FRIDAY, 21 AUGUST 2026

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PROCEEDINGS OF VIRTUAL MINI-PLENARY SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Members of the mini-plenary session met on the virtual platform at 10:00.

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

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

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, before we proceed, I would like to remind you that the virtual mini-plenary is deemed to be in the precincts of Parliament and it 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.

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Members enjoy the same powers and privileges that apply in the sitting of the National Assembly, and members should equally know that anything said on the 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 requested to speak. The microphones are very sensitive and it will pick up noise which may 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 this regard.

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

The first item on the Order Paper is the first reading debate on the Long-Term Insurance Amendment Bill.

LONG-TERM INSURANCE AMENDMENT BILL

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(First Reading debate)

Mr N L S KWANKWA: House Chair, Frolick, good to see you. Thank you so much. House Chair and colleagues, the purpose of the Bill is to amend the Long-Term Insurance Act 52 of 1998 by requiring the authority to prescribe Rules relating to protecting a policyholder of multiple funeral policies for the same beneficiaries and to require a long-term insurer to offer advice within a certain period to existing policyholders related to consequences of holding multiple funeral policies for the same beneficiary.

The Bill also provides that non-disclosure of existing funeral policy by a policyholder does not affect the validity of an affected funeral policy and that a policyholder of a funeral policy is entitled to cancel any of the multiple funeral policies held for the same life event after being advised of the benefits and implications thereof.

The Bill lastly provides for a sanction in the event of a failure of a long-term insurer to comply with certain rules and disclosure obligations. The contents of the Bill, Clause 1, amends Section 62 of the Principal Act by making certain

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insertions, provides for definitions of the words used in inserted subsections.

Subsection 3(b) requires that the authority must prescribe Rules that relate to determining if a beneficiary under a funeral policy applied for is already a beneficiary under a different funeral policy issued by the long-term insurer.

Subsection 3(c) places an obligation on a long-term insurer to disclose all existing policyholders the benefits and limitations on the benefits under each funeral policy held by that policyholder for the same life event.

Subsection 3(d) entitles a policyholder to after receipt of the advice contemplated in subsection 3(c) cancel any of the funeral policies held for the same life event.

Lastly, subsection 3(e) provides that the non-disclosure of a funeral policy held for the same life event does not affect the validity of an affected funeral policy.

Lastly, subsection 3(f) provides for a sanction in the event that a long-term insurer fails to comply with certain Rules and disclosure obligations. I thank you.

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Declarations of vote:

Mr S G MWALI: Chairperson, hon members, I rise in support of this Long-Term Insurance Amendment Bill for 2026, a vital measure to strengthen customer protection, promote fairness in the insurance sector, and ensure that ordinary South Africans are not disadvantaged by insurance arrangements they do not fully understand.

At the heart of this Bill is a simple principle, a person who pays for insurance must clearly understand what they are paying for.

The funeral policies are not luxury products for many working class and poor families; they are a critical form of social protection ensuring that loved ones can be buried with dignity without incurring debt or financial hardship. Yet too often policyholders who faithfully pay premiums discover it only at time of claim that they held multiple funeral policies with the same insurer and that the benefits are limited and not cumulative as they had assumed. This is the injustice the Bill is seeking to correct.

The issue is not about existence of multiple policies but the lack of understanding of their combined effect. A policyholder

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may reasonably assume that paying a multiple premium means receiving multiple full benefits. The policies are often taken out of different times through different channels via different representatives of the same insurer.

The products are then paid consistently over the years. When debt occurs, the family expects a full benefit payment. Instead, they may be informed that payouts are restricted due to overlapping cover. Only then do they learn that the protection they believed they had was not what they had understood it to be.

Insurance is built on trust, but it is also built on information available to customers at a time. Customers cannot be reasonably expected to interpret complex exclusions, limitations and interactions between policies.

Insurers however have the system and have records and the capacity to identify duplication within their own product. For this reason, the Bill requires insurers to implement a system that detects when prospective policyholders already hold a funeral policy with the same insurer and where duplication exists insurers must disclose the implications and limitations clearly before the new policyholder is concluded.

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This Bill also affirms that Parliament's duty to act where information is imbalanced disadvantage the custom.

Legislation must protect people not only regulate institutions where sophisticated financial institutions interact with ordinary customers the law must ensure that the weaker party is not unfairly prejudice. We are therefore saying to the insurance industry ... Thank you, Chair. [Time expired.]

Ms O M C MAOTWE: House Chair, it is also good to see you. The EFF supports the Long-Term Insurance Amendment Bill. In fact, we view the practice of insurance companies refusing to pay policyholders who they have collected money from on a monthly basis for many years on the basis that they hold multiple policies as fraud, exploitation and stealing from unsuspecting customers. But this was allowed to happen by the regulators because we have a revolving door between the National Treasury, SA Reserve Bank, the Financial Sector Conduct Authority and other state bodies that are meant to protect citizens who in state are only obsessed with ensuring that companies in the financial sector make profit and nothing else. They make policy on one hand looking at necessary reform but on the other hand they want to ensure that these companies continue to exploit our people.

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What is more shocking is that the majority of victims are black people and women including those in professional spaces and informal trading. Many of these insurance companies operate as if they are law unto themselves. They deny their customers information that rightfully belongs to them.

They do not explain in detail what it is selling and all they are interested in is the number of people they collect monthly premiums from. They do not care about the dignity of the deceased or the livelihood of those who remain behind. In fact, they know from the moment they enrol you as a client that they will not pay out the claim. If it was one reason it would have been another one. The cause of death, the time of death, the place of death, when you are poor and a black woman, they are not just going to pay your money.

This Bill matters because it finally begins to correct that imbalance. Firstly, by compelling insurers to actively check whether a prospective policyholder already holds a funeral policy for the same beneficiaries.

The Bill shifts the burden of due diligence away from vulnerable consumers and into the companies that have profited from their confusion. For too long insurers have hidden behind the excuse of

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non-disclosure by the client when it is the insurer itself that designs these operating expenses, OPEX, products and markets them aggressively without ever explaining their implications.

Secondly, the requirement that insurers disclose in writing and within 12 months, the costs benefits and limitations of every federal policy a person already holds is a direct blow against the culture of silence that has defined this industry.

Policyholders have been kept in the dark for decades discovering the true terms of their cover only at the moment of a loved one’s death when they are least equipped to fight them.

This Bill forces transparency at the point where it matters the most before the claim and not after.

Thirdly, the right to cancel duplicate policies and receive a refund without losing more than the value of the benefits already covered gives working class families real power to correct mistakes that were in truth engineered by the industry's own sales practices. This is not a favour to policyholders; it is a basic justice to storing money that should have never been extracted through deception in the first place.

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As the EFF, we welcome this development and call on the National Assembly to finalise this important private member's bill expeditiously.

We must treat it the way we have treated other private member's bills that were intended to give our people much needed relief. This is an important Bill and therefore we fully support this Bill. I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon Maotwe, I am also good seeing you. I think the virtual sessions mean that we have less contact with one another.

