the Department of Higher Education under the Minister Manamela is also working very hard day and night to deal with the curriculum at the Tvet college level to make sure that they are producing what the economy needs. This shows that we are

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 62

committed but we are focused. We understand what the challenges of this country and we are proactively now working on all those challenges to make sure that our economy does grow but the skills base that we have is able to respond to the needs by the labour market of this country.

So, there is work that is being done day to day. We are not sitting back and we acknowledge what the members are saying and raising as government. Additionally, Productivity SA continues to actively promote workplace productivity which relies on job ready artisans that again are produced by TVET colleges. We therefore support the initiative for a full life cycle of a student approach from enrolment to progress throughout the training period to certification, to work integrated learning and to industry aligned training and finally to data driven employment tracking.

The seventh administration has shifted the focus from simply issuing certificates to delivering employable talent. We are obsessed with the talent that must go and shows its skills at a workplace. Through the Department of Public Employment Services, which is in the Department of Employment and Labour, we have introduced measures to improve how TVET graduates are connected to job opportunities. The recently signed Memorandum of

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 63

Understanding with TVET Colleges including the likes of Thekwini TVET College will ensure that students are registered on the Employment Service of South Africa, Essa, database before they even graduate.

On job readiness and counselling, we provide counselling for every learner or for everyone who wants to use these facilities free of charge at all local labour centres of the department. We are making sure that people are career ready and workplace ready. We support a student when it comes to transition from the classroom to the workplace. When it comes to the workplace rights and safety. During apprenticeship, the Department of Employment and Labour ensures that students are covered by the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases, Coida, and their workplaces rights are upheld.

This is very fundamental and important because when you talk about vocational studies, you talk about artisans, welders and millwrights and those kind of skills and jobs are very dangerous. They always expose those who work in that sector to many dangers. So, as the Department of Employment and Labour, we have come into that space, we cover the apprenticeships with all the social security nets that we have in the department so that Coida is

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 64

able to compensate them even if they happen to get injured at work. That is the department being proactive as well.

Through the Commission for Employment Equity, the Department of Employment and Labour monitors whether previously disadvantaged and marginalised groups are gaining fair access to these new employment pathways. We are convinced that South Africa can only function and regain optimal performance when all South Africans are able to fully participate and take advantage of the economic riches of this country without regard to race, gender and creed.

Without having people like hon Boshoff who think life only happens in Orania, skills are found only in Orania, that is again the show of the character of hon Boshoff.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Minister, your time has expired.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR (Mr N M Sibiyá):

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. We are intending to make sure that this country does develop and reproduce more artisans.

Thank you.

Mr S T D LOUW: Hon Deputy Speaker, when President Ramaphosa delivered his state of nation address speech he spoke about the

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 65

overhaul of the Setas and said they must be replaced with a more effective model aligned with the country's economic needs. At least, when he was presenting that speech, he did not suggest that he does not know what he was talking about and has no solution. I would also like to remind hon members that the debate is not merely about the TVET colleges but about whether we are serious about building relevant skills that are aligned to our economic growth for the benefit of the majority.

However, one must appreciate that some hon members have borrowed from our notes what to represent from the beginning. One could see that hon Ngubane is one of our own and a former member of the ANC. He could have agreed on the policy alignment. We must not forget that hon Khakhau also agreed with what was presented in the beginning. Unfortunately, our pockets are full of aspirations and delivery and not what hon Khakhau has accused of us with. These are simple words of submission that she has made that speaks of us. Unlike the Minister who went abroad and wasted the taxpayer's money with a partner. Today that money could have been donated into young people's aspirations. It could have been donated into bettering the country because a country that does not produce skills produces unemployment. For them it is better to get double salaries because government is also giving them. They could have put that money to assist and make sure that there

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 66

are better interventions in the sector of education. But because it is all about themselves and it depends on the colour of their skins. That is why they do not understand where we are coming from.

So, I do not blame hon Boshoff to be shortsighted and thinking that only what is happening in his mind is not happening in a realistic way. We would want to put him in his place to understand what is happening.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Louw, there is a point of order. Hon Louw, please pause for a minute.

Mr S T D LOUW: As the ANC we have always understood that education is a public instrument of transformation. As I continue, we must confront the structural contradictions in our economy as we have got the historically overwhelmed economic pathways while we are undervaluing vocational and technical skills despite the economical clear demand for artisans, technicians and midlevel skills.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the contradictions ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 67

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Louw, there is a point of order, I have been trying to get your attention please pause. Hon Letsie, what is your point of order?

Mr S T D LOUW: Ow yes.

Mr W T LETSIE: Hon Deputy Speaker, I wanted the hon Louw to elaborate on this hon Minister who travelled overseas with his wife. I think that is a very interesting story which he must elaborate on for people of South Africa to hear.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Letsie, you know fully well that is not a point of order. Hon Louw, please proceed.

Mr S T D LOUW: Hon Deputy Speaker, yes, it is quite true that there was a Minister who used the taxpayer's money. Even their party did not rebuke and said nothing to him. I think they condone or agree with everything that happened. That is why they are giving themselves double salaries which is not even allowed in the country.

As I was continuing, we must confront the structural contradictions of our economy as we have got the historically overwhelmed economic pathways while undervaluing vocational and

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 68

technical skills, despite economical skill demand for artisans, technicians and mid-level skills. The contradictions are at the heart of the youth unemployment. It is precisely these contradictions that government, under the leadership of President Matamela Ramaphosa, has committed to resolve through the state of the nation address that we have seen serious reforms taking place.

We have seen that the President has to make sure that TVET colleges are repositioned as the primary institutions for artisans and occupational training. The acceleration of the infrastructural led economic growth in energy, transport, water and human settlements which require a massive pipeline of skills, artisan and skills is in progress as reported by the department. The commitment to expand skills development as part of the broader economic recovery in the construction agenda is quite enormous and clear. The critique by the opposition parties on the system of TVET Colleges is nothing new. We have had these concerns before and the ANC has been working tirelessly to address them.

Let us look at the facts. The ANC has increased the funding for TVET colleges by 50% since 2018 with a focus on infrastructure development and lecturer training. The ANC-led government has

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 69

also introduced new programmes to improve the trade testing capacity with a target of the 100 000 artisans by 2024. Our partnership with the industry has led to the creation of 200 000 workplace-based learning opportunities. But we acknowledge that there is more to be done. That is why the ANC-led government, through the TVET Colleges is implementing a new funding model to ensure colleges are adequately resourced, expanding digital skills, training to prepare students for the modern economy and strengthening governance and accountability to improve outcomes.

The opposition claims that the TVET system is broken, but they fail to acknowledge the progress we have made. Let us look at the numbers. The TVET's enrolment has increased from 50% and artisan production has grown by 20%. [Time expired.]

Debate concluded.

**THE STRAIN PLACED ON MUNICIPAL AND STATE RESOURCES BY ILLEGAL
OCCUPATIONS OF PRIVATE AND STATE PROPERTIES, REQUIRING
LEGISLATIVE REFORMS TO ADDRESS VARIOUS CHALLENGES PERTAINING TO
ILLEGAL LAND OCCUPATION**

(Subject for Discussion)

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 70

Mr L MPHITHI: House Chairperson and hon members, last month I conducted an oversight visit to the Springbok, Electron, Lindokuhle and East Road informal settlements, which are all sites that have been illegally invaded in the south of Johannesburg. Land invasions are a crisis. We are at a breaking point as a nation.

Orchestrated and bad faith unlawful occupations of land in South Africa have pushed our municipalities and organs of state to a crisis point. These occupations have the direct effect of forcing municipalities to provide basic services to occupied parcels of land, without having adequately provisioned for the increases in their budget and the alterations in planning frameworks. These expenses are above those already having been incurred in order to safeguard land from unlawful occupation in the first instance.

