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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

The Council met at 14:01.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon delegates, before we proceed, allow me to remind you that rules and processes apply for this hybrid sitting. I would also like to remind delegates of the rules relating to virtual and hybrid meetings and sittings, in particular subrules 21, 22 and 23 and Rule 103, which provide as follows: that the hybrid sitting constitutes a sitting of the National Council of Provinces; that delegates in the hybrid sitting enjoy the same powers and privileges that apply in a sitting of the National Council of Provinces; that for purposes of a quorum, all delegates who are logged onto the virtual platform shall be considered present; that delegates

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must switch on their videos if they want to speak; that delegates should ensure that the microphones on their electronic devices are muted and must always remain muted unless they are permitted to speak; that all delegates in the Chamber must connect to the virtual platform, as well as insert their cards to register on the Chamber system; that delegates who are physically in the Chamber must use the floor microphones; that all delegates will participate in the discussions through the chatroom.

In addition, I would also like to remind delegates that the interpretation facility is active. Permanent delegates, special delegates, SA Local Government Association, Salga, representatives and members of the executive on the virtual platform are requested to ensure that the interpretation facility on their electronic devices is properly activated to facilitate access to the interpretation service. Permanent delegates, special delegates, Salga representatives and members of the executive in the Chamber should use the interpretation instruments on their desks to access the interpretation facility.

Hon delegates, before we proceed, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Minister and Deputy Minister of

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Higher Education, Science and Innovation, the Minister and Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, all MECs, all special delegates, permanent delegates and Salga representatives to the House. For a change, I'm sure we can put our hands together to welcome the Ministers. Huh? You don't want to put your hands together for the Ministers? Moletsane, I can see your eyes popping out. Anyway, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, you are welcome.

I have also been informed that there won't be notices of motion or motions without notice. Having gone through this little motion of going through the information on the motions, we now proceed to the First Order, which is the Policy debate on Budget Vote No 17 – Higher Education and Training, Appropriation Bill [B3 – 2023] National Assembly – section 77. I now call on hon Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation to open the debate. Minister?

APPROPRIATION BILL

(Policy debate)

Vote No 17 – Higher Education and Training:

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The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Amos Masondo ...

IsiZulu:

... Bra Ami kuthina esikwaziyo.

English:

... Deputy Ministers who are present, MECs, including special delegates, the chairperson of the Select Committee on Education and Technology, Sports, Arts and Culture, Mr Nchabeleng, the acting Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training, Ms Thembisa Futshane, the Director-General of the Department of Science and Innovation, Dr Phil Mjwara, the leadership of our entities who have joined us here and the entire fraternity of the Post-School Education and Training, PSET, system as well as the national Science and Innovation fraternity, hon members, to all of you, it is my pleasure once more to address the NCOP today, marking my fourth address to the House since the beginning of our Sixth administration, as led by our President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa.

Although my Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation is a national function, our work as the Ministry is

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grounded in all provinces and in many localities through our regional offices and our institutional landscape. I am grateful for the support I continue to receive from premiers and MECs of Education and Economic Development in particular in various provinces. This support has been aptly demonstrated through various projects that both my Department of Higher Education and Training as well as the Department of Science and Innovation are implementing in all our provinces and municipalities.

In recent times, this support has also been demonstrated during my official handing over of the off the grid media and computer laboratory as part of my ministerial project at Moloke Primary School in Limpopo. The next provinces that will benefit from this off the grid media and computer laboratory project is going to be Mpumalanga, the North West and Eastern Cape.

Our Department of Higher Education and Training strives to create a South Africa that can provide decent opportunities for youth and adults through education and skills development initiatives. In order to align the skills required by our economy, we are reconceptualising the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa, as well as its

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implementation plan towards the development of what we call called a countrywide Master Skills Plan.

In this financial year, we will also be updating our National List of Occupations in High Demand and for the first time we will be piloting the first lists of Occupations in High Demand in provinces. We are going to be piloting this with the Mpumalanga and Western Cape provinces.

To ensure access, especially to the children of the working class and the poor to our PSET system, through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, we are now funding about 1,1 million students with a budget allocation of R47,6 billion in the current financial year. Of this amount, universities have been allocated R38,6 billion and Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, colleges R8,9 billion. It is the first time in the history of NSFAS that we have passed the one million mark in NSFAS student funding. This is the commitment that this government of the ANC is indeed committed to in uplifting, especially the children of the working class and the poor.

We are now working towards the finalisation of a new comprehensive student funding model, based on the

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considerations of this report which we aim to submit to Cabinet before the end of this year. Through this we aim to introduce measures to support all the categories of students, including those who are not supported by the current NSFAS funding policy, that we normally refer to as the missing middle.

Our National Development Plan, NDP, commits to growing technical and vocational education and training with specific emphasis on its size, differentiation, articulation, efficiency and functional effectiveness in response to the broader national development challenges.

Our sector education and training authorities, Setas, have injected R138 600 000 for the workplace training which was paid directly to employers, especially to produce more artisans. Currently, South Africa is producing on average about 20 000 qualified artisans per annum. Ours is to ensure that the number increases significantly so that we meet our NDP target of producing 30 000 qualified artisans per year by 2030. We are convinced that not only are we on course to produce this number of artisans; we think we will more likely even exceed this target.

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We have expanded our Centres of Specialisation to 34 centres at 20 TVET colleges to enhance workplace-linked training of artisans and related occupations, with a further investment of R68 million in 16 of our colleges that now have 33 trade test centres. When this government took over in 1994, there was only one place to test artisans, which was Olifantsfontein in Gauteng. We now have 33 trade test centres so that not everyone will have to travel to Gauteng.

My apologies, Chair. I'm recovering from the flu. I hope that I'm not going to spread it here. If I were to select whom to spread it to I would say so, but it would be unparliamentary to say so.

Currently, 26 of our colleges are engaged in entrepreneurial training through our entrepreneurship hubs. We are hard at work to ensure that all our colleges are involved in some form of entrepreneurship training and through our Department of Science and Innovation, we also plan to introduce innovation hubs in our TVET colleges.

To date, our department has opened up 14 954 TVET placement opportunities to the value of R726 million and we also committed to achieve a target of 20 000 placements of

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unemployed TVET college graduates this financial year, as per the President's commitment in the 2023 state of the nation address.

Through our career development services, our department participated in 36 career exhibitions and 41 career and employability sessions, which benefited 72 175 Grade 9 to Grade 12 learners and unemployed youth in all of our provinces. More than 1 264 educators, student support services staff and career development practitioners in our provinces participated in career-related capacity-building that we conducted as a department.

In pursuit of our commitment to elevate the status of Community Education and Training, CET, and to accommodate the youth that are not in education, employment or training, what we call the Neets, we have reprioritised R1,052 billion over the current Medium-term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, period for the development of infrastructure across all nine CET colleges. Planning for the construction of these facilities has already commenced and it's the first time in the history of South Africa that our community colleges, which were formerly adult education centres, are going to have their own

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infrastructure because so far we are using school infrastructure after hours.

As I said, 96% of community college learning centres operate from public schools. Therefore, building these centres will enable us to do more than just catering for those who want to complete their schooling – adults who left school early – but also to offer skills programmes and other occupational and nonformal programmes.

I am delighted to indicate that our community colleges are already providing such skills and nonformal programmes that lead to opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. These are in addition to the ordinary academic offerings aimed at youth and adults who never had the opportunity to complete their schooling.

I also need to point out that to date our Department of Higher Education and Training has invested over R3,7 billion for the maintenance and repairs of TVET college infrastructure. Areas of maintenance include the renovation of existing student accommodation, new roofing, painting, plumbing, glazing, electrical works, water, as well as sewer reticulation. We have also completed the construction of nine new TVET college

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campuses at a cost of R2,6 billion. Therefore, this means that the majority of our students ... By the way, all these new campuses are in rural areas, which means that the majority of our youth in some rural areas now will have access to technical and vocational education. Our completed campuses include uMgungundlovu TVET College, Msinga campus; Mthashana TVET College, Nongoma; Ikhala TVET College in Aliwal North; Ingwe TVET College in the Eastern Cape; Waterberg TVET College in Thabazimbi, Limpopo; and Umfolozi TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal.

In addition, work is proceeding at Ikhala TVET College in Sterkspruit and Gert Sibande TVET College in Balfour, Mpumalanga. Planning is also underway for the completion of Umgungundlovu TVET College in Greytown, well as Bhambanana college ...

IsiZulu:

... Kwamhlabuyalingana. Ngakhoke Kwamhlabuyalingana, mhlonishwa Sihlalo, azitholakali lezi ezinye izinto ekuthiwa ziyatholakala khona. Sekuzotholakala nemfundo manje yasema-TVET Colleges

English:

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So, this ANC government has committed and is delivering to the people of South Africa.

In terms of university infrastructure, of the total amount currently available for investment in infrastructure projects across all 26 existing universities, during the 2023-24 to 2025-26 MTEF period, is R8,662 billion. I am also pleased to say that we have completed feasibility studies for the establishment of two new universities, one, the University of Science and Innovation in Ekurhuleni and the crime detection university in Hammanskraal, which have been completed and will be presented to Cabinet for its consideration. In other words, in Hammanskraal we are not just going to be talking about cholera. We are also going to be talking about a new university in that area.

The construction of these two new universities will see a total of four new universities built by the ANC government since the dawn of our democracy in 1994. This is indeed a huge achievement. This will add to the Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley in the Northern Cape and the University of Mpumalanga in Mbombela.

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We have completed the process towards the allocation of R182 million towards our multieducational institution of Imbali and science precinct for accelerated implementation. Through the Department of Science and Innovation's Mobile Applications Laboratory, or mLabs, we will be strengthening that precinct's 4IR innovation system together with what we call Innobiz at the Durban University of Technology's Midlands Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Mr K MOTSAMAI: Point of order, Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Minister, just a second.

Mr K MOTSAMAI: Chairperson, why doesn't the Minister say ...

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Motsamai, what are you saying? Firstly, on what point are you rising?

Mr K MOTSAMAI: Why doesn't the Minister ... Chair, on freedom of speech.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: [Inaudible.] ... hon Motsamai ...

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Mr K MOTSAMAI: Why doesn't the Minister say the government instead of saying the ANC?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: We can't even hear you. You are not ... [Inaudible.]

Mr K MOTSAMAI: I said why doesn't the Minister say the government instead of saying the ANC in his speech?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: We will proceed. We can't even hear what hon Motsamai said. Please proceed, Minister.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: By the way, Chair, I think I lost a few seconds while the hon member wanted to ask that nonquestion.

The MLab will establish a community-centred coding laboratory and start an ecosystem development programme focused on school learners and selected community members.

I am also pleased to say that we have now commenced with the feasibility study of establishing a university campus in Giyani in Limpopo through the establishment of a campus of the Tshwane University of Technology. Also, the feasibility study

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on the establishment of the University of Zululand satellite campus in Ulundi has been completed. The construction design for this campus will commence in this financial year.

We have now also completed the building of the beautiful Sekhukhune Skills Development Centre to the value of R146,9 million, through our Wholesale and Retail Seta, in conjunction with the Sekhukhune TVET College.

With regard to student housing infrastructure, the review of the existing Department of Higher Education and Training-National Treasury-Development Bank of Southern Africa, DBSA, partnership for the delivery of student housing infrastructure is reaching finality. A number of institutions have benefitted from this programme, including the Nelson Mandela University, George campus with 198 beds; North West University, Mahikeng campus with 1 728 beds, as well as the University of Fort Hare, East London campus which got 1 437 beds and other institutions that I won't mention now because of time.

Funding for phase 2 of the Student Housing Infrastructure Programme, Ship, projects at the four institutions, namely Gert Sibande TVET College, Majuba TVET College, Tshwane University of Technology and the University of KwaZulu-Natal

has also been approved and these projects are projected to cost R2,1 billion.

Our Department of Science and Innovation, in collaboration with the SA Local Government Association, Salga, ... the Viability and Validation of Innovations for Service Delivery Programme ... we are piloting technologies and innovations that can improve the delivery of basic services such as water, sanitation and renewable energy at local government level. We are currently supporting 32 municipalities that are going through this programme.

Through the Living Labs Programme, we have established 11 community-embedded laboratories in rural villages and townships in a variety of our provinces. These laboratories are supporting 200 aspiring innovators through design thinking training, the development of 28 prototypes and 17 market-ready products and the registration of 14 businesses.

To support municipalities in driving an innovation-led economic development agenda, we have initiated what we call the Innovation Champions for Local Economic Development, LED, programme, which will be rolled out to all our 44 districts in the country in support of the District Development Model. In

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other words, our Department of Science and Innovation is leading a programme of science that is servicing the people. We are currently implementing the programme in the Vhembe and O R Tambo district municipalities in partnership with the University of Venda, as well as with Walter Sisulu in the Eastern Cape.

Through the Grassroots Innovation Programme, we have enlisted over 140 young entrepreneurs and an additional 60 enrolled through our collaboration with the DBSA. We are also working with Eskom on a project for young scientists, the Insurance Seta and the Department of Tourism.