Mr N M HADEBE: House Chairperson, the IFP supports the Long-term Insurance Amendment Bill because insurance must provide financial protection to South African families particularly those who can least afford to lose money.

We welcome the requirement for long-term insurers to establish systems to identify multiple funeral policies issued by the same insurer and to explain the costs maximum benefits and limitations of that cover. This is an important shift towards transparency and informed consumer choice. A policyholder should know what

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they are paying for and what protection they will actually receive.

The impetus of this Bill aligns with the IFP's commitment to protecting vulnerable South Africans and ensuring that institutions operate with integrity and accountability. In a country where many households must carefully manage limited incomes, consumers should not spend years paying premiums only to discover the point of greatest need that the protection they believed they had was subject to limitations they did not understand.

Even if the Bill is implemented, we believe that the regulations prescribed by the authority must ensure that any information provided by an insurer is understandable to a lay South African. This is so that the protections provided by this Bill can actually be exercised without unnecessary complexity.

We are also encouraged that this Bill has no organizational personnel or financial implications for the state as the government must do more with limited public resources. It is important that we strengthen protections for ordinary South Africans without creating unnecessary additional costs for the taxpayer. This is a responsible governance.

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The IFP therefore supports this bill because financial protection should protect people in practice not on paper. We must ensure that the insurance sector serves South Africans with transparency, fairness and accountability.

I thank you.

Ms J A BASSON: Hon Speaker, I rise on behalf of the PA to declare our position ... [Interjections] ...

Ms O M C MAOTWE (POINT OF ORDER): On a point of order, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, hon member, what is the point of order?

Ms O M C MAOTWE: This member is calling you the Speaker, you are not yet the Speaker. We are removing the Speaker next week Wednesday and we will decide who our Speaker is. At the moment you are not our Speaker, Chair.

The MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: Oh please, Maotwe man, you look so beautiful this morning.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Noted, hon members. Hon Maotwe, you're very sharp this morning, thank you for the correction.

Ms J A BASSON: Thank you. Hon Deputy Speaker ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, no, no, not Deputy Speaker, it is either House Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION: You must receive, Frolick. Say you receive.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Let's return to the debate now. Hon Basson, you may proceed.

Ms J A BASSON: I can second that motion.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Please proceed.

Ms J A BASSON: Thank you, Sir. I rise on behalf of the PA to declare our position on this Bill. We will acknowledge the noble intention of protecting consumers. The PA cannot support this Bill in the current form. Why not? Because this Bill creates the

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illusion of protection without delivering meaningful relief to our people.

It places the burden on insurance to develop systems but provides no clear timeline for the authority to prescribe the rules. It promises refunds, but caps on the value of the policy benefits, leaving policyholders still at a loss.

Furthermore, this Bill only addresses multiple policies issued by the same insurer. People hold policies across different insurers. This Bill does nothing to protect them from that reality. It is a half measure that fails to address the full scope of the problem.

The PA believes our people deserve better than half measures. They deserve comprehensive protection. We call for this Bill to be referred back to the consultation and strengthening. We will not support legislation that gives false hope to the poor and the vulnerable of this community. We stand with our people, not for flawed legislation.

I thank you.

Mr A D BEESLEY: Hon Chairperson, funeral insurance is important for millions of South Africans as it is a way of protecting

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families against the financial consequences of death. This is why the principle behind this Bill deserves our support. The problem it seeks to address is straightforward.

A policyholder may hold multiple funeral policies covering the same person or life event. Yet, under the existing regulatory framework, benefits payable by the same insurer can be subject to an aggregate limit. The result is that a person can continue paying premiums on multiple policies, only to discover when a claim is made that those additional policies do not provide the additional benefits that they expected. That is a consumer protection problem.

The Bill seeks to address this by moving the point at which the problem is identified from the claim stage to the point at which the policy is sold. Insurers would have to identify overlapping policies and clearly disclose the costs, maximum benefits and applicable limitations.

Existing policyholders would also have to be informed and given an opportunity to cancel policies they no longer need. We particularly welcome this emphasis on informed choices. Consumers should know what they are paying for, what they are entitled to receive and what the limitations of their cover are.

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This is not merely an abstract concern. Just this week, reporting ... [Inaudible.] ... in the Eastern Cape, highlighted an extraordinary gap in our current system. People can apparently have multiple funeral policies taken out on their lives without even knowing that these policies exist.

Some of these victims in that case reportedly had five, six or eight policies across different insurers. That raises an important question for this Parliament. The Bill improves transparency when multiple policies exist within the same insurer.

But what happens when those policies are spread across several insurers? This is one of the questions we believe the committee should interrogate as the Bill proceeds. There are other legitimate questions too. Does the Bill go far enough in addressing issues of advice and product suitability? And is the compliance burden it places on insurance practical, particularly when dealing with existing policyholders and beneficiaries?

These are not reasons to reject the Bill. These are reasons to scrutinise it properly. At its core, the legislation is about ensuring that ordinary South Africans do not spend their hard-

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earned money on insurance cover, whose limitations they only discover when it's too late.

The ActionSA therefore supports the Bill in principle and supports its progression to the next stage of the legislative process. We look forward to participating constructively in the committee's process, including considering whether further measures are necessary to ensure transparency and consumer protection across the funeral insurance industry as a whole. We support the Bill as it currently stands.

Thank you, Chair.

Mr W M THRING: Hon House Chairperson, the ACDP asserts that the Long-Term Insurance Amendment Bill addresses an important gap in consumer protection, particularly in the funeral insurance market. The Bill responds to concerns that policyholders may hold multiple funeral policies covering the same beneficiaries or life event, only to discover the limitations of such overlapping cover when a claim is made.

The need for this Bill is therefore clear. Many South Africans, particularly low-income households, faithfully pay funeral insurance premiums because they want to protect their families

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from the financial burden associated with death. It is fundamentally unfair if consumers pay multiple premiums without receiving a clear understanding of whether those policies provide additional benefits.

The ACDP understands that this Bill seeks to empower the Financial Sector Conduct Authority to prescribe rules protecting holders of multiple funeral policies. It also requires insurers to disclose the consequences of event and policies, gives policyholders the right to cancel duplicate policies covering the same life event, and protects the validity of a policy where another funeral policy was not disclosed. Importantly, insurers can face sanctions for failing to comply.

The ACDP believes that the consequences could be significant. For consumers, the Bill should mean greater transparency, informed choice, and potentially reduce unnecessary premium payments. It will also strengthen accountability within the insurance industry.

However, Parliament must guard against unintended consequences. Additional compliance and administrative requirements could increase costs for insurers, and there is a possibility that these costs could ultimately be reflected in premiums.

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We must also ensure that regulatory requirements are proportionate and do not disadvantage smaller insurers or reduce competition. But protection must translate into meaningful financial relief and certainty for policyholders, not merely additional regulation. South Africans must never be placed in the position where they pay for protection for years only to discover at the moment of greatest need that the protection they purchased does not provide what they reasonably expected.