Across South Africa, we are beginning to see that unlawful occupations are now leading to severe dysfunctionalities in urban environments, including the obstruction of sewage infrastructure, illegal and unsafe connections to the electricity grid, violations of planning legislation, and serious health and safety hazards for occupiers and residents alike. Environmental harms and a shortage of basic social amenities for clinics and schools are what we are seeing whenever these land occupations are taking

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 71

place. There have been recorded incidents of unlawful occupations being organised by opportunistic criminals and political operators, all at the expense of law-abiding citizens.

Besides the deprivation of constitutionally entrenched property rights, unlawful occupations, particularly those in bad faith, lead to queue-jumping for affordable housing, further dispossessing the most vulnerable people in our country.

Other occupations, particularly those on public land, delay the completion of crucial public infrastructure projects at the expense of residents. For example, the 2020 occupation of land in Khayelitsha delayed a R162 million project to construct a new water pipeline. Another example is the occupation of public land in Elandsfontein in Gauteng, which delayed a major project.

The City of Cape Town noted that between July 2020 and mid-May 2021, there were over 1 177 attempted land invasions of state-owned land in the city alone. These invasions placed immense financial and logistical burdens on all major metropolitan municipalities. To put the cost of unlawful occupations into perspective, during the 2021-22 financial year, the Western Cape Department of Infrastructure spent in excess of R162,2 million,

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 72

while the City of Cape Town spent R142,8 million to prevent land invasions.

Across South Africa, municipalities are facing similar pressures. The same losses occur in many other municipalities across South Africa and are particularly harmful to metros. In order to ensure that the already overburdened municipalities and organs of state are inclusive, well-managed and functioning urban environments, the large-scale unlawful occupation of land must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The current Act provides a rigid set of requirements that need to be complied with in order for a person to be lawfully evicted. Despite what may be the occupier's bad faith intentions or true financial circumstances, this has led to lengthy delays in the removal, which comes at a significant cost to owners and a substantial burden to municipalities. The DA has tabled a Bill to remedy this, bearing in mind both the current state of our urban municipalities and their dire need to address unlawful occupations.

This is why we've put our Bill before Parliament: to criminalise the incitement of the organisation of unlawful occupation, for courts to expand the factors to take into account when

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 73

considering applications for eviction and to provide for further provisions relating to the availability of alternative housing. Parliament has the responsibility to answer this crisis and amend the law to ensure that we protect the dignity of South Africans who are still without housing, whilst also protecting property rights as espoused in our Constitution.

Hon members, Parliament can act right now. We must exercise the responsibility placed upon us by the Constitution. I thank you, House Chairperson.

Mr A M SEABI: Good afternoon, House Chairperson and hon members. Hon Chairperson, the African National Congress stands firmly on the fundamental principle enshrined in the Freedom Charter, that there shall be houses, security and comfort for all.

This vision was not merely a promise of shelter, but a commitment to restoring the dignity stripped away by apartheid spatial planning. As we debate equitable access to housing today, we reaffirm that our efforts go beyond brick and mortar. They are about transforming spatial patterns, building integrated human settlements and ensuring that proximity to economic opportunities, schools and health care is not a privilege reserved for a few.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 74

While we acknowledge the challenges of rapid urbanisation and budget constraints, the ANC remains unwavering in its resolve to accelerate the delivery of well-located quality housing, ensuring that no South African is left behind in the realisation of a society where every person truly has a place of security and comfort.

House Chairperson, this debate on the strain placed on municipal and state resources by illegal occupants of private and state land must not be approached narrowly as a matter of legislative reform alone. To do so, would be to ignore the deeper structural realities that continue to shape our society.

Illegal land occupation is not simply an act of defiance against the law. It is, in many instances, a manifestation of the enduring legacy of apartheid spatial planning and racially discriminatory land policies. House Chairperson, for decades, millions of South Africans were forcibly removed from well-located land and confined to the peripheries of cities and economic activity.

This deliberate exclusion created a distorted pattern of land ownership and access, one that persists today. The spatial geography of inequality remains etched into our towns and cities,

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 75

where the poor are still far from opportunities, services and dignity.

Hon members, the African National Congress has never wavered in its commitment to redressing these historical injustices. Our democratic government has, since 1994, prioritised the expansion of access to adequate housing and the pursuit of spatial justice. We recognise that land and housing are not merely economic assets. They are fundamental to human dignity, social stability and inclusive development. However, hon members, we must also reflect honestly on the pressures facing our municipalities and the state.

The rapid pace of urbanisation, rising unemployment, poverty and inequality continue to drive demand for land and housing.

These socioeconomic conditions compel many of our people, particularly the most vulnerable, to occupy land out of desperation rather than criminal intent. This reality calls for a compassionate developmental response, not only a punitive one. At the same time, we must be unequivocal.

The rule of law must be upheld. We strongly condemn the activities of criminal syndicates who exploit the desperation of

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 76

our people by orchestrating land invasions and engaging in illegal land sales. These actors undermine lawful processes, fuel instability, and place immense strain on already stretched municipal resources. They must face the full might of the law.

Hon House Chairperson, our Constitution provides a clear framework to guide us. Section 26 affirms that everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing, while section 25 protects property rights. These rights are not mutually exclusive. They must be balanced in a manner that advances justice, equity and the public good. Our courts have constantly emphasised that evictions must be just and equitable, taking into account the circumstances of the occupiers, particularly the vulnerable.

Government, therefore, carries a moral, developmental and legal obligation to progressively realise the right to housing. This includes ensuring that evictions are not carried out in a manner that renders people homeless and that alternative accommodation is provided when necessary. It also requires proactive measures to prevent illegal occupations through proper planning, land release and service delivery.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 77

In this regard, government has implemented a range of housing programmes aimed at addressing the diverse needs of our population. The Breaking New Ground policy has shifted our approach towards the development of sustainable human settlements, integrating housing with social and economic opportunities. The First Home Finance programme has enabled many first-time homeowners to access the property market.

We have expanded subsidised rental housing, provided service sites to enable incremental housing development and implemented emergency housing interventions for those in crisis. Furthermore, the upgrading of informal settlements remains a central pillar of our approach. Rather than displacing communities, we are working to improve living conditions in situ, providing basic services and security of tenure.

Hon members, despite these efforts, the scale of the challenge remains significant. This is why the ongoing legislative process, led by the Minister of the Department of Human Settlements, to amend the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act is so critical. This amendment must strike a careful balance by protecting the rights of lawful property owners while ensuring that the dignity and rights of vulnerable occupiers are safeguarded.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 78

We must ensure that legislative framework is responsive to current realities, provides clarity to municipalities and closes gaps that are exploited by criminal elements. At the same time, legislation alone will not solve this challenge. It must be accompanied by accelerated land release, improved event planning, stronger intergovernmental co-ordination and increased investment in housing delivery.

Hon House Chairperson, let us be clear. Illegal land occupation is a symptom of deeper socioeconomic challenges. If we are to address it effectively, we must tackle its root causes - poverty, inequality, unemployment and spatial injustice. We must build cities that are inclusive, integrated and equitable.

The ANC remains committed to this transformative agenda. We will continue to pursue policies and programmes that restore dignity, expand access to land and housing, and build sustainable human settlements for all. In doing so, we affirm both the rule of law and the imperative of social justice. These are not opposing principles. They are complementary pillars of our constitutional democracy. I thank you, House Chair.

Mr T I GAMEDE: Hon Chairperson, the criminalisation of dispossession by the Government of National Unity, GNU, ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 79

IsiZulu:

... ifuna ukusibuyisela emuva ngenkani.