We will also continue to support the consortium led by the World Health Organisation to develop and build the messenger ribonucleic acid, mRNA, vaccine technology transfer hub locally. In fact, as the Department of Science and Innovation together with our partners, we are now ready to produce the first local vaccine for COVID-19 and other diseases and pandemics. The aim of this mRNA hub is to diversify vaccine manufacturing and specifically accelerate vaccine production in Africa through a consortium made up of the Medicines Patent Pool, Biovac and Afrigen Biologics and Vaccines, working together with the SA Medical Research Council.

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In response to the growing cancer challenge on the African continent – Cancer is actually a new pandemic that is just taking so many of our people – tomorrow here in the Western Cape, I will be launching the SA Isotope Facility which is managed by the National Research Foundation, an entity of our Department of Science and Innovation. This is our flagship programme based at iThemba LABS and the facility will conduct advance research and training capacity as well as increase the production capacity for radioisotopes, including new-generation novel radioisotopes as part of our fight against cancer.

In conclusion, I call upon the members of the NCOP to continue to support our initiatives to provide strategic leadership. I'm also inviting you to do your oversight at all these facilities that I've actually mentioned so that you can see ...

IsiZulu:

... ukuthi angikhulumi ngephupho noma ngezinto ezingekho.

English:

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All that I've spoken about here is there. Those who are saying that this government is doing nothing, I invite you members to go and show ... there.

For a nonquestion, there is indeed a government but it is a fact that it is an ANC-led government.

IsiZulu:

Ngiyabonga, Sihlalo.

Mr M E NCHABELENG: Hon Chair, Mr Masondo and your Deputy Ms Lucas, hon Members of Parliament serving in the National Council of Provinces, hon Minister, Dr Nzimande and Deputy Minister hon Manamela, greetings to the chairpersons of boards of entities linked to the department and greetings also to the director general and management of the department, all ladies and gentlemen.

The ANC stands to affirm and echo with certainty that we have improved access to education and knowledge. We believe that education and training is a basic human right and that all South Africans should have access to lifelong education and training irrespective of race, class, gender, creed, age, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability.

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We therefore need to be responsive to higher education matters as an apex policy priority of the ANC. Hon Chairperson, I have a problem with the gadget, the phone, so that's why my video is off.

The demand for higher education has far outstripped the supply capacity of the post schooling education and training sector. The concentration and demand for university education is an area we should assess to ensure our skills development response to other economic needs which require technical and occupational skills.

The two most important thing there is in this regard are the massification of the college system enrolment in community education training colleges and technical vocational and training colleges. This means that the agitated need for the country to take seriously, they need to focus on increasing considerably the number of intakes in TVET and community education and training centres is upon us.

It is the department's priority and task to achieve and implement this national development plan target. Secondly, the diversification of the public universities, where the Minister articulates that this diversification must be based on the

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university's strengths and the needs of the communities in which they are located. Dexter specialization with diversity enhances industry competencies amongst graduates.

Hon Chairperson, we are in agreement with the department when they say that the increase of enrolment in TVET colleges must be guided by a standardizing of registration and admission processes in the TVET sector to do away with different processes which have been applied by our colleges in that process. It will help in the migration from manual to online registration processes in all our TVET colleges.

To keep up with the challenges or upgrades of digitization and technological advancement, it is pleasing to know that there has been student growth in several colleges that have embraced the use of technology in their enrolment processes reducing the number of walk ins at TVET colleges.

Nothing is as more encouraging than having a government that is not deaf to the cries of our people. To get such progress in our TVET sector drives us to be steadfast in doing even more and greater. The increase of learners entering artisanal programmes has been at the centre of the objectives to be achieved at a higher rate by the department and sector.

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The limited centres and caps on intakes for artisanal programs have not assisted. We need improvement and progressive responsive measures to increase capacity. We must commend the Ministry for its responsiveness to such matters raised.

Hon members, the expansion of centres of your specialization established at about 20 TVET colleges are a major investment. Our commitment to the TVET sector is that the funding of education is to ensure upscaling training in artisanal skills, promotion of technical and vocational education and training. as a career of choice.

With that being said, the increase in artisan learners trained in TVET colleges measures the reality and output of expanding and building centres. Sixteen colleges in total now have 35, trade centres, test centres and they have trained over 600 artisans and that over 500 have qualified as artisans.

Hon members, the Minister is encouraging by investing his time in the actual programmes of artisans and has hosted the first ever centralized national artisan graduation ceremony for artisans qualifying in the top 13 of trades in high demand.

This is for the first time in the history South Africa.

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I'm sure at this point that we can all truly see in all transparency and true form that the ANC is people centered and everything is done for the benefit of our people. This should be commended and encouraged to be even greater and extended to many other programs.

We call for an enhanced implementation of the advocacy strategy to support and guide community education and training centre colleges to meet their enrolment targets by attracting more young people to register in the colleges.

Several problems faced by the higher education sector in terms of student funding, this affects the progression of students to complete their studies on time and their livelihoods as well. It is important for us to ensure that the sustainable funding model is finalized. Should this not be done, we will find ourselves as a country in an ongoing crisis.

His Excellency the President, in the state of the nation address, confirmed that for this year, one of government plans is to finalize the comprehensive student funding model for higher education particularly for students who fall outside the current National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS,

criteria reaching those who are known as encodes the missing middle.

The department will make considerations on the submission of the student funding implementation framework for approval, scheduled for the 31st of October this year by the department.

This submission will be accompanied by the revised draft fee increased regulatory framework for approval with a budget of R47,6 billion in the 2023 academic period allocated to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and the department for the first time passed, the 1 million mark that had been a target to be achieved in funding students, this covers 1,1 million students from TVET colleges and universities.

We are getting somewhere even though it is not easy, but we are surely not sliding back in realizing the importance of education and funding for the poor and missing middle.

With NSFAS now being a bursary and no longer a loan is progressive. It pays up to the full cost of study, including tuition, accommodation and pace living allowances monthly for students. Students staying in private accommodation off

campus, qualify for transport advances allowances which are paid out to them.

The introduction of direct payment through the NSFAS bank card for TVET colleges have been a step up in students' ability to get their allowances on time and efficiently.

Measuring the number of enrolment in the Post-School Education and Training, PSET, sector, it will be important to increase the number of lecturers participating in digital literacy programmes, especially concerning the TVET sector basic technology skills after the pandemic where learning took place online versus the sector, to ensure that the lecturers can participate digitally.

We need to advocate and support the department in ensuring that all public TVET colleges sign at least two protocols with the industry to place lecturers and learners for workplace experience coupling this with implementing student focused entrepreneurial development programme.

Chairperson and hon members, it is important to know that the sector must be committed not only to increasing the quality of education through increased access, but also to improving the

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quality of the education itself. There will be a need for educated provision of basic resources such as equipment and textbooks, improving teacher training and development and improving the teacher people ratio.

Also, for note, the Minister declared that as a department, they will be hosting a TVET curriculum review and transformation seminar from the 28th to the 30th of August 2023 this year. The SA Qualification Authority, SAQA, must play a role in being able to reduce the certification backlog and have a uniform standardized in the process of issuing certificates.

There will be a need of reviewing TVET college programs and qualifications to make them more responsive to and align with government priorities. The ANC believes that the government can deliver basic services, which are essential for the realization of South Africa's economic, social and cultural rights. This requires continued transparency of decision taken by the government on matters concerning higher learning institutions. This includes effective oversight by the legislature over the Minister's departments and higher education institutions.

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This is being done by the department when the Minister responds and addresses the matter on the arrest of five men that were accused of killings at the University of Fort Hare and the arrest of eight persons concerning alleged fraud and corruption at South Cape TVET colleges.

The department is at war with corruption. We're engaging corruptors, locking them up, ensuring that education and planning is not affected by such tendencies. The department needs to into the challenges of lack of awareness of coping mechanism resulting in an abuse of substance, particularly among the using the higher education and training institution.

We must increase the work of health and the Department of Social Development to host campaigns on campuses and colleges to promote mental health and awareness on how to respond to gender-based violence, GBV, and how to deal with drug problems or to avoid taking drugs. There is a need for the provision of additional academic and social support for students.

Hon Chairperson, we are confident in the work done by Minister Blade Nzimande and we will see more rapid positive changes in the post, schooling, education and training sector. The ANC supports this Budget Vote. I thank you.

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Ms D C CHRISTIANS: Hon Chairperson, honourable members, hon Minister and fellow South Africans, good day. Hon Chairperson, just before we begin, I would just like to say that this morning we received the terrible news that our colleague and friend, the mayor of Modimolle- Mookgophong Municipality Marlene van Staden has sadly passed away. She was a formidable woman, a servant leader, a person of enormous compassion. Our sincere condolences. It has been incredible lost to us. Our sincere condolences to Marlene's family, colleagues and friends, our thoughts and prayers over them all.

Chairperson, the ongoing chaos and disruption at universities across South Africa highlights the failure of the Minister of Higher Education and Training to effectively address the grievances of our students. Recent incidents, such as the setting ablaze of buildings at the University of Fort Hare, the University of Limpopo, and the Vaal University of Technology, demonstrate the deep-rooted frustration among our students. These protests, fuelled by concerns over exam timetables, accommodation and unpaid allowances, have resulted in violent clashes, property damage, and even loss of life, actions I have to state I categorically denounce.

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Additionally, let us not forget the shocking attempted murder of the vice chancellor, along with the tragic murder of his bodyguard, which sheds light on the rampant corruption and maladministration plaguing institutions of higher learning across South Africa.

A matter of growing concern, Chairperson, is the worrisome decrease in enrolment rates within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training, the TVET sector. The departments own admission reveals a 14 percent decrease in enrolment from 2018 to 2021. This decline can be attributed to the misalignment between funding and enrolment plans. Such a decline undermines our ability to address the skills shortage in our country effectively and hinders our national development challenges.

While the department aims to mobilise the private and development sectors to expand the TVET sector, the lack of adequate infrastructure remains a huge concern.

Without proper facilities and resources, we cannot hope to have a reimagined Community Education and Training, CET, college sector that meets the demands of our communities and prepares our students adequately for the workforce. Urgent

attention must be given to addressing this infrastructure deficit to ensure our students have the necessary resources and facilities to excel.

Hon Chairperson, while the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training outlines key policy directives for improving articulation between institutions and their programmes, these directives often remain mere words on paper due to ineffective implementation. We need a strong commitment from the department to ensure these policies are translated into action for the benefit of our students and the overall development of our nation.

Another pressing concern is the provision of student accommodation. This cannot be stressed enough. It has been a that the Minister and the department has had for a number of years and seem unable to resolve.

The department acknowledges the need for rapid expansion in this area, but without concrete plans and sufficient resource allocation, countless students are left without a safe and conducive learning environment. Dilapidated residences and the absence of safety measures on campuses have not been given adequate attention.

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Additionally, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, has failed young people in this country. Financial exclusion letters and late bursary payments have become all too common, leaving students in limbo and hindering their ability to pursue their studies. Now, the department claims that 96,6% of student funding has been paid yet, hon Chairperson, CPUT, UWC and NMU are taking to the streets due to delays and non-payments of NSFAS funding.

The promise of free education, which was meant to uplift and empower our youth, has not been delivered in its true essence. Students have taken to the streets, protesting against NSFAS funding delays, losing hope while awaiting outcomes of appeals, some for years now.

Additionally, the department's inability to deal with appeal cases effectively leaves our students languishing, unable to complete their qualifications. This not only affects their individual futures but also hampers the overall development and progress of our country.

Under the leadership of Minister Blade Nzimande, the Department of Higher Education and Training has failed many our students. TVETs receive poor funding for relevant

curriculum areas, and the lack of backup generators for loadshedding during classes further hinders their ability to deliver quality education. Minister, this misalignment between TVET education and the skills needed in our country is a significant contributing factor to the high number of students currently at home. They are unable to access education and they are unable to secure employment opportunities. The high dropout rate of 60% in the first year at TVET colleges is equally concerning for this sector.

Hon Chairperson, more worrying is the fact that TVET students in the Northern Cape have been waiting for their certificates, some for as long as 10 years. Furthermore, the rural TVET colleges in the Northern Cape, students have been waiting to be allocated for their practice more than a year. And yet, that the Minister tells us that he is committed to artisanship in in the country. Furthermore, the department's entities are plagued with underperformance, corruption, and mismanagement of funds.

Tenderpreneurs and service providers have been empowered to rob higher education institutions, diverting resources meant for student development and infrastructure development. This kind of corruption erodes the trust of our education system

and hampers its ability to fulfil its purpose of empowering our youth.

The department's underperformance is evident in its failure to meet its targets. This gradual and constant regression of the department under the current leadership is of great concern to all of us. It is clear that a change in approach and a commitment to effective governance and management are urgently needed to reverse this trend and ensure the department fulfils its mandate.