As Kingdom builders, the ACDP welcomes the Bill's consumer protection objective. Thank you, hon Chair, and it is certainly good to see you, and we are not intimidated, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): [Laughter.] I'll take that one. Thank you, hon Thring, it is also good to see you.

Mrs W R ALEXANDER: Hon House Chairperson, good morning to everybody. The DA welcomes the introduction of the Long-Term Insurance Amendment Bill. It addresses a genuine consumer protection gap that has left too many South Africans without proper information about funeral policies that they purchase. The problem is clear. Consumers often do not know that they hold multiple funeral policies with the same insurer until the claim is rejected. They pay premiums for policies that will not pay out

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simply because no one checked or informed them of the implication. This is unacceptable. The Bill corrects that the insurer detects duplicate funeral policies and provides written advice about the costs, benefits and limitations involved. We support this objective entirely.

However, we identified critical amendments needed to be made to make this workable and fair. Firstly, the requirements to advise existing policyholders is too broad. The Bill requires office to disclose to all funeral policyholders, not just those with duplicate policies. This creates unnecessary costs for insurers who have already ensured that there is only one policyholder. We would narrow this in cases that this is only when there are duplicate policies that already exist.

Secondly, the cancellation provided creates practical chaos. The Bill says that a policyholder can cancel within 31 days of receiving advice. But what if an insurer makes the offer and the policyholder does not respond? Do they get to cancel years later? This exposes insurers to infinite financial limbo. We need to create clearer time limits. Insurers offer within 12 months. Policyholders must accept within a further period and cancellation rights apply only then.

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Thirdly, we recommend that the advice go to both the policy applicant and the affected beneficiary. Greater protection requires clarity all around. These are not objections to the Consumer Protection Act 68 of 2008, they are refinement to make this more workable and durable. The Financial Sector Conduct Authority, FSCA, must have rules that achieve the genuine policy objective, inform consumers, not blanket requirements that create unmanageable complicated burdens.

The DA is committed to supporting this Bill with these amendments. Consumer protection and regulatory certainty can and must work together. Thank you, Speaker.

Mr S C SEKOATI: Hon House Chair, the ANC in the committee supported that this Bill moved to the next stage. We believe that the Long-Term Insurance Amendment Bill seeks to address a matter that is significant and impacts the bereaved persons. This results in financial loss when no value is gained from funeral insurance cover due to multiple funeral insurance covers which results in the forfeiture of benefits and all expected funds.

According to FinScope South Africa Consumer Survey 2024, 58% of adults in South Africa consider funeral insurance the most important insurance product. In contrast, the uptake of life

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insurance remains comparatively low at 11%, with 83% of adult South Africans having never had life insurance. There is also a significant research gap. Although funeral insurance represents about 45% of life insurance complaints, declined claims make up to more than half of funeral complaints published, a highlight that needs us to focus to the challenge impacting long-term insurance. The ANC has identified the need to focus on various components of the financial sector to ensure that it is developmental and provide quality services that protect its product holders. A focus on funeral insurance is an important component the committee should consider.

The Financial Sector Conduct Authority, FSCA, 2025 report has highlighted that the funeral insurance recurring premium approximately R45,1 billion per year and this consists of R27,2 billion in individual funeral policies, R15,2 billion in group individual funeral policies and R2,6 billion in group funeral business, approximately 17,2 million holders. This is a significant component of the insurance sector which contributes to job creation with the production value chain supporting it.

The extent of declined benefits affecting policyholders must be quantified. Policyholders are often made aware of the implications of holding multiple policies only when benefits are

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declined, which is precisely the concern the Bill seeks to address. It is a matter that the Finance Standing Committee should consider and the ANC will further engage in the process with the intention of resolving the matter. Thank you.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Hon House Chairperson, what is important here, most of you, I mean, all of you, except for one colleague who seemed to have completely misunderstood the objective of the Bill, is that you understand the crux of the problem. Those who interact with ordinary South Africans on a daily basis would realise that this is a serious problem especially after they have spent thousands of rands of their money on funeral plans and funeral policies that they never benefit from at the end of the process. We encounter this on a regular basis.

IsiXhosa:

Abantu bethu Sihlalo weNdlu bagaxeleka rhoqho kule ngxaki. Xa siseluntwini sisombulula imicimbi yabo siye sive ngalo mba njengenye yeengxaki abanazo. Asikwazi ke ngoku xa kufikelele ithuba lokuba siyilungise, siyibekele ecaleni.

English:

We appreciate the colleagues who have made some very cogent arguments making suggestions about how this Bill can be enhanced

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and improved. Ultimately, it is intended to protect the consumer but we do not want to create unnecessary burdens on the industry. So, we are happy with trying to achieve very important balancing Act as the legislature. Thank you very much, House Chairperson and colleagues.

First Reading debate concluded.

Long-term Insurance Amendment Bill

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON OVERSIGHT VISIT TO GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, ITS FUNDED NPOS, NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE COMMAND CENTRE AND TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, NDA, AND ITS FUNDED PROJECTS

Ms B S MASANGO: Hon House Chair, the Portfolio Committee on Social Development conducted an oversight visit to the Gauteng province from 25 March to 27 March 2025. During the visit, the committee received a progress report from the Gauteng Provincial Department of Social Development regarding the state of NPO funding, following the committee's prior engagement with the department on 13 November 2024.

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Additionally, the committee was briefed by the SA Local Government Association, Salga, on the municipal bylaw requirements applicable to the NPO sector and the support provided to the sector. A further briefing was received from the National Development Agency, NDA, which covered the programmes it implements, the NPOs, NGOs, and co-operatives it funds, the impact of its funding and the intervention of the Department of Social Development in Gauteng, as well as the details on the grant funding budget.

The objectives of this visit was to meet with the Gauteng Department of Social Development to receive a briefing on the progress that has been made in the NPO sector, the funding of the province, and redressing the decision taken by the Sixth Administration and the financial and nonfinancial support to the NPO sector, legislative framework implemented, the budget allocated for the NPO sector, and the report on the compliant and noncompliant NPOs and reasons for this noncompliant sectors.

To meet with Salga and the head of the NDA to receive a briefing on the programmes it implements. We also wanted to meet with the NPO sector to receive a follow-up report. And lastly, to conduct site visits to selected NPOs that are funded by the department, and to receive a briefing on the programmes and services that

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they render. Hon Chairperson and colleagues, this visit ... [Interjections.] ... sorry, I am being disturbed by the phones. [Interjections.]

Mr N T TSHOTETSI: It is Zille. Tell Zille to stop calling me!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No! Order, hon members. Hon Tshotetsi, that is now uncalled for. Please proceed, hon member.