English:

Members of the House and the people of South Africa, I stand here today witnessing a profound and dangerous political sleight of hand. We are told we are governed by a Government of National Unity, a phrase intended to evoke a shared destiny, but as we peel back the layers of this legislation agenda, we find a series of quiet technical manoeuvres designed to erode the constitutional protection of the poor.

Beneath the veneer of administrative efficiency lies the calculated attempt to dismantle the heart of our transformation. This is a strategic rewriting of eviction laws that signals a chilling reality for the landless. What we see here today is a DA-led neoliberal agenda that has found a comfortable home under the administration of Mr Ramaphosa. It is a tragedy of our history that the black skin of this leadership is being used to camouflage a systematic reversal of our liberation.

While the faces in the front benches may look like the people, the policies they defend belong to an era we thought we buried a long time ago. The arithmetic of injustice. Let us look closely

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 80

at the deterrence proposed in this Bill. It suggests the fine of R2 million or imprisonment up to five years for those found to be occupying land in bad faith ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Gamede, please pause for a moment. Hon members, firstly, I request that if you are not about to speak after being recognised, you remain muted. There was now, again, the hon Mbele and the hon Managa, who are unmuted. Please remain muted so that we don't disturb the speaker on the platform. Hon Bodlani, I see your hand. Why do you want to be recognised?

Ms T K BODLANI: Chairperson, on a point of order: the background of the member who is speaking, I do not believe it is acceptable. Could you please make your ruling on that? Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Yes! Thank you, hon Bodlani. Hon members, in terms of our Rules, members are advised to use the official background of Parliament. Of course, some sit within offices or office spaces and then have a neutral background, which is also acceptable. So, hon Gamede, please attend to that so that you have either a neutral background or the official background of Parliament. Okay, now I see other hands being raised.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 81

Mr M P MSEZANE: Next time, House Chair!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): No, thank you, hon Msezane. You have not been recognised.

Mr M P MSEZANE: I am sorry, House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Okay, I have made my ruling. I have just read what our Rules say. Unless it is something new, hon Reddy, why do you want to be recognised?

Mr V G REDDY: Hon Chair, on a point of order: For the clarification of the House, could you read that Rule? It refers specifically to party regalia and party symbols. There are no party symbols in this background used by hon Gamede. So, if you could read that Rule, I think it would be of benefit to the House. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you, hon Reddy. I'll come back to that specific point. I have made my ruling. I am comfortable that the Rules for virtual sittings apply. I think what you refer to as the Rule is a general Rule on party regalia. But I will return to you later in this specific debate with some further advice. Hon Gamede, please just remove your background

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 82

or, for now, switch off your camera. Hon Reddy and hon Ngubane, I've dealt with this matter. We must move on.

Mr V G REDDY: Hon Chair, on a point of order: Let us be fair here. You must read the Rule first, even if it relates to virtual meetings, before you ask the member to remove the background.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Reddy, we are not in a situation where you can, from the floor, dictate how I must decide over this specific sitting. I have made my ruling. If you're unhappy with the ruling, you know where to take it. But for now, that is the ruling.

Mr V G REDDY: Hon Chair, on a point of order: No, with respect, the ruling is based on the Rules. You can't just make your own ruling. Where did you get such a thing where you can make your own ruling? It must be based on the Rules.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): No, I have not made my own ruling, hon Reddy.

Mr V G REDDY: Hon Chair, on a point of order: But you can't give the specific Rule of what you are talking about. I want you to read that Rule.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 83

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Yes, as I am saying, hon Reddy, we are not in a situation where you can prescribe to me on how I should preside over this plenary. [Interjections.] Please, stand down now. I will start to regard your interventions as grossly disorderly conduct, and I will ask for you to be removed. [Interjections.]

Mr M P MSEZANE: No, refer the House to that Rule!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Ngubane, please take down your hand and remain muted.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Chair, I request to speak.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Ngubane, please, just stand down. [Interjections.] Hon Gamede, are you to proceed with the debate?

Mr T I GAMEDE: I want to say something. In the IFP, they wear something here every day with the head of the late ...

IsiZulu:

... uMntwana wakwaPhindangene ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 84

English:

... their late leader. If you look at this, there is no logo of the MKP. That is my president and me. Is it a crime now to be seen with President Zuma? Is it a crime? Because look at that chairperson. It is me and the hon president. That is all. Can I proceed, Chairperson?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Yes. Thank you, hon Gamede. I have made my ruling.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Chair, your ruling is wrong!

Mr V G REDDY: Chair, there was a hand. You need to recognise the hands raised; otherwise, this meeting is degenerating.

Mr J S NGUBANE: The ruling is wrong, Chair!

Mr V G REDDY: You will be responsible for that.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon members, please don't speak unless you are recognised.

Mr J S NGUBANE: You are not recognising us!

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 85

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Yes, hon Ngubane, I desperately want to come to you, and then other members just take over. Hon Ngubane, unless you want to raise something new, I caution you. I have now made my ruling. I am not going to revisit the ruling. I've given an undertaking to read the specific rule towards the end of this sitting. I am comfortable that I'm correct. Unless you have something new to raise, please don't proceed.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Chair, on a point of order: I have something new. I am asking you to suspend your ruling because it's based on nothing. You are not referring to any Rule.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): No, hon Ngubane, you have done exactly what I've requested you not to do. Hon members, the next member who will now try to take on this ruling will be regarded as acting in a grossly disorderly manner, and I will ask the Secretariat to remove that member from the platform. So, I have hon Msezane, ... [Interjections.] ... I have just said ... hon Reddy, you have not been recognised.

Mr V G REDDY: But you have not been fair ... [Interjections.] ... [Inaudible.] ... You are referring to Rules. Read the Rule to us.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 86

[Interjections.] You cannot create your own Rules as you go along.

Mr M P MSEZANE: You are bullying us! This is not your house. This is not your organisation. This is Parliament. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): I am not bullying anyone. Hon Msezane, you have now acted in a grossly disorderly manner.

Mr V G REDDY: We are not accepting your Rule.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): And the next time you do that, you will be removed from the virtual platform.

Mr V G REDDY: We are not accepting your ruling! Hon Gamede will keep his ... [Inaudible.] ... on until you read the Rule.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Reddy, unless it is something new, you are cautioned ... [Interjections.] ... hon Reddy, I am just cautioning you, unless you are raising something new, you will now be regarded as grossly disorderly.

Mr V G REDDY: We do not accept your ruling. Your ruling is not fair.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 87

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Okay, hon Reddy, you have acted in a grossly disorderly manner. You have disregarded the authority of the Chair. Table Staff, please remove hon Reddy from the platform.

Mr V G REDDY: You are degenerating this meeting, hon Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you, Table Staff, please remove hon Reddy. I have a new hand. Hon Chauke-Adonis.

Mrs T M CHAUKE-ADONIS: Chairperson, on a point of order: I think I am covered by you. I was going to request that, since you have made a ruling. Can we please move on with the debate? So, thank you very much, Chairperson. I am covered.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you. I see the hand of the hon Msezane. Hon Msezane, is it something new? If you again challenge the ruling, you will also be regarded as disregarding the authority of the Chair, acting in a grossly disorderly manner, and you will be removed from the platform. Do you want to proceed, hon Msezane? Okay, the hand has been taken down. Hon Gamede, you are welcome to proceed on the basis that you have a neutral virtual background. Thank you.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 88

IsiZulu:

Mnu T I GAMEDE: Hhayi, ngelinye ilanga, kuzolunga. Le-GNU, siyayibona le nto yayo ...

English:

... but we'll deal with it at a later stage. In what world does a person living in a shack have R2 million? This is not a fine. It is a death sentence for the family unit. Furthermore, this figure is a ridiculous violation of the proportionality principle enshrined in our Constitution and our law. By setting a fine that is mathematically impossible for the defendant to pay, the state is not seeking justice; it is seeking a backdoor to mass incarceration.