The chronic dysfunction, corruption, and inadequate governance within our higher education institutions are deeply rooted problems, Minister, and they demand immediate attention.

We cannot ignore the stakeholder conflicts, student protests, violent confrontations, and burning of buildings that have become all too common. These issues result in a loss of teaching time, withdrawal of funders, delays in research, and the exodus of talented academics and teachers.

Furthermore, corruption within our universities is a cancer that must be eradicated.

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In conclusion, political interference in university councils adds another layer of complexity to the challenges we face. Ministerial appointees often prioritise political roles over their responsibilities. Fellow South Africans, it is time to demand accountability, transparency, and ethical leadership within our higher education system.

Looking ahead to the 2024 elections, our tenure in office, made possible by the Moonshot Pact, will provide a decisive opportunity for both public and private education sectors to drive a knowledge-based economy that fosters innovation and propels economic growth. The DA remains resolute in our dedication to ensuring South Africa's youth are not forgotten, as we guide them to a brighter future and more promising for South Africa. I thank you, Chairperson.

Mr I NTSUBE: Hon Chairperson of the Council, the Deputy Chairperson, the Minister and the Deputy Minister ...

An HON MEMBER: You must come to Parliament!

Mr I NTSUBE: ... the Chief Whip of the Council, the permanent and special delegates, infrastructure development and maintenance is a priority to ensure that there are facilities

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that are made available for teaching and learning to continue to be an imperative to the ANC-led government. Our government understands many of our young people are keen and are grieving the opportunity to further their studies in all different higher education institutions and therefore, although it can be argued by the opposition that this priority is expensive to develop and maintain, it yields a high value overtime for a far educated knowledgeable and a skilled workforce of our citizens.

We furthermore appreciate the ongoing work done by the Minister of Higher Education, Minister Blade Nzimande to ensure that the department is taking responsive measures to the building of higher institutions of learning and student accommodation. The ANC has been deliberate on the monitoring and evaluation of the expansion and access of teaching and learning in Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, colleges and community education and training, CET, colleges. To cater for the needs of our people for them to have such access, it is important to ensure that we have buildings in our communities that will enable them to thrive. It is therefore important to note and commend the work that is being done by the department to ensure that we have these TVET colleges and CET colleges.

We must first appreciate the reprioritised infrastructure and deficiency grant towards community education and training that was to be redistributed over the medium-term financial period for infrastructure development. Although this had an impact on the baseline budget of Higher Education and Training, it was a meaningful indicator of the realisation of the importance of community education and training, showing that they are treated as any sector that provides a progressive contribution to the education sector.

The Minister of Higher Education announced that concerning TVET capital projects, a total of nine TVET colleges campuses have been completed. As the ANC we are pleased with this development because it shows that as a country, we are responding to basic societal need. The TVET colleges campuses to be constructed as of the year 2023-24 is Umfolozi campus and Umgungundlovu campus. We want to mention the maintenance and the repairs of TVET colleges infrastructure that has been prioritised and budgeted through the capital infrastructure and efficiency grant.

Since the grant inception during the 2018-19 financial year, it is encouraging to see that concerns often raised on a project cycle not being able to achieve its work are not

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hindering in this regard. We are pleased indeed by the maintenance and repairs of the College Infrastructure Efficiency Grant, CIEG, for upgrading the information technology infrastructure. There have been budgeted construction plans for nine community colleges learning centres as well.

As the ANC we are agree with the Minister when he brings confirmation that this history in the making, as it is the first time the department is investing in infrastructure for CET colleges and furthermore making it a priority. The department has announced a construction of the first three community college centres, namely, Devon in Heidelberg Gauteng, KwaGuqa in Emalahleni, Mpumalanga province and Eerste River in Western Cape.

The construction will commence in the current 2023-24 financial year. We hope that by the end of this year, at least we will be able to see one of them being in completion. The update on the funding for phase 2 of Student Housing Infrastructure Programme at the following TVET institutions, Gert Sibande TVET college and Majuba TVET college had been improved and the planning of this projects have commenced. The

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ongoing work by our government shows the truth of the matter of deliverables.

As there is a major need for facility for learning to be built, the urgency of the special development of student accommodation becomes a pressing priority. We had many universities in protest due to the absence of student accommodation having already accessed the centre for learning. There has been a poor evaluation of the student accommodation offered to our students in areas that are at times in high crime areas that far from the institution and are highly congested.

The ANC intends to see a transition in student accommodation for the livelihoods of our students. The department has plans for implementing nine projects for the provision of 28 000 students' beds. The construction of this will need urgency as well as the technical capacity and capability for whoever will be awarded a tender process of constructing the students' accommodation.

It is in the immediate the Minister accounted for the total of 8282beds that have been delivered across six institutions in the entire country. The institutions include Nelson Mandela

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University in Gqeberha, North West University, the University of Western Cape, the University of Fort Hare and Vaal University of Technology. It is important to note the need for upgrading facilities which indirectly impact the wellbeing of our nation when they are left unmaintained. They need to be equally building more when maintaining the others must be done subsequently. As the ANC we believe that the building of high institution facilities and student accommodation improves the quality of the student life.

Human capital formation is a direct consequence of the optimum levels of investment in social infrastructure, including the optimal mix therefore. Educational infrastructure of universities, TVET and CET colleges are crucial for the wellbeing of the students and their mental health. Moreover, educational infrastructure increases the quality and productivity of human capital within our country.

The ANC understands that infrastructure development is one of the fundamental requirements to promote productivity and inclusion. To address these major inequalities of the past we still need to do work tirelessly and ensuring that historically disadvantaged black institutions do not fail and can produce the best academically and otherwise. The

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government must ensure that previously disadvantaged institutions are equipped with ability to leverage modern technologies and modern infrastructure in their institutions to increase the competitiveness of the best educational facilities accompanied by sports and others that are important.

We stand to say that our previously disadvantaged institutions, including the TVET colleges now rely on higher quality infrastructure for access to equal opportunities and equal access to services. We therefore want to appreciate the progress that is being done and we welcome the refurbished infrastructure and a custom of teaching to cater for the requirements of the persons living with disabilities.

The ANC is pleased to confirm that the department has invested in infrastructure projects across the 26 existing universities during the 2023-24 and 2025-26 budget. The government has completed the feasibility studies for the establishment of the university of science and innovation in Ekurhuleni and the crime detection university in Hammanskraal. The new universities should actual construction in the coming year or two, at 30% of the construction completion. We are happy with the establishment of the Giyani educational precinct through

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the establishment of a university campus with Tshwane University of Technology and the construction of a design phase of Ulundi campus of the University of Zululand that will commence in this current financial year and that the actual construction should commence in this financial year.

Minister Blade Nzimande stated that government cannot and will not tolerate the threat to lives and destruction of property and request the university management to tighten up security in all university campuses to ensure the safety of all students. When he was responding to the students' protest that was taking place at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, CPUT, in the Western Cape. Similar faced with the same circumstances was Nelson Mandela University. With the recent burning of the building of the University of Fort Hare, we want to call upon the department in resolving the genuine students' concerns and protest. It must continuously consult the university and students' representatives. It becomes important to be able to bring this harmony and co-operative governance engagements to address the issues.

The Deputy Minister has been at work with training and higher ... [Inaudible.] ... in continually monitoring the levels of gender-based violence which remains persistently high both

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nationally and within the education sector. He has raised concerns that puts, particularly female students across the South African university and colleges in physical danger and causes the psychological stresses, causes fear and unsafety.

As the ANC, we would like the department to work on having protocol such as measures of safe rooms in institutions that will be able to safeguard as well as have high security and police interventions at the different areas where student accommodation and facilities are based. Towards the conclusion, we commend the Minister's work in the department and further are excited to learn that review of the existing department, National Treasury, and the Development Bank of the South Africa, DBSA, partnership for the delivery of the student housing infrastructure programme is also reaching its finality. This gives us hope on the issue of student accommodation which is currently a crisis. The programme should contribute to transforming the property market and great affordable quality student accommodation.

We encourage the department to further explore ways of concession for unutilised infrastructure to optimise the usage and productivity of the education sector. We welcome ... as the Minister has indicated, we are foreseeing the first COVID-

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19 shots being manufactured locally in South Africa. And we wish to say that you must applaud that effort and say that we should have more than just vaccines. We should manufacture our own cars like BMW and we should manufacture our own phones so that we build a state capacity. We also wish to say to the Minister that he must increase the capacity within the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, for them to be able to be proactive and promptly deal with issues that are affecting the students. We further calling on the department to cancel the student debt. As the ANC we support this Budget Vote. Thank you very much, Chair.

IsiZulu:

Nk S A LUTHULI: Ngibonge kakhulu, Sihlalo, ngibingelele uMhlonishwa u-Bara, siyabonga lapho ukuthi nawe ufuna ukubonakala ukuthi ukhona namhlanje la eNdlini.

English:

Thank you. Chairperson, this year marks a very important milestone in the politics of South Africa and the working class struggle. This year marks 10 years yes, DA, since the formation of the Economic Freedom Fighters, the only radical and militant economic emancipation movement that brings together the progressive forces on a mission of economic

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freedom in our lifetime, something that DA doesn't even know. Yes, you can howl but I still have time. As we celebrate the 10th year anniversary this year, we call upon all South Africans, even you Bara there, we call you to come and donate to the giant organisation. To donate you simple need to short message service, SMS, EFF donation to 42191 or go to effonlinedonation.org.

Yes, Deputy Chair, we hear you that side. And on our 10th year the Economic Freedom Fighters rejects the Budget Vote debate for Higher Education and Training. Chairperson, can I be protected, please. And it's a shame that the whole Deputy Chairperson is howling.

An HON MEMBER: You don't have issues, don't promote your party.

Ms S A LUTHULI: Chairperson, I hope you are timing me because the ANC is howling at me and taking my time. Thank you very much.

An HON MEMBER: And which is not right.

Ms S A LUTHULI: We reject the budget of the Department of Higher Education and Training that continues to face numerous challenges in education teaching, learning and research. We reject the proposed budget of Department of Higher Education and Training which has no feelings regarding the challenges students encounter during the admission process at different institutions.

IsiZulu:

Kuzobonakala sengathi sihlezi sizikhahlela izabelomali kepha asikwazi ukuthi sivumelane nesabelomali esingakwazi ukukhulumisana nezinselele esizibona unyaka nonyaka lapho abafundi baze bancamele ukuthi bayambe bayotoyi-toya ngenxa yezinkinga ezikhona yonke iminyaka, izinkinga ngezindawo zokuhlala nezinkinga zika-NSFAS.

Namhlanje sila kusenabafundi basema-TVET ekubonakala engakazitholi izibonelelo zabo KwaZulu-Natal. Ngikhuluma ngeShowe, uNgqongqoshe uyazi, kade eseShowe khona ezinsukwini, Inkandla Umfolozi College neElangeni eNdwedwe ikolishi, namanje abakazitholi izibonelelo zabo futhi izingane zilambile nokuthi izingane azikwazi nokukhokhela izindawo zokuhlala ngenxa yokuthi lo mnyango obonakala ungabanakekele.

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Futhi namhlanje kunezinkulungwane zabathweswe iziqu ekubonakala bengakazitholi izitifiketi zabo neziqo zabo futhi enkulumeni ka-ANC kubonakala bengenandaba nalokho.

English:

Minister Blade has failed to lead this nation to the realisation of its own National Development Plan that was to see the post-schooling system meet the needs of the economy and society. The entities under this department ...

IsiZulu:

... into ebonakala ikwazi nje ukuyenza ukubonakala emacaleni okukhwabanisa nenkohlakalo nokungakwazi ukuphatha kahle izimali osuke ubekelwe zona.

English:

This department keeps reducing targets and still fails to achieve them. There is a gradual and constant regression in this department you are leading and as an alleged leader, Minister, you have even failed to ensure accountability ...

IsiZulu:

... kuwena kanye nakumnyango wakho. Asifuni ukukhuluma ngendaba ka-NSFAS ngoba akukho ukuziphendulela lapho.

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English:

This department has no clue on how to handle ...

IsiZulu:

... amacala enkohlakalo abonakale e-Fort Hare. Hhayike, siyakuqonda ukuthi kungani kungeke anakwe lawo macala enkohlakalo ngoba abanye benu bathenga izitifiketi zabo neziqu zabo. Abanye benu enibaziyo eningabaphenyi ukuthi ngempela njengoba kuthiwa bazithengile lezi zicucu abanazo ngabe bazithengile yini ngempela.

English:

The Department of Higher Education and Training had not made any efforts or plans to protect ...

IsiZulu:

... umembuli wokungekho emthethweni emfundweni ephakeme futhi kuyinkinga lokho ngoba abantu bayafuna ukwazisa Ngqongqoshe ukuthi kwenzakalani ngaphakathi emnyangweni ngoba phela wena awuhlezi ukhona ngezikhathi zonke. Kodwa noma sebekwazile ukutshela ukuthi hhayibo nakhu kwenzeka ukuthi nokuthi kodwa asikho isivikelo abasitholayo okwenza kube zima nokuthi bakwazi baqhubeke babike ngoba basabela izimpilo zabo.