Ms B S MASANGO: ... was a success, and we got all the information that we had wanted to get from the various NPOs and the Department of Social Development in Gauteng. As a result of this, we resolved, as the portfolio committee, that the NDA should submit a technical response to the portfolio committee on the impact of grant funding. The report should also include reasons for the fluctuations in the NDA funding. The NDA should extend formal invitations to committee members to attend its events and visits to the NPOs it funds. This will strengthen oversight and engagement, and to allow committee members to gain first-hand insight into the impact of the NDA's programmes and the work of the funded NPOs.

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The NDA should also present its turnaround strategy to the portfolio committee. The agency should submit a list of its provincial offices and their locations to the portfolio committee. So, on behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, I hereby table this report for this House to consider and adopt. Thank you, hon House Chair.

IsiZulu:

Mfu N B GCWABAZA: Sihlalo ohloniphekile, namalungu onke, ngiphakama ngithunywe i-MKP nabahlali baseNingizimu Afrika. Siyi-MKP, sicela abahlali bonke baseNingizimu Afrika ukuba ngomhlaka-4 Novemba bahambe bayovota, bavotele i-MKP, ngoba lo mbiko utshengisa ngokusobala ukuthi uHulumeni woBunye beSizwe we-ANC, i-DA ne-IFP awusoze wakwazi ukulekelela labo bobulili obuthile abahlukumezekile, okungabesifazane, amantombazane kanye nabafana, bebe bazi ukuthi lab abantu bahlukumezeke kangakanani emiphakathini abaphila kuyona. Futhi abazimisele ukuxhasa nokulekelela ama-NPOs ngemali, bebe bazi ukuthi ama-NPOs asebenza kangakanani emiphakathini esihlala kuyo. Ahlula ngisho iminyango kaHulumeni. Imibiko inikeza ngokusobala ukuthi ama-NPOs asebenza ngempela emiphakathini yethu futhi enza imisebenzi ekungabe yenziwa uHulumeni.

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Kodwa uHulumeni woBunye beSizwe awunandaba nama-NPOs. Uhulumeni akawakhokheli ama-NPOs ngesikhathi esifanele. Ama-NPOs agcine engasakwazi ukusiza abantu emiphakathini. Umbiko utshengisa ukuthi u-71% wemisebenzi engabe yenziwa uHulumeni ugcina wenziwa ama-NPOs. Uhulumeni uphinde uphule isivumelwano asenza nama-NPOs kungakafiki isikhathi. Nomasipala bayazisikela kuwona ama-NPOs, bawahlukumeza ngemithetho engacacile, okuyimithetho eyayisebenza ngaphambi kuka-1994. Kuyoze kube yinini uHulumeni uzwisa abantu bakithi ubuhlungu obungaka

Sihlalo ohloniphekile, sibuye savakashela i-Gender-Based Violence Command Centre. Kubuhlungu kakhulu ukwazi ukuthi uHulumeni wanamuhla awufuni ukufaka imali ezintweni ezibalulekile ezifana nayo le-GBV Command Centre, lapho okubalulekile ukuthi abantu abasebenza khona kube abantu impela abazokwazi ukukhuluma izilimi zonke ezingamashumi nanye ezikhona lapha eNingizimu Afrika, ukwazi ukuzisa wonke umuntu ohlukumezekile ngisho ngabe ekhuluma luphi ulimi. Kubuhlungu kakhulu ukuthi noMongameli noma eseyibizile i-gender-based violence njenge nhlekelele yezwe kodwa akayifaki imali ezinhlelweni ezizolekelela ukusiza labo asebehlukumezekile.

Sihlalo ohloniphekile, siphinde saba nomhlangano nenhlangano yentuthuko kazwelonke, i-National Development Agency. Imibiko

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isitshengisa ukuthi le nhlangano isithuthukise izinhlangano ezingu-21 kuphela eNingizimu Afrika yonke jikelele ngesabelo mali esingu-R9,4 million. Kanjani nje ukuthi kusizwe abantu ngo-R9,4 million sihlupheke kangaka eNingizimu Afrika? Sihlalo ohloniphekile, le nhlangano iyona ebhekiwe ukuthi ikhiphe abantu bakithi abamnyama ebugqileni abafakwa uhulumeni wengcindezelo okunguhulumeni wabamhlophe, lo olana njengamanje kuHulumeni woBunye beSizwe namhlanje.

Uhulumeni akakhoni ukufaka imali ngoba akulindelekile ukuthi umuntu omnyama akwazi ukuthi aphinde asukume aphume ebugqileni akubona. Sihlalo ohloniphekile, sisekomidini, sesikhulume saze sakhihliza amagwebu siyi-MKP, sicela ukuthi kufakwe imali la kwi-NDA, kodwa cha, uHulumeni woBunye beSizwe awufuni. Umbuzo omkhulu umbuzo othi, uma kuwukuthi ayifakwa le mali la kwi-NDA, abantu bazosizakala kanjani ngoba i-NDA iyona emele ukukhipha abantu bakithi kubo bonke ubugqila esikubona esafakwa ongxiwa.

English:

Thank you so much, Chair. Vote MKP! [Time expired.]

Ms P MARAIS: House Chairperson, this report shows how heavily down depend on nonprofit organisations, NPOs, to provide essential services to the most vulnerable. The reports tell us

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that the NPOs deliver almost 71% of government's statutory service. Many do important work, but its dependence must concern us. NPOs must complement a capable Department of Social Development. They cannot substitute for one. Dependency is a sequence of years of anti-government, weakening state capacity, and outsourcing responsibility that the state itself must be capable of carrying.

The EFF supports decisive actions against NPOs that still misuse public money or fail to deliver, but when an organisation fails, the department cannot abandon those people who depend on it. Children must be fed, older persons cared for, and vulnerable people supported. This is why the failure of food banks matters. For a family without enough food, a food bank that does not deliver means another night without proper meal.

Thousands of young people across Gauteng are without jobs and meaningful opportunities while poverty and substance abuse destroy communities, yet the department cannot point to only one youth development programme. For the EFF, this is nowhere near enough. Young people need programmes that provide skills, connect them to jobs and economic opportunities. Funding for women development programmes reflects zero because expenditure was incorrectly allocated and went undetected for an entire year.

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Women cannot be a priority while money means that their development is not proper, accounted for, or reaching programmes meant to empower them.

Social workers at the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre receive calls from people who have been raped, abused, trafficked, or escaping violence. They carry emotional weight on these cases while helping victims through the worst moments of their lives. Answering the call is only the beginning. Protection must reach rural communities and townships, persons with disabilities, and people who cannot afford mobile data. A victim must be able to reach Social Development, SAPS, healthcare, shelter, and courts without carrying their own cases through a government that does not speak for itself. The test is what happens after the first call. Whether help arrives. Whether there is a safe place to go to. Whether the case reaches police and the courts. And whether the system can carry the victims through protection and justice. For the EFF, this requires enough social workers, multilingual service shelters, rural outreach, reliable gender-based violence data, and data-free access to support.