For a person in poverty, an unpayable fine is a guaranteed prison sentence. We are effectively debating the reintroduction of debtors' prisons in South Africa. By shifting this issue from civil administrative law to criminal law, the state is making a cowardly move. If an occupier is in a jail cell, the Department of Human Settlements is conveniently absolved of its duty to provide alternative accommodation. This is a move to erase the poor from the map of our cities. The crisis of perception. The proponents of this Bill will speak of a crisis point, pointing to land syndicates to justify these draconian measures. While no one

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 89

in this House supports the exploitation of the poor by criminals, you do not just burn down the forest to catch a few thieves.

Whose crisis are we talking about? For a DA and its neoliberal allies, the crisis is simply a site of informal settlements near suburban centres. We see the elitist obsession most violently in the Western Cape, where the DA-led administration is aggressively championing the construction of high walls to separate the haves from the have-nots.

The high wall is more than concrete and wire. It is a physical declaration of war against the poor. It is an admission that the DA's only solution to inequality is to hide it, fence it, and treat our people like an invasive species. The incoming and prospective party leader of the DA, Mr Geordin Hill-Lewis, is the architect of this exclusion and seeks to export this model to the national level. As the MKP, we will not bow to such racist demagoguery. This is a monument to an apartheid mindset that refuses to die, a world built by those who value the aesthetics of the suburb over the survival of the township. Lessons from the Global South, we have learned from Brazil that the law recognises the social function of property. It acknowledges that land is not just a commodity; it is a social resource. If land sits vacant and speculative for years while people are homeless, the law does not reach for handcuffs; it reaches for the tools of urban

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 90

reform. Why are we not discussing how to fast-track the expropriation of well-located land for social housing? Why has the current Government of National Unity excluded the critical intervention of our traditional leaders? Because we know and understand ...

IsiZulu:

... ukuthi amakhosi akithi nezinduna banabo ubuhlakani. Uma bangaba yingxenye yokuboniswa ngale nto, kungenzeka izinto eziningi ezingakwazi ukuthi zilisize izwe liye phambili.

English:

Instead, we are importing the worst impunity instincts of the Global North. We are choosing the path of the bulldozer and prison cell rather than the path of the architect and the urban planner. The bleeding wound of this land, we must remind this House that the land issue in South Africa is a bleeding wound. From the 1913 Land Act to the forced removals of District 6, the law has been used as a weapon of dispossession. When you introduce an R2 million fine, you are rubbing salt in that wound. You are telling the descendants of the dispossessed that the law still belongs to the masters. We know very well ...

IsiZulu:

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 91

... ukuthi ninabaniphethe abanitsshelayo ukuthi abantu abamnyama nabantu abahluphekayo ezweni lonke kufanele bacindezelwe kanjani.

English:

The Roman Dutch law cannot continue to reign supreme after 32 years of so-called democracy. The MKP is here to put a stop to that. The real people occupying land in bad faith are the settlers who came to our land, stole our land through colonialism, and now they seek to imprison the victims of the very same original crime.

In conclusion, we cannot allow the black skin of the Presidency to be the mask for a DA-led war on the poor. The people cannot live in a policy review. They need a commitment that this government will never criminalise the quest for human dignity. I move that this House rejects these punitive and unconstitutional clauses. We must demand a legal framework that protects the vulnerable, not one that builds more prisons and high walls.

Let us stop treating our people like criminals and start treating them like rightful owners of this land. I must remind this House that in 1652, when the settlers arrived in the Cape, there was not even a single man who came to Africa carrying a piece of land. And we all know that. And today we know very well ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 92

IsiZulu:

... ukuthi lo mhlaba kufanele ubuye. Thina siyi-MKP ...

English:

... are very firm and will continue to advocate for the expropriation of land without compensation because ...

IsiZulu:

... kuyoba kuhle uma umhlaba siwuphathelwa uHulumeni usebenzisana namakhosi. Kwasekuqaleni, umhlaba wethu wawuphethwe amakhosi. Zazingekho izingqinamba ezifana nalesi njengoba sebefuna ukuthatha abantu abahluphekayo. Umuphi umuntu ongathi afike akhe umjondolo bese ulindele ukuthi uma usuzomsusa lapho uthi wakhe endaweni engalungile bese uzothi kumele akhokhe u-R2 million. Uzowuthatha kuphi. Yindaba engavelanga wahamba wayothenga umuzi e-Sandton?

Ningadlali ngathi. Ningahlangana nje niyi-GNU, niqhube umqondo wenu wamaganu. Thina njenge-MKP, ngeke sivume abantu bakithi bacindezelwe. Zizokulwela lokho. Yingakho abantu bakithi uma sekufika uNovemba uzofika bavotele i-MKP ngoba iyona kuphela inhlango ezobakhulula.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 93

I thank you, hon Chairperson.

IsiZulu:

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILE: Gwaza!

Mr C J POOLE: Hon House chairperson ... [Inaudible.] ... Am I audible, House Chairperson?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Poole, the quality of the sound coming through is not good. You may consider switching off your video.

Mr C J POOLE: Can you hear me now?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Poole? ... My suggestion is that switch off the video and just try whether that improves connectivity.

Mr C J POOLE: House Chairperson, can you hear me?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Yes, that's better. Please proceed.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 94

Mr C J POOLE: Hon Chairperson, I wish to thank the hon Mover for tabling this important subject. The issue of illegal land occupation sits at the intersection of two fundamental imperatives, namely the protection ... [Inaudible.] ... of human dignity, and the preservation of the rule of law ... [Inaudible.] ... occupations are left unchecked ... [Inaudible.] ... principle in state resources and ... [Inaudible.] ... opportunities in a fair and orderly manner.

Municipalities across South Africa are increasingly confronted with the consequences of unlawful land occupation. These include unplanned settlement expansion, pressure on already strained bulk infrastructure, the diversion of limited financial resources, and the disruption of spatial planning and housing delivery programmes. In many cases, municipalities are forced to redirect funds away from planned projects to respond to crises created by land invasions – often without the legal clarity or capacity to act decisively.

When we delve deeper into the human settlements' portfolio, the issues are even more profound. South Africa has a housing backlog of approximately 3,8 million households, including nearly 900 000 households that have waited for longer than 10 years, and nearly

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 95

600 000 households that have waited for longer than 20 years. These are appalling numbers.

The failure by the Department of Human Settlements, across successive administrations, has created a layered problem. Due to an ineffective legal process, there has been a rise in illegal land occupations as some seek to bypass the stalled system. This, however, diverts resources from the millions of citizens who have waited, in many cases, for decades for a lawful opportunity to access housing. This erodes public trust in the legal system, strains administrative systems, and ultimately delays delivery for those in need.

House Chairperson, allow me to draw from practical experience. During my tenure as Mayor of Drakenstein Municipality, we were confronted with a recurring illegal land invasions known as "Plankies", which sought to occupy privately owned land. Year after year it became a flashpoint with community unrest, protests, and increasing pressure on the municipality to provide services.

However, the municipality was placed in a difficult legal position. On the one hand, there were legitimate humanitarian concerns. On the other hand, the land was privately owned, and

the provision of services required the consent of the landowner. This created a complex and often unmanageable situation.

Ultimately, in 2022 the municipality was able to reach an agreement with the private landowner to acquire a portion of the land, after which infrastructure and services could be formally installed. While this resolved the immediate crisis, it came at a significant cost: Additional municipal funding, unplanned expenditure, and a diversion of resources from other planned housing projects. Most importantly, what message does this send to the many law-abiding residents who have been waiting for years on the housing database? This is precisely why legislative reform is necessary.