Inkohlakalo, Ngqongqoshe, ebonakala ibikwa njalo eMangosuthi University of Technology, iNyuvesi yaseNingizimu Afrika, iNyuvezi yakwaZulu kanye neMpumalanga University of Technology, akubonakali kukhona abantu ababoshiwe, akubonakali kukhona abantu ababuzwayo ukuthi kahle kwenzakalani. Uzosho njalo vele uMhlonishwa u-Ndongeni ngoba uvikela izigebengu, vele yinto yenu enikwazi ukuyenza ukuvikelana nezigebengu.

English:

The department has put no measures in place to address safety and security at tertiary institutions and how social concerns like rape that occurred on various campuses ...

IsiZulu:

Kuyinkinga lokho njengomuntu wesifazane ukuthi ngime la namhlanje futhi namanje ngikhulume ngamacala okudlwengulwa enzekayo ngaphakathi ezikhungweni nokubonakala abafundi bengavikelwe. Usuku nosuku sizwa kuthiwa endaweni ewukuthi sekudlwengulwe owesifazane nokuthi leyonto asikwazi ukuyishayela ihlombe. Le nkinga yokuthi kunabafundi abakuma-TVET abase Nyakatho Koloni abala ko-32 okuze kube namhlanje abazitholi izitifiketi zeziqu zabo emuva kweminyaka eyishumi.

Kunabanye futhi abafundi awu-22 e-Upington nabo ababonakala bengazitholi izitifiketi zabo okwenza bangakwazi ukuthi baqhubeke ukuyohlololwa ukulungela umsebenzi abawufundele.

English:

The budget is not clear whether the funds channelled to technical and vocational education and training, TVET, colleges would address ...

IsiZulu:

... inkinga yezingqalasizinda ezibonakala zibhidlika nokuthi inking yezingqalasizinda iyinkinga endala, Sihlalo.

English:

The Higher Education and Training is meant to care and look after the needs of students and make sure that their safety is a priority. This department and ...

IsiZulu:

... Ngqongqoshe walo mnyango akabathandi abafundi uma sibuka ngendlela ekwenzeka ngakhona.

English:

In conclusion, yes, in conclusion, there have been no attempts to truly provide free accommodation for students even ...

IsiZulu:

... sibona izakhiwo zakhe uHulumeni ezihlezi dengwane okubonakalyo ukuthi uHulumeni ukuba ngempela uyabanakekela abafundi ngabe uyazithatha lezi zakhiwo baziguqule bazenze izindawo zokuhlala abafundi ukuze sikwazi ukubona ukuthi u-2024 mhlawumbe uzoza nezinto ezingcono. Kodwa, ngicela niyilalelise kahle lena ngoba ...

English:

... we as the Economic Freedom Fighters has constantly offered you and your department, Minister, a workable solution since 2013. The EFF is turning 10 years this year and we are a reminder to your department that ...

IsiZulu:

... yonke le minyaka eyishumi besizama sininikeza izindlela zokusebenza kumnyango nokwenza ukuthi izimpilo zabafundi zibe ngcono kodwa nina niyazinqaba nje. Anifuni nokuzizwa nhlobo ngoba anifuni ukuthi nisizakale. Nifuna ukubonakala sengathi yinina nodwa enaziyo kanti silana nathi njengamanye amaqembu

sizomela izinto zabantu. Sigxhamuka emakhaya la abantu abasho khona ukuthi sinezinkinga ezinje.

Ngakhoke, umangabe sizonitshela ukuthi nazi izindlela ezingase zikwazi ukusiza ukuthi umnyango wakho ube kahle, ukuthi umnyango wakho ubonakale ukuthi unalo uthando lwabafundi kodwa njalo nihlala ningafuni ukuzithatha izinto esininikeza zona.

English:

It is for these reasons that Economic Freedom Fighters rejects the Budget Vote for Higher Education and Training. Thank you. Now, you can howl.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: Chair, I am quoting from a *BusinessTech* article from June last year: "The Professional Provident Society has warned that government needs to do more to improve the standard of education in South Africa, saying that students themselves have largely lost faith in the quality of learning they receive at universities."

According to a survey conducted by the financial services group, as many as 25% of studying professionals felt they were insufficiently prepared for higher education, while 43% of the students said that they had been moderately prepared.

The survey included responses from more than 3 000 students with a focus on professional degrees. The majority of students said they had no confidence in the standard of higher education offered by South African universities, when compared internationally.

We believe that the Minister should focus on improving the quality of education in our institutions, rather than just increasing funding. Protests actions and unrest in some universities highlight the need for effective management and accountability in the use of funds and we urge the Minister to ensure that universities are held accountable for their spending and that the quality of education remains a priority.

With regard to NSFAS, it is commendable that the government is providing financial assistance to those who cannot afford to pay for their studies, but the system has proven to be flawed. The administrative inefficiencies and delays in the allocation of funds have resulted in many eligible students being left out of the system and ultimately, dropping out, due to financial constraints. We need a more streamlined and effective system that ensures that every student receives the necessary funding on time.

Furthermore, over the last few years, NSFAS reportedly had a loss of more R50 billion of irregular expenditures. With an average cost of R105 000 for a full-time student getting a degree in South Africa, 476 000 students could have received their degrees with that same R50 billion.

The corruption and maladministration issues at NSFAS must be addressed. And we need to take an honest look at how many of the students that receive NSFAS funding are eligible, how many of these graduated and what amount of funding were wasted on dropout students?

Afrikaans:

Die opvoedkundige gehalte in Suid-Afrika is swak, ten spyte van relatief hoë vlakke van publieke besteding aan onderwys. Die land bestee gemiddelde 6 % van sy BBP op onderwys, wat goed vergelyk met ander lande.

Die begroting en befondsing vir hoër onderwys is duidelik nie die hoofkwessie of probleem nie. Die hoof oorsake vir swak onderwys is veelvlakkig en word geassosieer met onvoldoende vakkennis van sommige dosente, geskiedenis, ras, taal, geografiese ligging en sosio-ekonomiese status.

Lae opvoedkundige prestasie dra by tot lae produktiwiteit, en hoë vlakke van armoede en werkloosheid. Onderrig in Suid-Afrikaanse universiteite en ander tersiëre fasilliteite word deur 'n magdom uitdagings geknou. Dosente het nie basiese vaardighede en noodsaaklike hulpbronne om onderrig en leer effektief te fasiliteer nie.

Verder word kwaliteitmaatstawwe, wat deur die Raad op Hoër Onderwys gestel is, slegs op papier gehaal en min of niks word gedoen om dit in die praktyk toe te pas nie.

Die regering en die departement moet ophou om die verlede te blameer vir die tekortkominge in onderwys in Suid-Afrika. Geen kind of student baat daaruit nie. Erken dat julle in 30 jaar nie suksesvol kon regeer nie en word eerder deel van die oplossing, eerder as om nog probleme te skep deur die rassspanning propageer word.

Ons jeug wil op die toekoms fokus en nie vashak in die verlede nie. Dit is die regering se plig om te verseker dat ons jeug 'n toekoms het om na te streef en voor te werk. Dit sal een die eerste prioriteite van die nuwe regering wees na die 2024 verkiesing. Dankie.

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Mr M R BARA: Hon Chairperson, hon members, hon Minister and fellow South Africans, I would like to pass my sincere condolences to the family and relatives of the Mangosuthu University of Technology, Prof Roger Cooposamy who was found murdered, after an alleged robbery. I hope that the police will find all the perpetrators soon.

It is quite disturbing that we see students and institutions closing and with students having to go home because of NSFAS' inability to meet their financial obligations. These students were made promises of a free education, which is far from realisation. This has a negative impact on them writing examinations. As a committee, we would have loved to have NSFAS during the committee presentation to answer some questions, but it was not to be.

As tuition costs continue to rise, students are dealing with increasing levels of debts, due to the extreme high cost of living. Many institutions are facing severe budget cuts with some of them struggling to survive.

The challenges facing South African higher education is linked to the wider crisis of poor economic growth, higher youth unemployment and the paralysing effect of the political crisis

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surrounding the ANC leadership and government. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic exposed the inequalities within and between universities, as some institutions were ready to move teaching online and continue with the academic term, whereas others faced severe constraints related to students' poor access to technology and poor socioeconomic circumstances.

We note with serious concern what is happening at the university of Fort Hare. An institution that prides itself on producing a legacy of leadership, which include former presidents like the late Nelson Mandela, Z K Mathews, Robert Mugabe, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, to mention just the few. The institution finds itself under siege from current leaders of the ANC in the province of the Eastern Cape. The biggest issue is that lives have been lost. Vice Chancellor, Dr Buhlungu and his deputies are under threat for standing up against corruption at the institution. We can't wait for the SIU investigation to get to the bottom of this calamity.

We note corruption that is happening within the department, with the alleged syndicate from the department, where Esayidi TVET College students are paying a bribe of R2 600 in order to receive their qualifications. Those who do not have the money are still waiting for their certificates.

Minister, I am bringing this to your attention, to urgently address this matter, as soon as possible. It is quite important to note that of almost 13 million applications for Social Relief of Distress Grant applications, 716 000 tertiary graduates applied. This is an indication of how dire the unemployment issue is, which also requires that our departments get together to seek a solution to address unemployment.

Much effort must be put to deal with gender-based violence across our institutions of higher learning. It is the responsibility of the department to play an oversight role, monitoring institutions to ensure that they take full responsibility for addressing GBV on their campuses. Not all universities have sufficient means to deal with GBV, hence it is quite critical for the department to assist and guide to curb the scourge.

It is however critical for the department to guide and assist the universities to update and modernise many curriculum subjects, to reflect new technologies and changing ideologies. The job market is looking for people with new skills and expertise, the department needs to make sure that universities adapt their curricula to meet these demands. There is a

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growing need to ensure diversity, racial and cultural inclusion.

Student retention is quite important for students to complete their studies. Universities need to find ways to keep students engaged and involved in their education to reduce dropout rates. Mental health also remains a huge challenge in our students lives. All attempts and efforts should be taken to assist universities that cannot afford to ensure that we fight for the positive mental state of our students. Assistance should be prioritised to institutions that cannot afford.

I hope that the Minister and Deputy Minister are able to put their differences aside in the interest of the student community in South Africa. These are but some of the challenges and solutions to some of the challenges that are confronting our higher education and require urgent interventions. Thank you.

Mr N M HADEBE: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, hon members, in the words of former President Nelson, and I quote:

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become

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a daughter, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that the child of farmworkers can become the President of a great nation.

One way in which South Africa's youth will be able to overcome the social and economic challenges they face daily is through quality education. However, Statistics SA has reported that youth unemployment remained a problem, as 4,9 million young people in South Africa are unemployed, as of the first quarter of 2023.

Therefore, it is especially disheartening to see that this department only achieved 21 out of the 47 targets it has set for itself in the third quarter of 2022-23. It is worrying that this department continues to fail at fulfilling its own self-imposed objectives. This has highlighted the need for development and co-ordination of policy and regulatory frameworks that encourage and allow an effective and efficient higher education system, whilst providing financial support to these institutions and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS.

We have noted some contributing factors to the department's failures in delivering its plans, such as delays in the

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finalisation of the Comprehensive Student Funding Policy for Higher Education. Sadly, even students ... [Inaudible.] ... have not spurred the department into being more creative.

Community Education and Training remains underresourced, which in turn, hinders its ability to expand and remain relevant despite the growing demand for short-term skills in our communities. The department only allocating 2% of its budget towards this programme does not inspire much confidence that this will change in the next academic year and beyond.

However, the IFP believes that all hope is not lost, because willingness from the government to implement solutions can turn things around, but this requires political will.

Therefore, we call on this department to enforce stricter consequence management measures against officials that fail to meet their targets, in accordance with their job descriptions. In consideration of the comments made, the IFP accepts the budget. I thank you.

Mr J J LONDT: Hon House Chair, members, hon Minister Mzimande, you ended off by saying that it is the ANC that is governing and you are correct. It is the ANC that is governing that is currently ensuring that there is a more than 30% dropout

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during period when kids that start school and kids that enrol for matric. It is the ANC that governs that ensure that only 20% of kids can read for comprehension, as hon Ntsube is a classic example of. It is the ANC that had brought down the standard of education. Then it is the Higher Education Department that has to struggle to get ...

Afrikaans:

... 'n oorbruggingskursus vir kinders wat universiteit toe gaan.

English:

That is the ANC that completely neglect the kids from the Grade R level all the way, so that the problem is at a university level. When they graduate there, it is the ANC that ensures we have an economy that is tanking. So, people who have gone through all the hardships, through teachers that do not support them enough, because the ANC government care more about Sadtu than the children, then finally get to the university, and then it is this ANC government that do not care about the missing middle.

Kids whose parents earn just above the threshold are not allowed to qualify for NSFAS and they fall through the cracks.