Social Development cannot become a department that merely accounts for poverty and manages vulnerability. It must feed people who are hungry and protect people in crisis while creating

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opportunities for young people and economic independence of women. The EFF supports the report and its recommendation and will hold the department accountable for the implementation. Thank you so much.

Ms B E MACHI: Hon House Chairperson, the IFP notes the Portfolio Committee on Social Development's report based on its visit to the Gauteng Department of Social Development. We are pleased with the level of oversight provided by the committee and strongly advocate for their findings to be enforced. Non-profit organisations are a pillar of South Africa's welfare system, and there cannot be any obstacles preventing the department from supporting them appropriately. Consequently, we emphasize the importance of reviewing the bylaws from each municipality that currently prevents NPOs from providing effective service delivery.

Additionally, we note the insufficient budget allocated to the National Development Agency. This lack of funding prevents the agency from fulfilling its role as a key financial channel for welfare programme. We highlight the necessity of increasing the National Development Agency, NDA’s budget so that it may facilitate effective developments as stated in the National Development Agency Act.

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The IFP has consistently advocated supporting grassroots welfare programmes. We must enable the portfolio committee's recommendations through practical action which are to protect South Africa's most vulnerable groups. I thank you, House Chairperson.

Ms J A BASSON: Hon Chairperson, the PA welcomes this report, but we cannot simply welcome reports while our people continue to suffer. The report expresses a system weakened by poor conditioning, funding constraints and governance challenges. We cannot accept this as business as usual.

We are in Women's Month, yet women are still being killed, raped and trafficked every single day. This month, we lost two young women from Reiger Park, 27-year-old Jaydin Margerman and 31-year-old Rolene Lessing. These were not statistics. They were daughters, loved ones, and women with futures ahead of them. Their families are left with pain that cannot be undone.

We are told the Gender Based Violence, GBV Command Centre operates 24 hours a day, yet it faces staff shortages, language barriers, limited racial access and poor conditions. In some rural areas, people cannot even have access to this service. Recommendations cannot prevent a woman from being attacked;

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implementation can. We cannot keep writing policies while women are losing their lives.

The PA therefore says enough is enough. Move from policy to action, from action to results, and from promises to implementation with intent. Our NPOs also need support, but funding must come with transparency, accountability and measurable results. These organisations serve our most vulnerable communities and should not be trapped with unnecessary red tape and paperwork.

Social Development must create skills, employment, dignity and suitable livelihoods, not dependency. The choice is simple. We cannot congratulate ourselves on policies on paper. We can and must ensure the results for the people on the ground. We need action. We need accountability. We need co-ordination. And above all, we need implementation with intent, because every woman deserves more than promising ... [Time expired.] We thank you.

Ms M P KOBE: Hon House Chair, the Department of Social Development is supposed to be the safety net for South Africans who are most vulnerable, but for too many people, that safety net is full of holes. Every day, South Africans depend on social grants to survive. Families depend on government-funded

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organisations to provide care. Victims of gender-based violence depend on the state to answer the call when they ask for help. Yet, across our communities, we continue to see failures in service delivery, inadequate support and weak accountability.

We must stop measuring success by how many programmes government announces. We must measure it by whether vulnerable South Africans actually receive the help they were promised. The organisations working on the ground cannot be treated as an afterthought. NPOs provide essential services to children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and victims of abuse. Government must ensure that funding reaches them on time, that contracts are properly monitored, and that every rand delivers a meaningful outcome. When someone calls the GBV Command Centre, they should not encounter another bureaucratic obstacle. They should encounter a state that responds.

Social development cannot simply be about keeping people dependent on grants. It must also be about creating opportunities, strengthening families and giving people a genuine pathway out of poverty. The people who need government most cannot afford the government to fail them. I thank you very much, House Chair.

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Ms N K SHARIF: House Chair, the oversight visit to Gauteng brought into sharp focus a reality government simply cannot ignore. Without our nonprofit organisations, NPOs and nongovernmental organisations, NGOs, our social protection system simply would not reach the people who need it most. These organisations are not peripheral to government, they are essential delivery partners.

As our chairperson has said, the nonprofit organisation, NPO, sector delivers approximately 71% of statutory social services. So, when an NPO is not funded, or when funding is delayed, or when an organisation is forced to close its doors, the consequences do not stop with that organisation. They are felt by the elderly person who loses access to home-based care, by the child who loses access to a meal and by the woman fleeing violence who no longer has access to a shelter.

That is why delays in NPO funding makes it so concerning. The NPOs operate on tight budgets. They employ social workers, caregivers, counsellors and support staff, while carrying costs for rent, electricity, food and transport. When government delays funding, these organisations are expected to still deliver essential services without the resources to do so.

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Let’s be clear. The DA supports accountability. Public money must be protected. Organisations that misuse funds must face consequences. The committee itself raised concerns about an organisation seeking continued funding despite allegations of mishandling allocated funds. Government has an obligation to hold funded organisations accountable.

The oversight found that NPOs face significant challenges complying with municipal bylaws, zoning requirements, environmental health regulations, tax requirements and other legislative obligations. Compliance can be costly and the committee identified the need for more centralised support.

Compliance must be accompanied by capacitation.

If an NPO is struggling to comply, the first question should not always be, how do we stop the funding? No. It should be, how do we help this organisation become compliant. The department already conducts capacitation workshops for noncompliant NPOs, but this is not enough.

We must strengthen and expand this support while ensuring that Social Development, municipalities and other government entities provide clear and co-ordinated requirements. The oversight visits

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demonstrated why this matters. At Ikusasa Lethu Youth Project, in Soweto, the committee saw an organisation providing home-based care to 134 beneficiaries, including elderly people who are bedridden and vulnerable children. Yet, the organisation faces caregiver burnout, emotional strain, limited funding and a shortage of male caregivers.

Its service centre also operates with limited funding and depends heavily on external stakeholders. These are people filling critical gaps in our social protection system. We cannot expect them to carry this burden indefinitely and without support and resources. At Mali Martin Polokegong Centre, the committee saw an organisation providing shelter and support to women and children exposed to violence, including victims of human trafficking. It also provides victim empowerment and skills development programmes. These are not abstract programmes, hon members, these are lifelines.

When funding is interrupted, we cannot simply ask whether an NPO can balance its books. We must ask: Who will care for the elderly person? Who will support the women escaping violence and who will feed the vulnerable child? The DA’s vision is to build a caring and resilient society, one that protects people when they are vulnerable, while helping them regain independence and withstand

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future shocks. That requires government to work with organisations already embedded in our communities, a whole-of-society approach.

The NPOs and NGOs must, therefore, be treated as genuine delivery partners, properly funded, properly capacitated, properly monitored and held accountable for results. We must measure impact. We must ask whether these programmes are actually improving people's lives and helping people become more self-sufficient.

The DA believes a caring state is not one that tries to do everything itself. It is one that knows where its capacity ends, works with those already serving communities and ensures that every single rand spent of taxpayers' money produces a real improvement in someone's life. The bottom line is, fund where there is need, capacitate where there is weakness, act decisively where there is abuse and measure whether people's lives are actually improving.