The current framework, particularly the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, PIE, while grounded in important constitutional protections, does not adequately equip municipalities and the state to respond effectively and timeously to illegal land occupations. In particular, the law does not address the incitement of land invasions, where vulnerable South Africans are coerced to illegally occupy land. The results of this are delayed legal processes, uncertainty in enforcement, and increasing financial and administrative burdens on municipalities.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 97

The question before us is not whether we protect vulnerable individuals, that is non-negotiable. The question is whether we can do so while also ensuring fairness in access to housing, respect for property rights, and the sustainability of public resources.

The DA has already proposed amendments aimed at strengthening the legislative framework in this regard. These reforms seek to improve clarity in the law, go after the incitement of illegal land invasions, enable faster and more effective responses to illegal occupation, and restore balance between compassion and accountability.

On behalf of the millions of South Africans still waiting for a housing opportunity, we must ask: How long must they wait, while South Africans are undermined by an ineffective legal system and unlawful occupations? We cannot continue to enable disorder while millions of law-abiding South Africans remain on waiting lists for decades. Reform is no longer optional; it is necessary to restore fairness, protect public resources, and uphold the rule of law.

We cannot build a just and sustainable society if the rule of law is eroded, and if fairness in access to housing is compromised.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 98

Legislative reform is not about exclusion; it is about restoring balance so that dignity, legality, and fairness can coexist. I thank you, House Chair.

Ms M S LETLAPE: House Chairperson, the most tragic things about the debate we are having here today is the ignominious lack of historical awareness from the very person who sponsored this debate, whose grandparents may more likely have been labelled "illegal squatters" by the apartheid regime.

This tragic betrayal of history manifests itself through the outstanding ignorance this member has about landlessness and its root causes, which in turn makes him ever so eager to criminalise landless people. This debate follows a private member's Bill introduced by another member of the DA, whose intent is to bring via the back door the apartheid era legislation to deal with this landless black people.

The so-called illegal occupation of land is a direct product of colonial dispossession and apartheid forced removals, and also a direct result of the inability of the post-1994 establishment to restore land from settlers back to natives. Let us expose this DA conspiracy to use this Parliament to reintroduce apartheid era legislation a bit.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 99

Prior to 1994, a major piece of legislation governing evictions was the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 52 of 1951, which was also known as PISA. The PISA provided for criminal prosecution of those who occupied land unlawfully during apartheid. Coupled with a number of other legislative provisions that sought to strip Africans of their humanity, PISA provided strict draconian means through which African people's presence in urban areas would be controlled.

The introduction of PIE in 1998 therefore marked a radical turn away from the criminalisation of landless black people. It correctly located the judicial process for evictions in the civil and not criminal realm of our justice system. Squatting, which was a crime and under PISA, was no longer considered a crime and therefore removing from the state the power to criminalise landlessness and homelessness.

Furthermore, PIE made evictions to only be possible through a court order, and to be subjected to a number of requirements, with the ultimate goal of not leaving even those who occupy land unlawfully, homeless. This is more important viewed from the context of our history and the blatant disregard for the humanity of African people that the racist apartheid regime applied PISA.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 100

All this background is important to properly locate the DA's attempt to reverse this history. The DA's proposal in the attempt to amend the PIE Act, seek to reintroduce the criminalisation of land occupations as it was during apartheid, and this can never be allowed. Occupation of land in the context of widespread homelessness is done largely without the consent of the owner. It is for this reason that PIE is there to regulate the rights of those who occupy the land and the rights of the owner. Besides that, no one can incite people to occupy the land with the consent of the owner.

Therefore, in the absence of a radical programme for the return of the land to natives to eliminate landlessness, what the DA wants, in essence, is for black people to be criminalised just for existing, and this can never be allowed. This attitude by the DA is constitutionally contemptuous and must be vehemently rejected.

For as long as the land remains in the hands of settlers, our people will continue to occupy the land. Our people need land to build their own homes. They need land to run their own businesses, and they need land to farm. If the state continues to fail to provide land to natives, land occupations are going to intensify and continue for our people to give our people the

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 101

platform to get their own land and to redeem and restore their own dignity. Thank you, House Chair.

Mr T M LANGA: Chair, it is the hon Langa. I will be debating on behalf of the hon Ngcobo. He has connectivity challenges.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Please proceed, hon Langa.

Mr T M LANGA: May I also request to keep my video off for better connectivity?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): You are welcome.

Mr T M LANGA: Thank you, Chair. The challenge of illegal land occupation cannot be confined to a single department. It is a matter of how the state manages, protects, and utilises its land and infrastructure assets. Across the Republic, we are witnessing a growing pattern of unlawful occupation of both public and privately owned land, often on sites that are strategically located for future development. These are not arbitrary parcels of land. They are frequently earmarked for essential infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, housing, clinics, transport networks, and community facilities. When such land is occupied illegally, planned development is delayed,

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 102

infrastructure pipelines are disrupted, and the government is forced into reactive, costly interventions.

This trend exposes a deeper governance failure. Too often, state-owned land lies unmonitored, unprotected, and underutilised. In the absence of visible planning and active management, it becomes vulnerable to invasion. Once illegal occupation takes place, the legal, financial, and social costs of restoring order escalate rapidly, placing immense strain on already stretched resources and undermining the government's developmental agenda. At the same time, we must acknowledge the lived reality driving these occupations.

The demand for land and housing continues to outpace delivery. Communities that are frustrated by long waiting periods and nontransparent allocation processes resort to unlawful means out of desperation. This does not justify illegality, but it does demand a more responsive and co-ordinated government approach.

There is an urgent need to strengthen preventative mechanisms. The law must empower authorities to act decisively at the earliest stages of illegal occupation, before settlement becomes entrenched. The government must improve its systems for tracking and managing land. A credible, up-to-date audit of state-owned

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 103

property is essential. Without clear records, accountability is weakened, and land remains exposed to opportunistic occupation.

Intergovernmental co-ordination must be formalised and enforced. The fragmentation between those responsible for land management, infrastructure planning, and housing delivery creates gaps that are easily exploited. A unified, coherent response is essential if we want to protect public assets whilst meeting the needs of our people. The release of well-located land for development must be accelerated. Illegal occupation thrives in the vacuum created by slow and inefficient processes. If the government is proactive in making land available, it can both uphold the rule of law and respond meaningfully to the housing crisis.

This issue ultimately calls for balance. We must uphold property rights and the rule of law whilst also recognising the urgency of human needs. We must protect land intended for public benefit while ensuring that such land does not remain idle and vulnerable. The IFP believes that we can relieve the strain on municipalities, safeguard critical infrastructure planning, and restore public confidence in the state's ability to manage land in the interest of all. I thank you, Chair.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 104

Ms M L MATHOPA: House Chair and hon members, to the hon Conrad, and hon Mphithi I wish to say ...

Afrikaans:

... die DA is sleg, en ons sien en ken wat julle mee besig is.

English:

Today, I rise to address a matter that strikes at the very heart of justice: dignity, and the responsibility of the state to protect its most vulnerable. Behind every policy decision we make are real people, are real families, and are real consequences. Today, we must confront those consequences head-on. Yes, illegal land occupations place an enormous strain on municipalities. They drain budgets, disrupt planning, and force emergency spending on services that were never budgeted for.

There is another crisis, one far more silent and far crueller, and it is happening right here in the Western Cape. Under the banner of alternative accommodation, the provincial government and certain municipalities are using housing policy as a weapon to remove vulnerable coloured farm worker families from the land they have lived on for generations. Let us be clear: When a municipality tells a court that accommodation is available, but that accommodation is far from work, far from schools, unsafe,

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 105

unserviced, or not even built, that is not compliance. That is not justice. That is state-sanctioned displacement.