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Kids that have made sure that they overcome all of the barriers that this ANC government has put in place, are not supported after getting through all of these barriers. Then they drop out at a university level.

It is unacceptable that we sit and talk about higher education, as if it is an isolated incident. This ANC government, Minister Mzimande, that you are so proud of, is failing the future of this country, starting at a Grade R level.

These extended irrational Covid-19 regulations that this ANC government implemented ensured that triple the number of students dropped out than usual. What are you doing to ensure that these students are getting back on track and that they actually have a chance to get to university. what are you doing to ensure that they do not start on the back foot on the university, but they go and compete with the best and the brightest of the country?

I don't see anything that is being done in any of the eight ANC provinces. Here is the Western Cape, however, there is the Back on Tract Programme, where millions are being invested on getting students that fell behind, as the word says, back on

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track to be competitive. That is why, every year, this province where the DA governs, produce more matriculants that qualify to go university.

And, hon Minister, if you do not start fighting that in your Cabinet ... I am still speaking English. I don't know if the translation is not working. That is where the problem lies. So, I don't have a lot of time left, but we have three by-elections coming up now in George. Usually, you only see the ANC when there is an election coming up. So, I invite you to please go to the by-elections in George and when you are there, just last week, an ANC staff member was arrested for allegedly raping a Nelson Mandela University student there at the George campus.

So, this ANC government that you are so proud of is the one that is failing the kids from the day they start school until the day they matriculate. They fail them at university and even if they have overcome all of that, our economy is not working. [Time expired.]

That is why we should start implementing the DA policies, where you get the lowest unemployment rate in this province.

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Imagine how the future would look, if you can implement that across the rest of the country. I thank you.

Ms A D MALEKA: Thank you, Chairperson. Greetings to you, the Deputy Chairperson, House Chairperson, Minister, and hon members, the African National Congress debates today with an understanding that the most effective and sustainable way to build an economy is through equipping people with the skills and know-how to drive it.

We have therefore seen our government and Minister Blade Ndzimande working to strengthen the link between the skills that we develop and the skills that the workplace needs. We believe that the targets set by our government can never be achieved unless all people are empowered through quality education and skills training. This brings a positive and impactful provision for active involvement by citizens in what we believe is a democratic process and introduces skilful workers to the economy.

IsiZulu:

Wena ngiyeza kuwe.

English:

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The hon Minister, on the occasion of the National Skills Fund, NSF, breakfast with NSF beneficiaries, spoke on skills development and training that remains important in addressing the skewed South African education and the skills development trajectory, which was characterized by inequalities through over-resistant policies.

We have seen the effects of apartheid discriminatory policies being redressed by the ANC-led government through the attention given to skills development. After all, it is important because it promotes inclusive economic growth. We are encouraged by the NSF, which is set to develop skills in the digital and technology sector through an innovation model that links payments for training and employment outcomes.

The department set R1,7 billion today, by the NSF, towards its bursaries programme, benefiting enrolled students in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. In scarce and critical skills for the benefit of the higher education and training sector, moreover, about 5 000 students receive NSF funding for undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

In the previous year, the Minister firmly announced that there were steps that were being taken to reduce red tape so that we

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can create efficiency and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy that often halts us back. This would mean that there would be more entrepreneurial opportunities.

The National Treasury announced the development of skills for 5 000 for small, medium and micro enterprises, SMMEs.

Therefore, this goes to show the red tape reduction team in the Presidency under Mr Siphosiso Nkomo has been working effectively with various departments to make it easier to the establishment of businesses.

Furthermore, His Excellency the President in his state of the nation address announced the process for the finalization and amendment to the Businesses Act to reduce regulatory impediments for SMMEs and co-operatives and make it easier for entrepreneurs to start businesses. Growth and creation of jobs in our country's economy will be driven by SMMEs and co-operatives and informal businesses.

Chairperson, it becomes important to ensure that our Sector Education and Training Authority, SETA, play a role in ensuring that implementation of the national skills development is met for our people. The government invests and budgets a huge amount of money towards this, which then means

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that it must function and play its role in leading the compliance of industries.

It pleases us to see the ANC-led government that through our SETAs combined, as a country, we managed to open a total of 52 701 leadership opportunities in the last financial year. Our SETAs combined opened up to 7 095 university student work placements and awarded 13 169 bursaries in various fields on skills in high demand, in the issue of skills development improvement in support of an inclusive growth path,

Hon Chairperson, one of the key ingredients for economic growth and competitiveness is the ability to attract skills that the economy needs. There are more than 3 million users registered on SAYouth. Mobi, is a zero-rated online platform for South African youth to access opportunities for learning and earning.

His Excellency the President confirmed that this had been done in close collaboration with the National Youth Development Agency, which continues to provide valuable assistance to young entrepreneurs and work seekers. These efforts, and strategic interventions, show how much the government is seeking to be responsive to this immediate need for

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intervention in a coherent and efficient inclusive society economy.

In the previous year, the government spoke strongly of the value of the Presidential Employment Stimulus in providing work and livelihood opportunities. It pleases us to get a brief from the state of the nation address on the practical initiative that had been done, which has now created over 1 million opportunities, reaching every province and district in our country.

IsiZulu:

Niyibonile leyo ngoba nabantwana benu bazuzile Mhlonishwa uLuthuli.

English:

We have seen several school assistants start work in more than 22 000 schools, offering dignity, hope and important work experience to unemployed young people. That it is a socio-economic growth we want to see as a country and see programmes as such confirming the work of an inclusive economy as evident. More internship opportunities and skills training programmes for the unemployed and unskilled in various sectors

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of the economy are necessary and should be a priority. The ANC-led government ...

IsiZulu:

... yiyo, injalo vele Mhlonishwa u-Londt ...

English:

... hon Londt, it is an ANC-led government. ... [Inaudible.]
... to those who are unemployed and give hope to those who have waited too long. Apartheid has shaped and distorted the economy of South Africa's rural areas in ways that adversely advantage black communities through unemployment and landlessness.

It is, therefore, vital that a democratic state establishes in rural development policy to address this distortion and create opportunities for rural people through balance and sustainable development. Rural development forms an essential component of the ANC programmes for distribution and growth, redressing the current ...

IsiZulu:

... ngisaqhubeka ...

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English:

... as I continue. Imbalances in the provision of social services and physical infrastructure require affirmative action in the allocation of resources.

Updating the national list of occupations in high demand and piloting the provincial list of occupations in high demand in collaboration with the two provinces of Mpumalanga and Western Cape. This set target by the department is to place over 10 000 Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Tvet, college graduates in employment have surpassed that figure and have set a target for 2023 of 20 000 Tvet colleges to be placed in employment is quite impressive and should be uploaded.

We note that Minister Blade Zimandi said - hon Bara...

IsiZulu:

... Bara, uyakhuluma? ...

English:

... said several times to our college principals, that our Tvet colleges will not be called a college if they do not have well-established relations with industry and workplace within

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their areas. The Minister has since requested Director General Sishi and our Tvet colleges branch in the department to monitor this very closely.

Hon members, training must be linked to economic policy and form an integral part of the restructuring of the economy. Millions of youth South Africans are not in employment, education, and training. Our government must continue to prioritize the employment of young people in all our efforts.

The government must seek to expand initiatives that provide work experience for young people and offer support finance and market opportunities for young entrepreneurs. There is a need to link the provision of grants to pathways to inter-work, self-employment, training, and other form of economic development. This means more focus on training and artisanal, vocation and technical skills and encourages greater enrolment in colleges. Tvet colleges must have more than updated equipment on which students will train and acquire relevant skills.

In the issue of skills development in Community Education and Training, CET. The massification of skills provision through ... [Inaudible.] ... training colleges is essential for the

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training of young people and skills development. NSF launched its inaugural funding window focused on capacity building and for highly progressive community colleges.

IsiZulu:

... angeke ngi ... [Akuzwakali.]

English:

In the issue of graduates as employment-created innovators, the African National Congress has a call to all companies, departments and state-owned enterprises, SOEs, to remove the requirement for work experience for young people seeking entry-level positions. There will be an introduction to remote worker Visitors' International Stay Admission, Visa, and a special dispensation to higher-growth start-ups.

While the reform programme is underway, we will continue to support public and social employment to provide work to those who need it. We are without a doubt on the right track to ensure that our country is broadening skills development. We thank the department Minister Blade Nzimande ...

IsiZulu:

... ngomsebenzi wakhe oncomekayo ...

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English:

For his continued work to ensure that the education and training sector are progressively encountered. Hon Luthuli ...

IsiZulu:

Mhlonishwa uLuthuli, njalo uma ume ngaphambili usitshela ngezigebengu nani, sike sakucela ngaphambilini ukuthi ngoba wena uyazi umnyango kumele ubophe laba abangayo, sicela lobu bufakazi onabo ukuthi uye nabo phambili ukuze uzosizakala ngoba u-ANC iwona ohamba phambili ngokulwa nenkohlakalo nabo bonke abantu. Siyabonga namhlanje, Mhlonishwa u-Londt ukuthi abantwana bayakhona ukuya ezikoleni emadolobheni ngalo-ANC. Abantwana bayile bayofunda ko-Wits University ekukade bengakhoni ukuya kuyo. Siyabonga, Sihlalo, u-ANC uyaliseka leli Voti.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon Chair and hon members. Let me start by thanking all those who have supported this budget. Hon Nchabeleng, hon Ntsube, hon Malika and ...

IsiZulu:

... futhi nawe Bhungane eNkatheni, siyabonga.

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English:

Hon Londt, before your comment about education in this country, the Western Cape government must allow poor black kids to go and study medicine in Cuba. You can't be depriving them and actually be telling us all these kinds of things. And also, I thought you were lost you were in a Basic Education debate, not a Higher Education, debate, which absolutely was yesterday. So it's very important that you stick to - the Chair was actually kind to you, it should have been ruled out of order.

I want to say to you hon Nchabeleng, thanks for raising all these issues, especially around curriculum transformation. There is a lot that we are doing with our centres of specialisation in TVET colleges, our university capacity development programme including the production of young academics that we identify at masters level, assist them to complete their PhDs. Also, I wish to point out that on violence on our campuses, in February we held a Campus Security Summit, where we have identified a lot of challenges that we need if we are to bring stability to our colleges.

What I don't like with the DA, don't say things that are not there if you are debating with us, debate us on facts. For

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instance, there is no truth that there is a 60% dropout of first years at TVET colleges, that's simply not true. You just manufacturing that because you have got nothing to say in response of the improvements that we are making in our TVET colleges. So it's very important that - even on student accommodation, we are doing a lot on this. I've said National Student Financial Aid Scheme, Nsfas accredit more private providers whilst government is still trying to build college and university-owned accommodation so that we are able to expand and respond.

It was asked by the way who did research as to what is the extent of student accommodation in this country. We don't have to be lectured by the DA on that. We are the ones who actually did all that.

IsiZulu:

Madlanduna, Mhlonishwa uLuthuli, musa ukusisukela ngoba sisothi uma sesisusa izindaba zenu niyi-EFF, nifaka omafikizolo nibafaka ePhalamende nikhipha izingane zabantu ezikade zahlala ePhalamende zabakhona. Yini eningasitshela ...

English:

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... what can you do for South Africans, if you can treat your own members with decency.

IsiZulu:

Ningabenzelani nje nina abantu baseNingizimu Afrika.

English:

Hon Bara, I agree with you. We want the Special Investigating Unit, SIU to do its work. In fact, if you ask me, my concern is that the SIU takes too long to investigate. Like at Fort Hare, they've been there forever. We are not getting anything that is coming up. We want them to move faster, so I agree with you there. By the way. We are the first department to have a policy framework on fighting gender-based violence, the department of higher education and training. And we have said all our institutions guided by that framework must have their own institutional frameworks. And we have got higher ... [Inaudible] ... which is doing wonderful work in terms of fighting, gender-based violence.

So, it is very important that we do those kinds of things because 10% of gender-based violence incidents are in our sector. So that is why we are actually taking all these matters seriously. To the FF Plus, we are not pointing to the

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past because we are trying to find excuses. The past lives with us. It was only in 1976 that the National Party apartheid criminal regime, imposed Afrikaans as a medium of instruction to all South Africans. That was the spark of 1976 which was ... [Interjections.]

Mr F J BADENHORST: Chair, on a point of order.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon member, what is your point of order?

Mr F J BADENHORST: The hon Minister is misleading this House. He earlier said that our summation of the dropout rate in TVET colleges is not between 50% and 60%. Statistics SA has confirmed that. Please go and check your facts Minister. You are misleading this House.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon member, just to remind members, please let us really ensure that we don't use the point of order to debate specific points or views. In other words, don't abuse the points of order. Please don't do that. Minister, please proceed.