This is how we build a resilient society. Ultimately, Social Development is not only about protecting government systems, it is about protecting the people of South Africa. I thank you.

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Ms M P MAKGATO: Chairperson, the consideration of this crucial oversight visit sits in a historic month that shaped the destiny of the country forever. The women of the country continue to play an instrumental role in building households, shaping communities and leading institutions of various magnitude. Henceforth, we draw inspiration from mama Charlotte Maxeke, whose legacy reminds us that leadership must be measured by how many people we lift with us. She said that this work is not for ourselves. Kill that spirit of self and do not live above people. If you can rise, bring someone with you.

I rise on behalf of the ANC to affirm the significance of parliamentary oversight in ensuring that Social Development programmes translate into enhancement and lives of hundreds of marginalised and vulnerable people. The portfolio committee oversight visit to Gauteng revealed that Social Development is not merely about allocations and programmes. Instead, it is about restoring dignity, protecting vulnerable communities and creating pathways towards sustainable livelihoods. The visit exposed the role played by nonprofit organisations in delivering essential digital services for governance.

However, the oversight unearthed that numerous NPOs continue to encounter finding constraints, poor compliance and conflict with

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bylaws. To mitigate the present challenges, the ANC in the committee strongly advocates for capacity building, strengthening intergovernmental co-ordination and standardising approaches to municipal requirements. The ANC views these interventions as crucial and urgently needed to ensure that NPOs continue to serve our vulnerable people, people of South Africa.

During the oversight visit to the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre, we got first-hand experience of the immensely crucial work to support victims of gender-based violence, GBV, and related social ills. For instance, Mali Martin Polokegong Centre, provides temporary accommodation and multiple pathways for victims' empowerment, such as skills development and programmes aimed at changing abusive behaviour among men and boys.

However, the stuck reality is that the centre encounters staff shortages, limited accessibility for persons with disability and people of rural areas, language barriers and need for stronger co-ordination with the SA Police Service required attention. It is under these circumstances that the ANC continues to give unwavering support to efforts of the Department of Social Development, DSD, towards investing in NPOs' capacity, scaling up GBV prevention and response to women empowerment and community services.

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In addition, the ANC reiterates the call for stronger outreach to rural areas, payment of NPOs in time, consistent monitoring and improved access to GBV services including a thorough data-free digital platform. On the other hand, the National Development Agency's work requires improvement so as to immensely contribute to poverty eradication, skills development and sustainable community enterprises.

Finally, in supporting this declaration, we, the ANC remain strongly committed to a social development system that does not merely manage poverty but aids our people to overcome it. A system that protects the vulnerable and builds strong and sustainable livelihoods. Chairperson, I thank you. Let's go and vote for the ANC.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Thank you very much, hon members. That concludes the debate and the decision of this report will be taken at a full plenary session of the National Assembly.

Debate concluded.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ON OVERSIGHT VISIT TO GAUTENG

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Ms L L VAN DER MERWE: House Chairperson, hon Majozi. As part of its oversight programme for the Seventh Parliament, the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities visited the offices of the Commission for Gender Equality, CGE, the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, and the department's offices in Gauteng from 29 to 30 April 2026. The visit to the department was prompted by concerns raised by the hon Minister that the department is underfunded, and therefore, lacks the basic resources needed to fulfil its mandate effectively.

The committee, therefore, assessed whether the department's current budget allocation is sufficient to support the implementation of its mandate in light of the impact of operations, because of the office accommodation challenges. The visits to the NYDA and CGE offices were undertaken to investigate whistleblower's reports about poor working conditions and to assess the office and accommodation in relation to funds allocated.

The committee, having visited the department's head office in the Fedsure Building in Pretoria, we are aware that the department allocated R10,7 million for property payments for the 2026-27 financial year as per the annual performance plan, APP, 2026-27. The committee noted with concern the appalling conditions of the

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building in terms of the lack of adequate ventilation, general infrastructure, safety and security concerns.

Lifts were not working optimally, there was high staff occupancies per offices and poor internet connectivity, inadequate storage facilities for documentation and a general lack of signage. The committee also noted with concern that despite the engagement and visit by the Minister of Public Works to the department, there has been no progress in dealing with the infrastructure concerns.

Having visited the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, the committee noted that in the APP for 2026-27, prior to the oversight visit, that the NYDA was spending an exorbitant amount on head office accommodation, amounting to over a million rand per month for its Sunningdale Hill offices in Johannesburg. The committee noted with concern the general lack of signage for the NYDA and its offices, therefore, not making the agency visible to the public.

During the oversight visit to the offices, the committee noted the inaccessibility of the head office for youth utilising public transport. The committee also noted that the location of the head office did not lend itself to be accessible for youth, given its

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location. The committee further noted with concern the NYDA's long lease term of seven years for the head office and queried how that arrangement was reached.

The committee maintained that alternative accommodation that is more accessible to the youth should be leased by the NYDA at a significantly less amount. With regards to our visit to the CGE, conducting the oversight visit and walkabout at the CGE offices, the committee again noted with concern appalling conditions of the buildings in terms of its lack of adequate ventilation, general infrastructure concerns and safety concerns. The building was old, and a heritage site, and therefore, cannot be renovated.

Again, the lifts were not working. They had small offices that required a large number of staff to be in small offices, poor internet connectivity, inadequate storage facilities and no proper document management. The committee then resolved as follows, to invite the Minister of Public Works to brief the committee regarding urgent infrastructure concerns for the department and the CGE.

The committee to invite the Minister of Public Works to brief the committee on potential earmarked buildings for the department as its lease was coming to an end. The committee to invite the

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Minister of Public Works to provide clarity on the processes to determine the suitability of office accommodation. The committee will also engage the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, going forward, on a proposed cost-effective measure related to its office accommodation and lease agreements.

The CGE was to keep the committee updated in terms of its head office relocation to a temporary office space, noting the relocation date of 1 August. I therefore table this report to this House for its consideration. Thank you, House Chair.

Ms H M RADEBE: Hon House Chair, as the government in waiting, the MKP has considered this report with the seriousness of constitutional responsibility demands. We will not oppose the observation and findings contained in the report. We welcome them because they expose failures that require urgent and decisive intervention, but it falls to us as the government in waiting to draw a clear distinction that this committee cannot afford to blame. The observations are stronger than the recommendations.

The committee has uncovered serious government financial and operational concerns, yet the proposed response is likely to invite Ministers to brief the committee, engage institutions, receive updates and request documents. That is not enough; it is

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not what the public elected the MKP to accept. Parliament cannot become a place where government failure is documented, discussed and then simply referred back to the same executive for another briefing.

Oversight must have consequences, where it does not, the MKP will say so plainly. Look at the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, the very department responsible for advancing the dignity and rights of women, youth and persons with disabilities is operating in premises with poor ventilation, deteriorating infrastructure, overcrowded offices, inadequate storage, poor connectivity and serious security concerns. Yet R10,79 million is allocated for property payments in this financial year.