The very laws meant to protect the vulnerable – the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, the Extension of Security of Tenure Act, and our constitutional housing obligations – are being twisted to push poor families off farms and out of rural towns. The people paying the price are the same communities that have been carrying this province for decades.

Hon members, the PA has consistently raised the alarm about this injustice. We refuse to allow coloured communities to be treated as expendable, as if their history, their labour, and their dignity mean nothing. We must first tighten the definition of alternative accommodation. It must be real, safe, serviced, and close to livelihoods – no more paper promises. Secondly, there must be independent verification of municipal housing claims. Courts cannot rely on affidavits that look good on paper but collapse on the ground. Thirdly, long-term farm worker communities must be protected through real tenure security and on-site upgrading. These are not transient occupiers. They are heritage communities. We will not tolerate illegal land grabs. However, neither will we tolerate the quiet, bureaucratic removal

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 106

of vulnerable families under the guise of alternative accommodation.

Hon members, furthermore, on state properties, it is now undeniable that the noble intentions of the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act are being systematically exploited. Criminal syndicates are hijacking state property in inner cities. They illegally occupy properties, extort and collect rent unlawfully, and then use the very provisions of this Act as a shield. By claiming potential homelessness, they force the state and municipalities into years of costly litigation, holding the entire legal system hostage.

Will we defend planning systems only, or will we defend people too? The Constitution demands both. Justice demands both. The people demand both. Congratulations to the PA, the fastest-growing party in South Africa. I thank you, Chair.

Mr P A VAN STADEN: Chairperson, the illegal occupation of land, whether privately or state owned, has escalated beyond a mere crisis point. It is placing significant strain on both municipal and state resources. Furthermore, the moratoriums on evictions introduced during the COVID-19 lockdown have contributed to the escalation of this problem. Land invasion and the illegal

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 107

occupation of both government and private buildings is not a new phenomenon. The critical question however is why this continues to occur.

Three key factors appear to be driving the problem. First, the slow pace at which housing and title deeds are delivered to low-income communities fuels frustration and desperation. Second, inflammatory rhetoric by populist politicians can incite individuals to occupy land and property unlawfully. Three, unresolved land claims create ongoing uncertainty that, in turn, discourages investment and hampers development, particularly in the agricultural sector.

The Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, Act 19 of 1998 was enacted to regulate evictions and protect individuals from arbitrary removal from their homes or land. Its core purpose is to balance the rights of the property owners with the rights and dignity of unlawful occupiers.

Afrikaans:

Die vraag kan met reg gevra word oor hoe hierdie wetgewing behoorlik toegepas kan word as die wet verkeerd verstaan of geïnterpreteer word deur beide 'n plaaslike owerheid of dié wat wel grond onwettig beset. Watter hulpmiddele word daar aan

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 108

wetstoepassers verskaf wat nie seker is hoe om op te tree indien hierdie voorvalle plaasvind nie? Ons het dit al baie kere ervaar en gesien dat 'n hof 'n bevel uitreik om mense van eiendom af te sit of uit geboue te sit wat onwettig beset word, maar wanneer daardie aksie uitgevoer moet word, ontstaan daar onsekerheid by wetstoepassers oor hoe om dit wel te doen.

Die staat is nie onskuldig in hierdie hele saga nie. Indien behoorlike behuising verskaf word, soos wat sedert 1994 belowe is, en titelaktes betyds oorgedra word en daar nie probleme is met waglyste waar mense jare vir behuising moet wag nie behoort hierdie probleme vinnig af te neem. Grond wat reeds verkry is deur grondhervorming en waarvan 90% van die projekte misluk het, asook ongebruikte staatsgrond, kan dadelik hiervoor aangewend word vir herverdeling en die beginsel van vrywillige verkoper, vrywillige koper kan daarna gevolg word. Ek dank u,
Huisvoorsitter.

Sesotho:

Mof L M NGOBENI: Ke a leboha Modulasetulo.

English:

Chairperson, ActionSA has been unapologetic and we have been at the forefront of reclaiming hijacked buildings and cities like

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 109

Johannesburg and Tshwane, and we have long advocated for legislative changes to ensure that municipalities are not forced to subsidise unlawful occupation.

For too long, inner city buildings have been taken over, often by undocumented foreign nationals displacing law-abiding South Africans and accelerating the decay of our urban centers. Buildings that are intended for student accommodation or low-income housing are routinely abused, while municipalities are dragged through costly and prolonged court cases to secure evictions. These efforts are frequently opposed by nongovernmental organisations, NGOs, and international bodies that claim to defend human rights, yet little regard is given to the rights of millions of South Africans who remain on housing waiting lists or who commute daily into city centers with no access to dignified accommodation. In our view, this cannot continue.

The state cannot be expected to finance or legitimise illegal occupation, whether on public or private property. We need firm and unambiguous legislation reform that empowers municipalities to act decisively, limits frivolous legal delays, and places accountability where it belongs, on those who break the law. We must also confront the uncomfortable reality that in action has

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 110

consequences. When buildings collapse or fires break out, lives are lost.

At the same municipalities previously criticised for enforcement are then blamed for failing to act. This cycle of paralysis has served and does not serve anyone. In ActionSA's view, we believe in a balanced approach, enforcing the law while expanding access to legitimate housing opportunities.

Nevertheless, enforcement cannot be optional. A capable state must protect its citizens and its cities. It must protect its infrastructure and its people.

Chairperson, restoring order in our cities cannot, and is not, and should not be viewed as xenophobia. It is responsible governance. It is about fairness, dignity and the protection of all who live and work in South Africa. I thank you.

Mr S M GANA: Hon Chair, the unplanned and often illegal occupation of land is not simply a legal issue. It is a reflection of desperation, inequality and search for dignity. At its core, what we have in South Africa is not a general land problem. We have an urban land problem.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 111

Our cities are growing faster than our capacity to plan, to service and integrate communities, driven by rapid urbanisation and compounded by illegal immigration that we are seeing in South Africa. We must begin with a fundamental principle. The right to adequate housing is not negotiable, it is a constitutional and moral obligation. However, rights cannot be realised in a chaos. Unplanned land occupation undermines the very possibility of delivering adequate housing because it disrupts infrastructure planning, overwhelms basic services and makes it harder for the government to plan and respond effectively.

At the same time, we must be clear about exploitation. There are criminal networks that hijack buildings, sell land illegally and prey on the vulnerabilities of the poor. The state must be firm and ruthless in dealing with these actors.

They are not the champions of the poor. They are the profiteers of suffering. Yet, firmness must never become cruelty. We must reject illegal evictions that disregard human dignity and due process. People are not problems to be removed. They are citizens and residents in need of solutions.

The realisation of adequate housing requires a balance. It requires a strong enforcement against criminality alongside

compassionate, planned and coordinated settlement strategies. This means investing in well-located land, accelerating housing delivery and building capable municipalities that can anticipate and manage urban growth.

Ultimately, we must choose a path that upholds both order and humanity. Where the vulnerable are protected, the law is respected and every person has a fair chance at a dignified place to call home.

Xitsonga:

Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

Ms N S SOMPA-MASIU: Hon House Chair, the debate about illegal land invasion on private property and state property must be located within the historical background of the country and of the socio-political environment of today. It must not be treated as merely a criminal matter that needs law enforcement only. Of course, we have a duty as law-abiding citizens to respect the law, and as Members of Parliament, MPs, we must be exemplary in this regard.

Municipalities have, for many years, been dealing with a number of challenges relating to by-law enforcement. While they possess

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 113

the legal instrument and work hand-in-hand with law enforcement officers, they have to contend with an everchanging dynamic of people as a result of push and pull factors in the places they govern. One of those dynamics is the increasing number of urban population.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, in its Africa's Urbanisation Dynamic 2025 report, records that Africa's urban population will double from 700 million to 1,4 billion by 2050.