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The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thanks hon Chair. The last two points, Nsfas paid TVET colleges and universities' allowances yesterday. So, Madlanduna, if there are problems, bring them to us. Don't come and grandstand her. As a Member of Parliament, you can call me anytime I am inviting you, to say there is a problem at such and such a place, we will address it. Don't make it and turn it into a crisis. It's like what the DA is saying, our system is very stable. Our universities and colleges are very stable as I speak now. Thank you hon Maleka for pointing out the various skills development initiatives that this government has embarked upon.

IsiZulu:

Siyabonga, Sihlalo.

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Perhaps I should just at this point indicate that we are indeed very grateful and truly appreciate the presence of Ministers. Thank you very much for honouring this appointment and coming over in person to deliver your input and to allow us to have space to debate the issues. Thank you very much. We will now proceed to the second order, Policy debate on Budget Vote 32: Forestry, Fisheries

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and the Environment. I now call on the Minister to come forward and address the House.

Debate concluded.

APPROPRIATION BILL

(Policy debate)

Vote No 32 - Forestry, Fisheries and Environment:

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT: Hon House Chair, Deputy Minister Sotyu, hon Tebogo Modise, committee members, chairpersons of the entities reporting to our department, Director-General Ms Nomfundo Tshabalala and team of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, CEOs of our public entities, hon members present in this sitting and online, the tabling of the Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Budget Vote in this august House today, marks our last Budget Vote in the Sixth administration. On the onset, allow me to thank the SA Local Government Association, Salga, traditional leadership, scientific experts and all stakeholders in different provinces who continue to work closely with us on many complex environmental matters in the

quest to address the triple planetary challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution.

One considerable attention in this financial year is waste management. Last week, officials from our department joined business and civil society in Paris at the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution. The journey to the first global legally binding plastic treaty began in February last year when the United Nations Environment Assembly convened in Kenya. A total of 175 nations including South Africa committed to developing an international legally binding instrument including the environment with the aim of completing negotiations by the end of 2024.

In Paris last week agreement was reached on a mandate for the preparation of a zero-draft text of the instrument for consideration at the third session of the committee that will meet in, Nairobi, Kenya in November this year.

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, Amcen, is leading the African group of negotiators and we will jointly review Africa's progress to date in August. In our country about 80 000 tons of plastic leak from rivers and our

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oceans as a result of failures in our waste management system. Severe financial management challenges mean many municipalities are not able to expand household waste collection and some areas which previously had regular waste removal no longer have a weekly service.

In this financial year we are reinvigorating the Presidential Good Green Deeds programme to focus on cleaning and greening the provincial capitals. Cities included are Mangaung, Polokwane, Mbombela, Mahikeng, Sol Plaatjie, Buffalo City, Nelson Mandela Bay, Sedibeng, West Rand, Ekurhuleni, Umsunduzi and the Greater Cape flats region including Langa, Mitchells Plain, Khayelitsha, Elsies River, Mfuleni, Phillipi and Bonteheuwel.

Our programme will see the creation of 2 000 work opportunities per province for a period of 12 months to support municipalities in the provincial capitals, to clean up dump sites, plant trees and stop littering in selected streets. In these cities additional support will be given to ensure waste management authorities have access to yellow fleet and there is greater focus on improving land fill compliance and support for the diversion of waste to recycling activities.

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Hon members, our recent experience of extreme weather events including floods, storm surges and severe storms tells us climate change is already part of our lived reality. It is for this reason that the department is working hard to support provincial and municipal government to adapt to the realities. The aim of these interventions is to build climate resilience at local level and mainstream the necessary measures in provincial and municipal plans and budgets. The nine district municipalities we have worked with include Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn, Sekhukhune, Waterburg, Garden Route, Overberg, Cape Winelands and the West Coast Municipalities. We are currently assisting the Free State and Mpumalanga provinces to review and improve their climate change adaptation plans.

Together with Salga we have worked to assess local disaster management plans and ensure these are adequately reorientated to take account of possible future induced disaster in Bojanala, West Rand, iLembe, Chris Hani and Sedibeng district municipalities. In the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, Sarah Baartman District Municipality, Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality and the Amathole District Municipality we have trained officials on the ocean vulnerability index so that effective planning can be undertaken to prepare for storm surges and sea level rise.

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In the past year we have also capacitated the Mopani, Mangaung, Madibeng, ZF Mgcau, Joe Gqabi and the Limpopo, North West and KwaZulu-Natal provinces in the development and revision of air quality management plans.

Hon members, I am pleased to announce that in this financial year, our work is directed at domesticating the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, dubbed the new deal for people and nature which was adopted at the Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022. This will be achieved through the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity recently adopted by government.

Hon members, achieving the 30 by 30 targets will require provinces and municipalities to identify land that can be placed under conservation while at the same time ensuring benefit-sharing for surrounding communities. This year we hope to begin the establishment of the Eastern Cape Grasslands National Park, so that we can finalise declaration in 2024. This new national park will be a unique as it is a collaborative development that will follow a new model of ownership, land uses, governance and management.

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To ensure full and meaningful participation of previously disadvantaged people in the biodiversity economy value chain, a transformation programme has been launched within the biodiversity sector focusing on traditional authorities, previously disadvantaged individuals, small, medium and micro enterprises, traditional health practitioners and various associations. In this regard, we are pursuing partnerships with institutions of higher learning, piloting off take projects for community beneficiation and enhancing government interventions to support communities to participate meaningfully in the biodiversity economy.

This year we entered into memoranda of understanding with the University of Venda - which has already been signed - University of Limpopo, University of Mpumalanga and Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape so we develop the skills of previously disadvantaged individuals to participate in the biodiversity value chain.

In order to implement the game meat strategy, our department is identifying 25 pilot projects which we believe will in future will generate about R3,1 billion per annum and create tens of thousands of new jobs.

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Working in partnership with the Department of Traditional Affairs, National and Provincial Houses of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders and Traditional Authorities across all provinces, our department will support 17 000 community beneficiaries through the novel Community Rangers Programme to assist Traditional Authorities to stamp out illegal exploitation of biodiversity in their respective communities.

Hon members, the SANParks Socio-Economic Transformation Action Plan further aims to support greater participation by black owned businesses especially those owned by women, youth and persons with disabilities in infrastructure development and commercial tourism opportunities. Other focus areas include supplier development, direct and indirect employment creation, awareness, knowledge creation and exchange and meaningful land claimant beneficiation. To contribute to the expansion of the wildlife economy, SANParks will donate 2 448 plains game and 12 high value species to emerging game farmers in the coming year.

The SA National Parks will also undertake a strategic review of all programmes in line with the recommendations of the High Level Panel. In this regard, the process of reimagining protected areas, in close collaboration with the department,

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ha begun and new models of both expansion of national parks and establishment of new national parks are being explored.

In addition to initiatives to address visitor safety and combat marine and terrestrial wildlife crime in all our national parks, SANParks has deployed the Sea-Air-Mountain Team in Table Mountain National Park to address safety concerns, combat wildlife crime and enhance search and rescue operations. It is also in the final consultation phase of the Baboon Management Plan for the Western Cape. Through the development of SANParks Vision 2040 all South Africans can participate in the reimagining and co-creating a new future for conservation through national protected areas. The focus here is on creating the future with diverse stakeholders, where the youth, in particular, will play a significant role as custodians of the future. Given that SANParks will celebrate a century of its existence in 2026, the development of Vision 2040 is a great opportunity to recalibrate its future.

Hon members, following the release last year of the Panel Review Report on the artificial breaching of the St Lucia Estuary in January 2021, the iSimangaliso Wetland Park authority have taken a number of steps to address back

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flooding and the clearing of invasive species. Earlier this year, I visited the Dukuduku forest and flooded community farms on the Monzi side of the iMfolozi River, infrastructure projects being undertaken in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, and met community members in St Lucia.

A year ago, I made a commitment that the St Lucia Lake, which is protected and managed by the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, will no longer be managed as an isolated system which ignores surrounding stakeholders. I am pleased to report that from my engagements in March this year, relations between the park management and the surrounding communities have considerably improved.

Last year, iSimangaliso received R340 million from government for infrastructure projects, including road construction, the finalisation of the office block, new staff quarters and the development of new lodges. These projects contribute to job creation and socioeconomic improvement in an economically depressed area.

Through the infrastructure and environmental management projects, the park has created around 5 000 work opportunities

and more funding will be allocated this year to further address unemployment and poverty.

Hon members, without the S A National Biodiversity Institute, SANBI, we would not have the biodiversity information we need to make important decisions about the sustainable use of our environment. In the past year, SANBI has successfully implemented its Biodiversity Human Capital Development Strategy, known as the Groen Sebenza Graduate Programme. This programme plays an important role in ensuring postgraduate scientists have integrated work experience.

The S A National Biodiversity Institute also plays an important role in researching and finding solutions to the problem of biological invasions. The latest report on the status of biological invasions will be shared with the public later this year. In the past year we have employed 1 653 people through SANBI's ecological infrastructure programme to clear 5 000 hectares of land. A total of 442 Eco Champs were employed to protect our gardens and to work in the zoo. A total of 758 rural careers were also established and 206 research assistants employed.

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A key project involving SANBI is the uMngeni Ecological Infrastructure Partnership involving government, business, civil society and academia. In the past decade all parties have been working together to plan and prioritise the protection and rehabilitation of ecological infrastructure along the river, and to co-ordinate research. This initiative has included the Palmiet Rehabilitation Project undertaken in partnership with the eThekweni municipality.

Hon members, the department's regulatory, compliance and enforcement projects in provinces include the training of provincial environmental management inspectors in all aspects of work. We also support provinces in enforcing compliance regulations and supporting interprovincial investigations where required.

Today, 8 June, marks World Oceans Day. The department is commemorating this awareness programme through a marine science career exhibition incorporating the SA Agulhas II Open Day.

With regard to our work on oceans and coasts, water quality monitoring is being conducted at 30 sites in the four coastal provinces. We continue to work on the coastal provincial parks

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agencies to manage marine protected areas. Currently, we are working with Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife, Eastern Cape Parks and Western Cape Nature as well as iSimangaliso Wetlands Park.

Hon members, fishing not only contributes to the national fiscus through commercial fishing operations, but also improves the lives of fishing communities. Work to complete the appeals for the 2021-22 Fishing Rights Allocation Process is progressing well and the final appeals are set for finalisation on 30 October 2023.

Once the allocation of fishing rights to small scale fishing co-operatives in the Western Cape is finalised, small fishing co-operatives in all four coastal provinces will be further supported through training, capacity building, development and infrastructure support.

We have also created 1 500 work opportunities countrywide, and 900 full time equivalents in the coastal provinces through the Working for Fisheries projects this year. These include activities to prevent poaching, small scale fisheries mentorship, fishing harbour's maintenance, alternative

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livelihoods projects, catch data capturing, projects in the Hamburg community and at the Gariep Aquaculture Project.

In the coming year, the Aquaculture Development Bill will be submitted to Parliament, while the National Freshwater Wild Capture Fisheries action plan for the 2023-24 financial year will be implemented.

As I conclude, I would like to thank the chairperson of the select committee hon Tebogo Modise and all the committee members for your support for the department's programmes in the past year. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to our Deputy Minister Ms Soty, the Director-General Ms Tshabalala and team of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, the CEOs, chairpersons of the boards of our entities for all your hard work. And finally, let me take this opportunity to thank our MECs and mayors who carry joint responsibility with me for ensuring a healthy environment. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you as we build a new deal for people and nature. I thank you.

Ms T C MODISE: Hon House Chair, Chairperson of the NCOP, the Minister and the Deputy Minister of the department, MECs that are on the platform and hon members, good afternoon.

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House Chair, three days ago the global community celebrated 50 years of World Environment Day, which is celebrated annually on 5 June since 1973 to encourage awareness and action to protection of environment. The theme for the World Environment Day 2023 is #BeatPlasticPollution, which is geared towards a calling for global solutions to combat the pandemic of plastic pollution.

According to the United Nations, more than 40 million tonnes of plastic is produced every year worldwide, half of which is designed to be used once only. Of that, less than 10% is recycled. Consequently, an estimated 19 to 23 million tonnes end up in the lakes, rivers and seas annually. Allow me, hon House Chairperson, to lend a voice to calls to tackle the plastic pollution and the need for all to be mindful to the consequences of littering and its impact to the environment.

This debate is also taking place a few days after receiving tragic news of the passing of our leader, the SACP leader, Comrade Howard Yawa, who served the people of North West with profound dedication and commitment.

IsiXhosa:

Ndithi, lala ngoxolo mkhokeli wam. Lala ngoxolo ...

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English:

... my leader, my mentor. Comrade Yawa served in various departments in the North West. He was MEC for Public Works from April 2004 until 2007. He was the MEC for Local Government and Housing until May 2009 under the late Premier Edna Molewa, may her soul rest in peace. After 2009 and national and provincial elections served as an MEC for Public Safety under the premiership of hon Maureen Modiselle our ambassador. We join the SACP and the people of North West to mourn his passing and convey heartfelt condolences to his family and the entire ANC and South African Communist Party at large.