We must, therefore ask, who approved this lease; who inspected these premises; who certified them as suitable; who knew about this condition and why has nobody been held accountable? This cannot remain a rhetorical question. As the MKP, we require answers, not assurances. If there was negligence, there must be consequence management; if there was maladministration, there must be an investigation, and if public money was wasted, Parliament must establish how and why.

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The situation at NYADA is equally disturbing. More than R1 million every month is being spent on its head office in Sunning Hill. The committee observed that there was less than 40% of staff occupants on the day of the visit. There is a seven-year lease, while the occupation is not readily accessible to the very young people the agency exists to serve. This is not a simple accommodation issue; it raises serious questions about procurement, financial prudence, accessibility, value for money and accountability.

We need to know who negotiated the lease, who approved it, what alternatives were considered, what the total contractual liability is, whether the public received value for money and where there was wrongdoing, negligence or maladministration is established. There must be consequences. The MKP will not settle for less. As the Commission for Gender Equality, CGE, Chapter 9 institution is entrusted with protecting constitutional democracy and advancing gender equality, the committee found an unacceptable infrastructure, security and documentation management condition.

Again, the report records the failure, but Parliament must go further. We must identify responsibility, establish the causes, quantity the financial implications and demand a time-bound

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remedial plan. The MKP, as the government in waiting, therefore, takes a principled position. We support the observation because they expose the failures, but we reject the recommendation in their presence. Thank you. [Time expired.]

Ms P R MAILOLA: House Chair, the EFF, support the adoption of this report, but we do so with serious reservation. This report exposes a government that has become comfortable with waste, negligence, and the deterioration of institutions that are supposed to serve our people.

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities is operating in an unacceptable condition. The committee found poor ventilation, deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate security, overcrowded offices, poor internet connectivity and inadequate storage facilities. More disturbing is that these conditions were not new.

The committee questioned how the premises were assessed and approved as suitable for occupation in the first place. We must therefore ask directly who approved this premises, who conducted the assessment, who signed off on these leases and who will account for this failure.

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The EFF does not believe that government buildings should become monuments to an incompetency while public servants are forced to work in conditions that compromise their dignity and safety.

The National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, presents even more disturbing picture. The committee found that the NYDA is spending more than one million every month on its Sunning Hill head office, despite observing less than 40% staff occupancy. The location is also inaccessible to many young people who rely on public transport. This is happening in a country where young people are facing mass unemployment and poverty.

How can an institution established to serve unemployed young people justifies such extravagant expenditure on offices. The EFF demands transparency on the lease agreements, procurement processes, cost duration and decision makers responsible for this arrangement.

The Commission for Gender Equality is also operating under unacceptable conditions, including poor infrastructure, inadequate storage, security concerns, and overcrowded offices.

These are institutions dealing with the most vulnerable sections of our society. They cannot fight for the rights and dignity of

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our people, while government itself denies them the decent condition in which to work.

We welcome the committee's resolution to summon the Minister of Public Works. But let it be clear, calling another briefing is not accountability. Accountability means identify those responsible, producing the contract and procurement record, establishing whether these were negligence or maladministration, recover public money where necessary, and ensure that correction action are clear and have deadline.

The EFF will therefore support the adoption of this report, but our support comes with a warning - Parliament must not become a rubber stem for administrative failure, public resources belong to the people ...

Thank you, House Chair. [Time expired.]

Ms B E MACHI: Hon House Chairperson, the IFP acknowledges the portfolio committee's report on its oversight visits to the offices of the National Youth Development Agency, the Commission of Gender Equality and the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. We note with concern the lack of appropriate infrastructure and the latter two offices without basic resources

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like ventilations, internet connectivity, and adequate space, staff members are unable to perform their duties to the best of their ability.

Not only does this infringe on workers' rights to secure working conditions, but it also negatively impact the vulnerable communities, the department protects. Staff members who cannot function at full capacity cannot perform their duties properly, which directly impacts the communities they serve.

The IFP is pleased with the level of detailed oversight provided by the portfolio committee and supports their proposal to involve the Minister of Public Works in the department's pressing infrastructural concerns. We emphasise that our country's most vulnerable cannot be uplifted unless the staff driving ... [Inaudible.] ... change are empowered first. I thank you, House Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): The next speaker will be hon T JEYI, from the PA. I am saying all this because it's her maiden speech. So, can we please be nice.

Ms T JEYI: Hon House Chair, hon members, patriots, I rise on behalf of the PA to fully and clearly support the report of the

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Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.

Hon members, this report exposes nothing less than institutional neglect and state failure. Three critical institutions, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, the NYDA and the CGE are being deliberately ... [Inaudible.] ... of basic dignity.

Let me be clear, this is a shame. The department operates in a building with no ventilation, no security and no safety, curricula vitae, CVs, are dumped in open boxes, an insult to every job seeker. The NYDA burns over one million rand per month on inaccessible offices, while youth struggle to reach them. The CGE is scrambling in a heritage site that cannot even be renovated.

House Chair...

Afrikaans:

... ons versoek die Minister van Openbare Werke en Infrastruktuur om die komitee onmiddellik te woord te staan. Gevolgebestuur moet toegepas word teen elke amptenaar wat hierdie instellings in die

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steek gelaat het. Ons vra ook om onmiddellike verskuiwing na geskikte akkommodasie wat aan die doel en vereistes voldoen.

English:

We will not tolerate a government that treats its own institutions with hatred we will not allow the rights of women, youth and persons with disabilities to be undermined by negligence.

The PA stands firm, adopt this report, implement the resolutions, and hold the guilty accountable.

Afrikaans:

Salut. Ons baiza niks.

English:

Thank you, House Chairperson.

Ms J A BASSON: House Chairperson, I would just like to congratulate the new PA hon Member of Parliament, MP, on her maiden speech.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Thank you very much, hon member.

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Dr T K S LETLAPE: House Chair, I wouldn't want to repeat what has been said by many members, but just to put it together. We support the report of the committee, but what it highlights is an incapable Public Works Department that is incapable of providing safe accommodation for the various departments. And that creates all the other problems that we have.

So, there's a failure of Public Works which should be put under administration and maybe outsourced by government because it's incapable. When you look at what happens in our villages, you understand the incapability of Public Works.

The second issue is insufficient budgets. What comes out is how insufficient the budget is for the department, how weak the budget is, for the Commission for Gender Equality, and how weak the budgets are for the core activities of the NYDA. That brings us to a Parliament that is indifferent. We can't keep creating structures of government that we do not fund properly to be able to fulfil their missions and then come out, go on visits when structures are not properly funded.

So, we as Members of Parliament, MPs, must take full responsibility for what our departments have become, for what the structures that we create have become. Because we don't

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accommodate them properly, we don't fund them properly, how do we expect them to function?