In South Africa we already have more than 63% of people being urbanised, and this number is expected to grow to above or more than 73% in 2030. Therefore, there will be a demand of land for urban dwelling.

It is out of this realisation that I argue that to treat any form of land hunger as criminality is to shun away from the reality of land hunger. It is also to ignore the realities of the changing world that demands for more movement of the people.

The ANC, in its wisdom in the previous administration, championed the Expropriation Act to ensure that municipalities take advantage of the situation of growing land demands in urban areas

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 114

and make land available to urban and rural dwelling. But the problem is more urgent in the urban areas.

However, this Act is being challenged in court because it is seen as threatening individuals' property rights. There is number of unregistered properties and land parcels, while speeding up the title deeds and contribution of ... [Inaudible.] ... to the decline.

But municipalities are still faced with realities of being unable to act in cases where a said property is identifiable. Some properties are identifiable because their owners' assumption of ownership is questionable and it means the owners will fear showing themselves.

The legacy of apartheid's spatial planning remains a big challenge to all South Africans. Property owners' patents still reflect the sad reality of apartheid making.

Beyond apartheid, the neoliberal agenda of placing the market over livelihood results into the challenge of the land invasion. No wonder that in the City of Cape Town land invasion has been a big problem as compared to other cities. Yet, the city has spent the least of human settlement grant ... [Inaudible.] ... it has

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 115

auctioned over 200 properties to private individuals from elsewhere in the world. This is a clear indication that the city wants to put profit over people and their wellbeing.

Therefore, the strain of municipality is as a result of unequal land ownership patents, which are a legacy of apartheid and that any form of redress is seen as threatening those property rights, when it's in fact about to address the land hunger.

We must also ensure that local government is treated as an equal sphere of government just like other spheres. While we respect that we are a utilitarian state, we ought to ensure that municipalities have the required capacity and capability to confront the challenges of growing lenders of the people.

This means that we must build municipalities to be able to spend their grants to provide affordable housing. Affordable housing must be provided to the city centres, almost close to and not far from the places of work. I thank you.

Ms E L POWELL: Hon House Chair, this House is debating the strain that illegal land occupation places on municipal and state resources. Yet, the solution is already before us.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 116

In 2023 I introduced a Private Member's Bill to amend the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land, PIE, Act to address precisely the challenges debated here today.

It is legally sound, it has been certified as constitutional and it directly responds to the strain that illegal land occupation places on municipalities, on landowners and most importantly, on the poorest South Africans patiently waiting for housing.

The solutions are already drafted, tabled and ready for adoption. We could, quite literally, solve this crisis tomorrow.

But predictably, when I first introduced this Bill I did not receive a serious response. Instead, I received a torrent of abuse. I was told that because of my race I could not possibly understand the history of dispossession in South Africa and that I had no place contributing to the resolution of present-day challenges in our country.

There is perhaps no lazier response in this House than to invoke the history of apartheid every time the ANC is confronted with a problem it has simply ignored for years.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 117

I understand the history of dispossession. I also understand the present reality. I spent formative years working in informal settlements in the KwaZulu-Natal and in Cape Town. I saw, first hand, the desperation of families waiting lawfully and patiently for their chance at dignified housing. I also saw, first hand, how organised land invasion syndicates and unlawful occupations deprive the poorest and most vulnerable people in our country of their right to dignified homes.

In eThekweni, an ANC-run metro, land invasions were reported this year as taking place almost every single hour.

In Gauteng thousands of completed housing projects have been invaded before allocation, displacing lawful beneficiaries and forcing government into lengthy, costly eviction processes that often fail.

Across the country municipalities are locked into continuous cycles of invasion, demolition, reoccupation and in spending hundreds of millions of rands on legal battles, private security and unbudgeted emergency service provision, while infrastructure is vandalised, land earmarked for development is lost and housing is delayed.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 118

This is a systemic escalating crisis that is now overwhelming local government and undermining our government's ability to deliver housing to those who need it most.

SA Local Government Association, Salga, itself, has been lobbying for years for an amendment to PIE Act to make it easier for municipalities to manage unlawful occupation. Salga has hosted workshops, consolidated municipal inputs and submitted position papers on PIE amendments.

So, this is not a fringe view, it is the view of the leaders of local government, who are left to pick up the pieces of national legislative failure.

So, let us be honest about what's happening here and why this crisis persists. Since 2019, in response to my parliamentary questions, the various Ministers of Human Settlements have repeatedly said that amendments to PIE Act would shortly be introduced by the department. But year after year and deadline after deadline, the answer was the same, wait another year.

So, the DA took the initiative and tabled the necessary amendments because we cannot wait any longer and because the DA gets things done.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 119

When our Bill finally came before the committee late last year, after the previous Human Settlements Chairperson in the Sixth Administration had repeatedly kicked for touch to keep it off the agenda, the irony was, in fact, breathtaking. This is because senior department officials who were hostile to the idea of the DA having introduced the Bill, nevertheless, agreed with the vast majority of its provisions.

Then the Department said it would bring its own version containing the same provisions that our Bill contained by March this year. That deadline seems to have been missed.

That is because, ultimately, the ANC wants this debate framed as if there are only two binary choices, either they introduce the solutions or the crisis continues.

The real problem is not that the work has not been done. It has been done. The law is ready. But sadly, some amongst the ANC would rather allow the crisis to continue than to permit a DA Member of Parliament to secure the amendment of a broken law. And that's the truth of this matter. And it is poorest South Africans amongst us, municipalities and lawful beneficiaries who are paying the price for this inertia every day.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 120

The DA has put solutions on the table, we've drafted the amendments, we've gazetted them, we've secured legal certification, we've engaged stakeholders. We have received support from Agribiz, from the Minerals Council, from the Law Society of SA, from technical officials, provinces and municipalities that know exactly what this crisis costs on the ground.

Our Bill seeks to protect poor law-abiding South Africans from being pushed further back in the queue by bad-faith occupations, political incitement and organised land grabs.

It does not abolish constitutional protections. It refines the law so that genuine vulnerability is protected, while abuse is no longer rewarded. It criminalises the incitement, arrangement and organisation of unlawful occupation even in the event where no money changes hands, because political incitement to undertake illegal action, actively sews chaos in our most vulnerable communities.

It requires the courts to look a little bit more carefully at the intention behind the unlawful occupation, including the occupiers' means, their health and their prior living arrangements, and the needs of vulnerable households.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 121

It empowers courts to specify a period for which alternative accommodation must be provided where that is reasonable, instead of leaving municipalities trapped indefinitely. And it brings clarity and fairness to a legal framework that is currently too easily manipulated by bad-faith actors at the expense of landowners and the genuinely homeless.

It gives effect to the Constitution, because section 26 of the Constitution protects against arbitrary eviction, yes. But section 25 also protects against the arbitrary deprivation of property. And to the state, has the duty within available resources to progressively realise access to housing in an orderly, lawful and planned way.

South Africa doesn't need another excuse and another delayed promise. It does not need another performative lecture on history from the very party that has failed for years to fix a law that is crippling municipalities across the country.

And so, now, all that stands between South Africa and reform is the ANC's refusal to act, unless it alone can claim the credit.

If we are serious about protecting the vulnerable, about restoring fairness to housing allocation, about safeguarding

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 122

municipal capacity and about upholding the constitutional rights of our citizens, then we should pass the amendments tabled by the DA.

The law is ready. The country is ready. It's now time for action. I thank you.