Hon House Chairperson, the National Development Plan, NDP, envisions environmental sustainability and transformation within the context of an integrated and inclusive economy that is supported by a capable and developmental state. The ANC-led government has remained on course to ensure that transformation of our society occurs, especially in the arena of economic transformation and job creation.

The work of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment is critical for sustainability of environment, which must enable inclusive economic development. The sector

also contributes to gross domestic product, GDP, and job creation. Inclusive economic development and environmental sustainability should not be seen as mutual inclusive, but symbolic.

Degradation of the environment does not lead to long-term economy sustainability. The work of the department is also a critical link to the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan in relation to the development of the forestry sector and its downstream value chain in paper and wood industry and ocean economy.

Moreover, promotion of green energy is an opportunity for development of a new industry sector, with job creation potential whilst at the same time providing green energy, security and positive contributions to environmental sustainability. It is not correct to place emphasis on our environmental concern as opposed to our developmental agenda, just as it is incorrect to place emphasis on our development agenda at the expense of environmental priorities. Getting to the correct balance is not always easy, but it is necessary to strive to achieve this balance.

The department has nine programmes in critical areas to ensure that the department has ability to carry out its programmes and mandate in the different sectors. The budget allocated to the department is R9,887 billion for the 2023 financial year, which is a slight decrease. This means that the department needs to ensure impactful engagements and qualitative spending to ensure that its programmes are implemented, and its performance targets are achieved.

It is important that the department and all its entities which report to it strive to achieve clean audits. This is also a measure to which its budget and programmes can be measured in terms of implementation.

The quality of water is a source of concern for many communities, and also local municipalities to supply clean water to people. Moreover, the discharge of wastewater is a matter of concern for communities. While the function of the discharge occurs through municipalities, it is imperative that the national department maintains a strong monitoring process to ensure that the discharge of wastewater meets national standards, and testing of water needs to continue by the department.

Municipalities need to enforce the prescribed standards before discharging wastewater and the national department must continue to enforce the standards through the permit system. Landfill sites are increasingly being filled and becoming more expensive, especially in Gauteng. The cost of municipality's landfill site is high.

It is important that municipalities are able to ensure that separation of waste occurs to ensure development of recycling. Recycling of paper, plastic, glass and metal is an arena in which the empowerment of our people can occur. This is also important in relation to recycling of plastic as these do not decompose in landfill sites.

Recycling is an emerging sector in our country, and while reducing the volume of waste in landfill sites, it is also environmentally friendly. The department in conjunction with the municipalities should develop the recycling sector as it is also an income generating job creation. Public awareness about recycling of waste is critical in the process of developing the sector in our country.

The United Kingdom's council issued different Bills for separation of recycling waste and collection of different bins

on different days. Expensive landfill sites cannot be the only solution to waste management in our country. Public awareness to develop a culture of recycling material will enhance the ability of the country to develop the recycling sector as part of green industrialisation of job creation.

Enforcement of environmental standards and regulations still remain a concern, as this is a municipality function with the national department setting standards and regulations and issuing permits. It is important that these less pollute water. Wastewater and water treatment is critical in this regard.

Air pollution around major industrial areas is also an important area for concern as it impacts directly on the health of our people in those areas. Training of officials for ensuring environmental compliance is an important step in ensuring compliance. It is important that as part of enforcement of environmental standards, there is also public awareness on the needs to adhere to the environmental regulations.

The department's programmes are linked with those of other departments in ensuring environmental, sustainable and

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economic development. Therefore, it is imperative that there is co-ordination between the department and other departments, such as Public Enterprises which has the South African Forestry Company Limited, Safcol, as an entity dealing with forestry that can empower communities; Public Works and Infrastructure in relation to trying up fishing co-operatives in coastal communities with the Small Harbours programme.

The world is moving to green industrialisation and development as herein lies opportunities. South Africa needs to keep peace and to honour its local environment commitment and international commitments. The department has nine important programmes that cover the full area of environmental sustainability and implementation of programmes with the correct skill set personnel as it is critical to ensure qualitative spending and getting value for the budget appropriated.

Our work must not be hidden from the people and communities, and they should feel the difference improving their lives through the works of the department and its entities.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): As you conclude.

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Ms T C MODISE: The select committee will engage in enhancing oversight to ensure that there is an implementation programme on the budget allocated, and that the department and its entities carry out its mandate and function. The ANC-led government's goal to create a better life for all can only occur in an environmental and sustainable manner, where the development and transformation is realised.

Hon House Chairperson, in conclusion, let me quote the words of our late President, Ntate Nelson Mandela, when he once said, "We must never forget that it is our duty to protect this environment." Indeed, the greatest ... [Time expired.] The ANC supports Budget Vote 32 of the department, and we thank you, House Chair. Thank you very much.

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Hon House Chairperson, hon members, hon Minister and fellow South Africans, a few years ago climate change was a buzz word used by scientists - today we all are intensely aware of our environment due to severe weather patterns and the impact thereof on our immediate environment as well as our natural resources. Climate Change has an effect on more or less every aspect of our lives. Therefore, the protection and conservation of our natural resources is essential.

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South Africa is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, which consist of four goals and 23 action targets. Target 3, calls for 30% of the world's terrestrial, coastal and marine areas to be in effective protection by 2030. This implies increasing our protected areas, which is of great importance.

However, with constant budget cuts, a valid question is: Are we able to balance the expansion of conservation areas, with ensuring that existing protected areas are well managed and fulfilling their conservation objectives? A recent report by the *Endangered Wildlife Trust, EWT*, and the *Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, Wessa*, on provincial reserves in South Africa, stated a growing concern that South African protected areas, which contain high biological diversity, are not fulfilling their conservation objectives.

Fifty challenges have been identified - the main challenge is finances that centres around funding, budget cuts and allocation of budgets. Further challenges are a lack of capacity, lack of skilled and experienced staff, lack of resources, as well as problems with cumbersome procurement processes and relations with neighbouring communities.

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Furthermore, the department informed the select committee that provincial park agencies will also now manage marine protected areas, which might become a problem in areas where the management of provincial parks is already a concern. Minister, we call on the department to ensure this balance in future planning of expansion projects, as well as to look into the recommendations of this report, for assistance in the possible solutions to ensure the effective management of all provincial parks across the country. Minister, we welcome the improvements in the ... [Inaudible.] ... Park, as you have announced in your speech.

Hon Chair, the issue of pollution is a topic that has been addressed in various ways, in many debates and oral question sessions, in this House. Sewage spillage is a growing concern in many municipalities in South Africa, due to a variety of reasons and problems, ranging from inadequate financial management to maintaining infrastructure and effective waste management - the problem of loadshedding is also contributing to that. We hope the landmark case of a conviction against West Rand Municipality will set a benchmark for compliance and enforcement on sewage pollution.

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We, therefore, welcome the increased focus on environmental compliance and enforcement aspects of waste management. We hope that the Waste Flagship project focussing on the top forty landfill sites, mainly in the metros and adjacent municipalities, is the gateway to environmental compliance, alternative waste treatment and opportunities for the private sector to invest in alternative waste treatment and create much needed jobs!

The cost of landfill sites, that need to comply with the norms and standards in more rural communities, is a contributing factor to poor management of landfill sites, as well as the establishing of regional sites. Assisting municipalities to buy a yellow fleet with MIG funding is a step in the right direction.

Minister, the negotiations with National Treasury for a Waste Management Grant, to ensure effective waste management, including alternative waste treatment, would be an enabling factor to minimise waste to landfill. We hope that these negotiations will be fruitful and successful.

Another aspect that should be addressed on a bigger scale, is to include projects ensuring greater access of all human

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settlements to waste removal services. Illegal dumping is a problem that needs to be addressed by all municipalities, all political parties and every citizen, as leakage of waste material to the environment is an issue of concern for all of us.

Minister, plastic pollution is another important matter, as you have already mentioned. According to reports from the department, the extended producer responsibility schemes, EPR schemes, for paper and packaging started the important work of diverting waste from landfill sites. One-and-a-half million tons of paper and packing was diverted from landfill sites through recycling, recovery and treatment.

On this World Oceans Day, we should recognise that if we would like to win the war against plastic pollution in our communities, rivers and eventually the ocean, we should speed up our efforts on plastic pollution by also expanding EPR schemes for plastic.

Hon Chair, in the Western Cape, fishing is an important aspect of many people's lives. The Small Scale Fishing policy and the consequent process of applications, co-operatives and effective management thereof, is a matter of lives and

livelihoods for many people living along the coast. We will have to fulfil our oversight responsibility over this process, to ensure transparency and rebuild the trust of these communities in the process, as well as the department.

An aspect that does not only contribute to the livelihoods of these fishing communities, but also all South Africans, is the aspect of poaching and illegal fishing. The Marine Living Resources Act, sec 3(1), stipulates that,

This Act shall apply to all persons, whether or not South African persons, and to all fishing vessels and aircraft, including foreign fishing vessels and aircraft, on, in or in the airspace above South African waters.

It is a well-known fact that foreign vessels, not licenced and unauthorised, enter our waters and catch thousands of tons of fish without any consequences. These illegal fishing expeditions have a devastating effect on our stockpile with direct and indirect consequences on our various sectors and industries.

It is also a well-known fact that vessels under Chinese flags are the most common of these illegal fishing expeditions.

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Minister, is the fact that South Africa is part of the Brics countries the reason for closing our eyes on this practice? If it is not, we urge you to ensure that there are enough fishery control officers to fulfil their role and tasks according the Marine Living Resources Act. If funding is a problem, I want to urge you and the department to elicit funding to stop illegal fishing to the benefit of our own industry and our economy.

Hon Chair, sustainable development is most probably one of the most used phrases at the moment. We need to manage our natural resources with transparency, integrity and honesty, to get the cooperation of all institutions, organisations and every citizen, to ensure a healthy environment for us as well as our children. We can only do so if we do not compromise our commitments to conservation and sustainable development. I thank you.

Dr D F BESE (Eastern Cape): Greetings to the House Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, all members of the House, MECs from other provinces, our Director General, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. It is an honour and privilege to be here today and take part in the debate on behalf of Eastern Cape Province. ... [Inaudible.]

... has been presented by Minister Chris. It is a Budget Vote that seeks to advance the interest of those that were previously marginalised. We have for too long lived with the environmental policies that seem to favour the minority of our society.

South Africa has one of the most magnificent environments in the world because of our rich variety of plants and animals. Our country is ranked in the top three most biodiversity on earth. This places on us as lawmakers, has an enormous responsibility to ensure that all of us work together to ensure our natural environment is protected and that we are all able to live in the harmony with nature. This means that the sustainable use of our natural resources in the development of our economy and the upliftment of the lives of our people should not be such that it destroys the environment we live in. But most importantly, it means that our people, the poorest of the poor, must participate and benefit from the economic activity that occur in biodiversity sector. Our province, the Eastern Cape, is a treasure true of natural wonder, hosting a diverse and breath-taking environment that is steaming with biodiversity from last forest, pristine, coastal lines, ... [Inaudible.] ... grassland and the dramatic mountain ranges.

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This province offers the rich ... [Inaudible.] ... pride of ecosystems that entrant and inspire one of the most remarkable features of the Eastern Cape in its coastal line. Stretching along the Indian Ocean, it does encompass stunning beaches through their caves and towering cliffs. The province is known for its abundance of marine life, including dolphins, whales, and myriad of fish species. The coastal waters also provide nesting grounds for the endangered sea turtles contributing to their conservation effort.

Moving inland, the Eastern Cape reveals and diverse array of landscapes. The province is home to the world known Krantzkloof Nature Reserve, UNESCO World Heritage site. This vast wilderness area comprises rough mountains, deep ... [Inaudible.] ... and pristine River Valley, all supporting a wide range of plant and animal species. It offers a sanctuary for many endangered and rare species, including the Cape, Mountain zebra, black rhinoceros, and various endemic bird species. The Eastern Cape is also blessed with an incredible variety of floral. The ... [Inaudible.] ... features unique fragile ecosystems such as the ... [Inaudible.] ... vegetation type to the to the Cape Floristic Region, which is recognised as a global biodiversity passport.

The province's nature reserves and national parks such as Addo Elephant National Park and the Tsitsikamma National Park showcase this remarkable floral diversity to foreign visitors the chance to explore and appreciate the beauty of these natural treasures. With all these endowments, the ... [Inaudible.] ... to global biodiversity framework and the subsequent White Paper on the conservation and sustainable use of South Africa's biodiversity that the Minister has alluded to, could come ... [Inaudible.] ... for the province if implemented correctly and wisely combating wildlife crimes.

Since the intervention programmes initiated between national government and the provinces to address the poaching of our country's wildlife, the Eastern Cape seem to be winning the battle against the rhino poaching in the past three years. We believe that this can largely be attributed to the co-operation and the continual collaborative efforts between national government and us, policy SANParks, National Prosecuting Authority and the private sector.