So, it is time that Parliament took responsibility for the mess that we are creating as Members of Parliament, and we should not cry victim and act responsibly. Public service must get its act together. We must fund our structures properly for what we expect them to deliver. Thank you, House Chair.

Ms T A KHANYILE: Hon Chairperson, our visit to the NYDA raised an especially important concern, which is value for money and its benefit to South African youth. The NYDA's head office is situated in Sandton, an expensive and relatively inaccessible area for many of the young people whom the agency is established and mandated to serve.

The committee was informed that the offices were accessible on the basis that there was a taxi rank nearby. However, during our oversight, we established that what was being referred to was not actually a taxi rank. We also noted that approximately 40% of the available office space was being utilised while the agency is paying approximately R1 million in rental costs.

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While we acknowledge that the current NYDA Board inherited the existing lease and therefore cannot be held responsible for entering into that agreement, the oversight requires us to look forward, not merely backwards. As a government with finite resources, we must be doing more with less.

We encourage the NYDA to urgently explore alternative accommodation that is more accessible to young people and provides better value for money. Every rand spent on unnecessary or excessive accommodation is a rand that cannot be directed towards programs that directly benefit employed and economically excluded young people.

Our position, as the DA, is therefore clear: The majority of the NYDA’s budget must ultimately be directed towards serving young people rather than sustaining expensive administrative arrangements.

Hon Chairperson, at the Commission for Gender Equality, we similarly observed the infrastructure challenges. The building is visibly dilapidated, and officials informed us that they are unable to address certain faults because the property is situated within a heritage or museum area.

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We were particularly concerned about the conditions under which general workers operate. They do not have a proper canteen or appropriate space to eat and rest. We were shown small cupboards being used as spaces where workers can relax. This is simply not acceptable. The dignity of workers must not depend on their position within an institution.

We also noted that the CGE is currently using parts of Constitutional Hill as its offices while construction work is underway. These conditions reinforce the need for an approach to accommodation not simply as a property issue, but an issue that directly affects institutional effectiveness, staff morale and service delivery.

Hon Chairperson, hon members, the common thread running through these oversight visits is that office accommodation cannot be separated from the ability of institutions to fulfil their mandate. However, we must also be careful to distinguish between genuine infrastructure needs and expenditure that does not represent value for money.

It is therefore the DA’s position that the committee resolves to summon Mr Caesar Sibande, the Head of Property Management Trading Entity at the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, to

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appear before the portfolio committee to account for his failure to address the agent infrastructure concerns at the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities Head Office despite having been expressly instructed to do so by Minister Dean McPherson.

The Minister cannot be undermined by the very departmental head charged with addressing infrastructure concerns raised by his political principal: Where officials are working in unsafe, inaccessible and unhealthy environments, it requires urgent intervention; where institutions are paying substantial amounts for office space that is underutilised or inaccessible to the very people they serve, we must demand better financial management; and where failures occur, there must be accountability.

We support the committee’s recommendations regarding the NYDA and encourage the agencies to urgently investigate alternative accommodation that is accessible to young people, while exploring mechanisms to terminate or exit the current lease at the earliest lawful and financially responsible opportunity.

Ultimately, our scarce public resources must follow our mandate: For the NYDA, that means young people; for the CGE, that means

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advancing gender equality; and for the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, that means ensuring that women, young people and persons with disabilities receive the support and protection they deserve.

We cannot expect institutions to deliver exceptional services while asking their officials to work in conditions that undermine their dignity, health and productivity. We support the report. I thank you, Chair.

Mr N T TSHOTETSI: House Chair, the ANC rises to support the report of the portfolio committee on its oversight visit to the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, the National Youth Development Agencies and the Commission on Gender Equality in Gauteng. We support this report because it reflects an important exercise of Parliament’s constitutional responsibility to hold public institutions accountable and to ensure that the resources entrusted to government are used effectively in pursuit of the transformation agenda.

Section 55(2) of the Constitution requires that the National Assembly must maintain oversight over the exercise of executive authority and to ensure accountability. The oversight therefore represents the fundamental work of the committee, moving beyond

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presentations and written reports to physically assess the conditions under which public servants operate and the extent to which public institutions are positioned to fulfil their mandates.

The ANC has historically placed the creation of a capable, developmental and accountable state to be at the centre of the development of the National Democratic Society. The Freedom Charter’s commitment to the democratic South Africa in which the people shall govern remains relevant to how we understand public accountability today.

Government institutions exist to serve the people, and public resources must therefore be directed towards advancing the interests of society, particularly those who continue to experience historical and structural exclusions. Our policies and resolutions have consistently recognised that the emancipation of women, the advancement of young people and the inclusion of persons with disabilities cannot be separated from the broader transformation of South African society.

For these priorities to be realised, we require institutions that are functional, properly resourced, accessible and capable of delivering on their mandates. It is therefore in this context

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that the ANC supports the committee's findings and recommendations. We cannot support a situation where institutions responsible for advancing gender equality, youth development and the rights of women and persons with disabilities are themselves constrained by inadequate or unsustainable working environments.

The state must lead by example: Where infrastructure is inadequate, it must be addressed; where accommodation is not fit for purpose, appropriate alternatives must be secured; and where public resources are being spent without sufficient value being derived, corrective measures must be taken.

The ANC has consistently emphasised that young people must be placed at the centre of our developmental agenda. The resources allocated for youth development must therefore be directed as far as possible towards programs and interventions that create meaningful opportunities for young people of our country.

We accordingly support the committee's position that the NYDA must pursue more cost-effective accommodation arrangements and ensure that the expenditure on administration represents value for money. Every rand saved through responsible administration is a rand that can potentially be redirected towards youth

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development, skills, entrepreneurship and other economic opportunities.

The same principle of responsible public expenditure applies to the Commission of Gender Equality. As a Chapter 9 Institution, the CGE plays an important role in advancing constitutional democracy and promoting gender equality. Its ability to fulfil its responsibility must be protected and strengthened. We therefore support appropriate interventions to address institutional and infrastructure challenges that are identified through the oversight processes while fully respecting the constitutional independence of the Constitution.

Chair, the ANC supports the committee’s resolution arising from the oversight. The ANC further believes that the challenges identified should be used to strengthen the co-ordination between the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, the NYDA and other relevant government structures.

Government accommodation should not be approached merely as a facilities management matter. It must be viewed within the broader objective of building a capable and efficient developmental state. We commend the committee for undertaking

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oversight that went beyond receiving reports and presentations and sought to assess institutional conditions directly.

The ANC will continue to use parliamentary oversight to defend public interest, strengthen accountability and advance the transformation agenda of our democratic state. In that spirit, House Chair, we believe that contrary to a view of convening some junior administrator in the department, the committee's recommendation is that the entire Department of Public Works, including the Minister, must stand and be supported by all. Thank you very much.

Debate concluded.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Thank you very much, hon members. That concludes the debate and the business of this virtual mini plenary session. The decision on this report will be taken at a full plenary session of the National Assembly.

The mini plenary rose at 11:35.

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