Ms J L MOKOENA: Hon members, the debate today confronts a difficult but necessary reality. The growing strain on municipal and state resources caused by illegal occupation of land is real. It is visible in our cities, towns, and informal settlements. However, let us be clear from the outset, this is not simply a problem of law enforcement and police monitoring. It reflects the unfinished business of land reform in South Africa. Firstly, framing the issue. It is very important to take a cautionary approach to such debate. If we simply reduce the issue at hand to illegal occupation and therefore tighter control, we might miss the true character of the debate. It is true that the country is faced with unlawful occupation, but what we are seeing across the country is not random disorder and lawlessness from our people. It is an eruption of unresolved land redistribution and land restitution. It is a pushback against apartheid spatial planning and its accompanying inequality. It is a protest against the housing backlog that has kept people waiting for a promise since

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 123

the dawn of democracy. We need to be honest in our framing of the problem, to say that those occupying land are not necessarily criminals; they are ordinary South Africans like me and you seeking dignity, shelter, and proximity to economic opportunities.

Secondly, the ANC's position on land. The ANC has always been clear. The call for land reform is not about political tokenism and soundly irrelevant, but it is a real, genuine call about dignity, identity, and inclusion in the economy. That is why, as the ANC, we support accelerated land reform, we support equitable redistribution of land, and we support state-led intervention, including expropriation where appropriate. We also affirm that land reform must be lawful, orderly and sustainable. In other words, it must strengthen and not undermine our economic and social cohesion.

Thirdly, the constitutional prescripts. Our Constitution requires balance. It protects the right to property and the right to access adequate housing. We also have the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from, and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, which ensures that evictions must be just and equitable. No one may be evicted without a court order, and the dignity of our vulnerable people

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 124

must be protected. This framework is not a weakness. It is a deliberate break from our past of arbitrary forced removal.

Fourthly, the reality strains on municipalities. We acknowledge that municipalities are under severe pressure with the unplanned settlements and the disruption it causes on the water, sanitation, and electricity systems. We also acknowledge the pressure on all the surrounding infrastructure. We have noted the impact that unlawful land occupation has on development projects and the ever-increasing disputes that come with it. At the same time, municipalities are expected to provide alternative accommodation, identify land, and respond to housing emergencies with limited resources. This creates a clear tension between constitutional obligation and capacity on the ground.

Fifthly, the landmark case. We know that the challenge we are dealing with today is a system under strain where the law rightly protects people from arbitrary eviction, but the state cannot always have the capacity to provide alternative accommodation. So, the unlawful occupation continues, and the municipalities are found in a state of managing a permanent crisis. However, this tension has already been addressed by our courts. In the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality versus Blue Moonlight Properties. In the Constitutional Court, the court made three

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 125

critical points in response to the issue of unlawful occupants and eviction. Firstly, municipalities cannot avoid the responsibility; secondly, the duty to provide housing rests on all spheres of government; and lastly, the state must plan proactively, not reactively. At the same time, the court made it clear that private landowners cannot be expected to carry the baton of state housing indefinitely. So, currently, the responsibility lies squarely with the state to act.

Way forward. We must state categorically that the ANC rejects extremes. We reject lawlessness and opportunistic land invasion. In the same breath, we reject a heavy-handed approach that aims to criminalise the poor. However, we support a well-balanced practical programme of action. We support the acceleration of the land reform programme, including the release of well-located, conducive land for housing, the expansion of access to land for the poor and working class, and ensuring that land reform supports economic inclusion. We also support the call for the release of land. It is our view that underutilized public land must be identified and repurposed to cater to the housing challenge. And we are also saying that our people must not be placed on a remote piece of land far away from jobs and services.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 126

Finally, we call for the strengthening of municipal capacity and refinement of the legal frameworks. We have noted with concern that several municipalities are unable to respond to the housing crisis that they are confronted with. And it is our view that municipalities must be given the necessary support to strengthen their capacity to deliver services. Municipalities must be able to provide dedicated funding for emergency housing, and this co-ordination must be managed and improved across all spheres of government.

In terms of legislative gaps, we are of the view that the legal framework needs to be refined to improve the efficiency of the eviction process and clarify the responsibilities of parties involved in the eviction process to maintain fairness.

As I conclude on our members, this debate is not about choosing between property and rights. It is about realizing the existence of both within a transformed and just society. The strain on municipalities will not be solved by enforcement alone. It will be solved by accelerating the land reform programmes, delivering social housing, and building a capable and developmental state. I thank you.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 127

Mr L MPHITHI: House Chairperson, this debate has shown South Africans who care about the challenges that they face, who are presenting solutions to the crises that we are seeing, and who are here to simply offer empty rhetoric. This debate has shown clearly that the DA has a plan for housing reform. The DA has brought forward legislation to address the incitement of illegal land occupations, which take away from state resources while also depriving those waiting for decades for a house and a title deed. A title deed is an asset in the hands of South Africans that can be passed to future generations. It presents the opportunity to create generational wealth. We ask political parties to work with us to improve the lives of South Africans. The facts here are clear. There is a title deed backlog of over 1,2 million, a number that has grown by nearly 800 000 since 2019. There are over 30 000 South Africans who have been waiting for a title deed since before 1994. How can we enjoy democracy when the government is simply not having the people's back? A department that receives more than R30 billion from taxpayers has not used these funds adequately to provide opportunities for South Africans. And what is worse is that The Presidency, via Operation Vulindlela long identified the title deed backlog as a major bottleneck in our economy that requires reform. The Presidency went further to propose solutions. In March 2025, The Presidency recommended that the department create a digital database integrated with

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 128

government departments to track the title deed backlog and work to find solutions. A delay in this legislation is brutal, and it is wrong. I would like to appreciate hon Seabi and hon Mokoena and welcome their steady and measured inputs. Hon Gamede, who sits with me on the portfolio committee, knows very well that multiple municipalities across the country have come to our committee multiple times asking the committee to take a stand and to amend this legislation to assist them with the challenges that they face on the ground. It is surprising to know that he no longer agrees with those sentiments. Hon Letlape has spent the past couple of years engaging with South Africans who have been on housing waiting lists since 1996. They have been skipped over because many of them have had to sacrifice their housing opportunities to those who have taken land illegally. Equally, I have engaged property owners who have had their homes and buildings hijacked. It is simply not okay. Hon Letlape needs to spend more time engaging South Africans and learning about this issue, because it is an issue that affects multiple South Africans in our country. Hon Langa, you are quite right about the causality of the slow pace of delivering housing opportunities and the rise of illegal occupation. But we can no longer leave this crisis unaddressed. Hon Mathopa, the PA is as useful as a fork in soup on this topic, because you have tried and failed dismally to present any form of solution on this issue. The DA in

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 129

the city of Cape Town has delivered the most housing opportunities across South Africa. We do not do paper promises; we do delivery. There are nearly 4 million South African households still waiting for state-subsidized housing. Nearly 600 000 of these households have been waiting for more than 20 years. We must leave politics outside and restore law and order while balancing the needs of the most vulnerable South Africans. We need to act. We can do so now. The legislation is tabled. We can act right now and protect the most vulnerable South Africans ... [Time expired.] ... the rule of law. Thank you very much, House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you. Hon members, earlier in the debate, I undertook to come back with reasons for my ruling. So, I can confirm that in the Announcements Tablings and Committee Reports, ATC, of the 30th of November 2022, the report of the Rules Committee of the National Assembly was agreed to by the National Assembly itself, amending the Rules for virtual sittings. Paragraphs two and three of this specific report are determined as follows, and I quote: Members must - that is my emphasis -

Members must use approved virtual backgrounds during parliamentary proceedings to maintain neutrality and decorum.

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2026

Page: 130

Permitted backgrounds are restricted to the current parliamentary building, a blank background, a blurred background, or a static picture of the member, with a strict prohibition on party symbols or political statements.

So, I hope that clarifies that specific matter.

Debate concluded.

The mini-plenary session rose at 17:00.

UNREVISED HANSARD