The newly adopted National Integrated Strategy to combat wildlife crimes will strengthen and co-ordinate all efforts in ensuring that Integrated Waste Management Programme. We are delighted to hear that ... [Inaudible.] ... Eastern Cape has

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been identified as one of the targeted ... one of the most remarkable features of the Eastern Cape in east coastline. Apologies, the Eastern Cape has been identified as one of the targeted provincial capital towns for the reinvigorated Presidential Good Green Deeds Campaign, as the minister has alluded. This initiative is focused on improving cleanliness in our municipalities. In supporting this initiative, the department has collaborated with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and other government department to ... [Inaudible.] ... the sustainable development principles in the delivery of municipal services. Especially around waste management and climate change.

A prize money to the value of R1 million is dedicated to improving waste management services by the winning municipality and recognition for sound environmental practises. We are happy that industry and municipal support has been achieved through collaboration and partnership with DSSE, Salga, ... [Inaudible.] ... and other agencies to host clean-up campaign, recycling, enterprise support programme and procurement of specialised waste management vehicles, and equipment through ME Funding.

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A total of 23 ... [Inaudible.] ... handling facilities have been audited for environmental performance across the Eastern Cape. Two new management licences were issued with additional two Waste Management Licence, WML, amendment and the two facilities registered to sort ... [Inaudible.] ... and bail and store waste for the processing and recycling. This also contribute to green jobs and reducing impacts of climate change by the waste sector as waste is diverted from ... [Inaudible.] ... to landfill.

The province is also engaged in the EPWP programme, where we create employment and waste and ... [Inaudible.] ... sector working with municipalities. The benefiting municipality for this financial year are Matatiela, Mbhashe, Raymond Mhlaba. Koukamma, Dr AB Xuma, Enoch Mgijima, and Elundini Local Municipality. A total of 613 short term employment opportunities will be created ... [Inaudible.] ...

We have identified climate change as one of the high impact projects that we are focusing on as the province. This is because this is one of the provinces that ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): As you conclude.

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Dr D F BESE (Eastern Cape): Okay, thank you. Thank you, House Chair. Last year, we announced that we were going to launch the climate change programme. This work has started and currently a situation assessment is being conducted to identify the most vulnerable communities and what constitutes their vulnerability. The Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan 2019 ... [Inaudible.] ... by provinces last year. ... [Inaudible.] ... will have the opportunity ... [Inaudible.] ... has to offer. Thank you very much, hon House Chairperson.

Mr M J MAGWALA: Mama Ngwenya, let me greet the Minister, the Deputy Minister, the hon members and our guests. I hope the Chairperson is going to protect me from the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP. Chairperson, the EFF turns 10 years this year. It's been ten years of advocating for the expropriation of land without compensation for equitable redistribution, the nationalisation of mines, banks and other strategic sectors of the economy.

Also, the building of state and government capacity, free decolonised and quality education, health care, houses, sanitation, massive protected industrial development to create sustainable jobs, open, massive investment in the development

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of the African economy, accountable and corrupt-free government. On our 10th year, we reject the proposed budget for the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment. You will hear the reasons, Minister.

We reject the budget of a department whose mandate is to ensure secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources, while promoting justifiable economic and social development. Yet, to date, there has been no indication of this ministry fulfilling its mandate. The municipalities across the country are failing to carry out their environmental management functions. They are extremely dirty and not friendly environment.

We know this to be true, as we as the EFF has had to intervene and initiate a campaign after a man that was killed by the ANC government in Free State, the Andries Tatane clean-up campaign, across the country, every Saturday. I challenge the Minister to find a location so that, next week Saturday we go and clean together, Minister, with your resources. The Andries Tatane clean-up campaign which happens every Saturday is led by the president and the commander in chief, CIC, Julius Sello Malema.

The EFF's Andries Tatane campaign, provides relief for underserviced communities across the country, even in the DA-led municipalities, like the City of Tshwane, horrible City of Cape Town, George, Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, to name few, are filthy dirty. Chairperson, the irony is that the lack of waste management exists despite a National Waste Management Strategy, NWMS, in place. The lack of environment management exists despite the Annual Performance stating that 300 councillors and officials were trained in waste management, but we still have the municipalities that are dirty.

Minister, section 2J of the Marine Living Resources Act outlines, and I quote, "the need to restructure the fishing industry to address the historical imbalances and to achieve equity in all branches of the fishing industry." Furthermore, Section 18(5) of the Marine Living Resources Act states:

In granting any right referred to in subsection one, the Minister shall, in order to achieve the objectives contemplated in section 2, have particular regard to the need to permit new entrants, particularly those from historically disadvantaged sectors of society.

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These two sections stand as the cornerstones for the transformation of the fishing industry, and they enable the Minister to introduce the new entrants into the various fishing sectors. Many fishers registered companies and made application for the fishing rights allocation process, FRAP, 2020. We now know that their efforts were in vain, as there is no way that this department will allow black people to threaten the domain of the white monopoly capital.

We are expected to go and compete in the lower leagues, in the congested small-scale fisheries sector. Minister, our people have been robbed for years by foreign companies that use our people as the black economic empowerment, BEE, status, making millions and giving them nothing in return. I am going to give you a company that resides here about this later on. The Western Cape processes for the allocation of small-scale fishing rights which started in 2005-06 financial year is yet to be concluded.

Out of the 8 500 people that were to be considered as per the court order in 2005, only 4 037 verification forms were collected, and more than half of the people involved in the 2016 verification process have disappeared. Most of our people have died while waiting for this ANC government to give them

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permission to fish. We have no choice but to poach. The people of Hermanus in Zwelihle, have been the victims of not getting their licence and are forced to fish illegally. The fisheries management branch has, to date, never delivered services timeously due to human capacity shortages.

The FRAP 2020 became the FRAP 2022 due to staff shortages, and only one phase of the appeals has been finalised. The fishing rights allocation process under this ANC government has been nothing but a fanatic catastrophe. Minister, I think this department missed a golden opportunity when it handed of Knoflokskraal to the Public Works. It is common cause that the most deprived sections of our people are those in rural areas in like our people in Knoflokskraal, Grabouw.

They have little or no land, little or no fuel, little or no income, and struggle daily with the burden of poverty.

Forestry is rural-based and there is a natural link between it and the rural population. It can provide employment, building materials, fuel and craft materials. It can provide opportunity and hope and can add dignity to the environment. However, there is still no strategy as to how this government will ensure broader participation in forestry.

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Chairperson, why are the public hearings on the Climate Change Bill being rushed in such a manner? In most cases, the hearings are poorly planned and many of those who attend use it to express their frustration with this ANC government. The EFF does not support this budget. Going back to one of the companies, Minister, I stand here before you with a proof of an old black man who has been exploited by a white Portuguese, who seems to be highly protected in the fishing industry you preside over.

I am saying this because the matter has been raised to the ANC way before the existence of the EFF, and somehow, it gets overlooked and not given attention it deserves. This matter has been equally raised in your department, and it has been rejected. The case has also been opened with the police, but there is no investigation of follow-up on the matter, Now, it has resurfaced itself to the show of the EFF, and we sought to put it before you.

There is a group of black men that have been working in the sea for years, doing fishing for a company called Tontraham Fishing Close Corporation, CC, the company number is there, Minister ... [Interjections.] ... Among these men, there is a man who brought this matter to our attention, Thulani, Alfred

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Thulong Matlhoko, age 76, resides in Canada, Guguetu in Cape Town, who has been made to sign documents that makes him a 5% shareholder, but the man is not getting anything.

Mr Matlhoko was made to sign this document by a white man called Ferrari Jose Marvel Elvis who reside in 42 Van der Walt Street in Welgemoed. Mr Matlhoko went for years, not knowing that he is a shareholder, but continue to work. Yet, he's not getting anything, Minister. The SA Revenue Service, Sars, is after this man, and he has been treated badly. I wish and hope, hon Minister, as our people have been... I've got the company number and everything, even the share certificate I can share with you. Thank you very much.

Cllr P NGUBANE (Salga): My greeting to the Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Minister, Deputy Minister, the Chief Whip of the NCOP and the House Chairpersons, hon permanent delegates and hon special delegates. Hon Chairperson, South African Local Government Association, Salga would like to thank the hon Minister, on this budget speech.

Hon House Chairperson, Salga is very pleased with the support the department is providing in terms of the Local Government

Support Strategy and Programme which identifies important areas of support to municipalities. This is in line with Section 154 of the Constitution which states that:

The national government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise their powers and to perform their functions.

This is much appreciated.

However, hon House Chairperson and hon members, Madam Minister, and your Deputy as a sector, we need to reflect on the extent to which the available resources for environmental management are equitably distributed across the spheres of government based on the differentiated responsibilities.

By resources we do not just mean financial, we are also referring to human resources and expertise. For example, hon House Chairperson, is it prudent to have your best waste management and air quality management expertise in provincial and national government, when the function has to be performed at local government. At the end, this expertise has to come in as a short-term support measure to municipalities that are

battling to perform the function, when they should in fact, have been in those municipalities in the first place.

Perhaps what we need to a comprehensive assessment of the financial resources and capacity that the country has for environmental management and how can it be more efficiently deployed. What is South Africa's expenditure on environmental management and how we are distributing them across the three spheres of government in line with their responsibilities.

Hon House Chairperson, the work of the department on biodiversity and conservation is applauded. Municipalities play an important role as both users and managers of natural resources and protected areas.

However, there is a need to unpack the constitutional mandates surrounding biodiversity protection and conservation as well as compliance. If local government is to become part of the biodiversity and conservation response, then a lot more work is to be done to promote conservation trained staff placement in municipalities and to involve them in a greater manner in biodiversity initiatives.

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Often local government is either left out, an afterthought or becomes tagged onto some other process as a second-hand recipient of such information generation and sharing. There is a need to build a developmental, integrative, and administrative capacities of municipalities for wise and informed management of protected areas.

Hon House Chairperson, Salga acknowledges that the nation faces serious problems with waste management, including unsatisfactory landfill operations, inconsistent waste collection services, and intolerable levels of littering and illegal dumping of waste.

We also welcome the support provided by the department to municipalities to improve waste service provision. This includes initiatives for improving cleanliness in various municipalities, procurement of waste infrastructure and re-invigorated Presidential Good Green Deeds programme, amongst others.

We would however, like to bring to the attention of the Minister, the need to consider reviving the cleanest municipality competition. It is believed that this competition

is key in inspiring municipalities to work hard to accomplish a goal of cleanliness.

The introduction of the Extended Producer Responsibility schemes for paper and packaging, electrical, electronic, and lighting sectors is a key milestone for the waste sector.

Whilst it is understood that Extended Producer Responsibility, EPR, may not be the panacea of all waste management challenges in the country, it is a positive step towards increasing the diversion of waste and promotion of recycling.

Lastly, it is crucial for the national and provinces to actively participate in the implementation of EPR. They must support the process by doing more than monitoring the public relations officer, PROs' performance.

Hon House Chairperson, municipalities are vulnerable to climate change and related transition as institutions in addition to the vulnerability of their local economies and communities. They use vast networks of infrastructure to provide services and collect revenue.

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When the infrastructure is destroyed and dysfunctional, there will be no services charges income and ratepayers may even be reluctant to pay property rates. If the transition to a low-carbon economy does not happen or is not just and leads to increase in the already high rate of unemployment, it will result in non-payment of municipal services and property rates, as well as an increase in social unrest and vandalism of infrastructure which is already high.

Hon House Chairperson and Minister, madam to this effect, Salga is delighted that finally our voice has been heard and the Presidential Climate Commission at its 6th ordinary session, agreed to expand the representation on the commission to cover underrepresented sectors. Accordingly, Salga was identified to nominate two mayors who have been appointed as commissioners representing local government in the Presidential Climate Commission, PCC.

We believe that local government should really be at the heart of South Africa's climate change and the just transition agenda which will have profound implications for the future competitiveness of municipal economies and livelihoods of their citizens. It has an important role to play in supporting local just transition processes.

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Hon House Chairperson, Salga is committed to mobilizing the whole of local government to step up and contribute towards a global ambition for climate resilience, putting people and nature first in pursuit of a resilient world where we do not just survive climate shocks and stresses but thrive in spite of them.

Hon House Chairperson, I listened attentively to the speakers this afternoon, I'm happy that the debate is getting fruitful and also the heckling is getting less and less. So, we appreciate this as Salga, because we would like to observe and see constructive NCOP in Parliament, as we are sitting there, we watch you very seriously and carefully on what you are debating and exchanging. Thank you, hon House Chairperson.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT:

Hon Deputy Chairperson, I was saying that I am getting short of a day. Good evening Deputy Chairperson and members of the Council. Before I can start with my speech, I just want to indicate to the hon member from SA Local Government Association, Salga representative with regards to a proposal on the competition to the cleanest municipality that we do have such a competition with sponsored awards. Last year, we had three winners starting from R350 000 per municipality.

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Hon Chair, the link between the environment and human health cannot be ignored as some sectors of the economy show improved returns and economic growth following the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organisation in April declared that COVID-19 is no longer considered an international public health emergency. Therefore, this means that we can get on with the business of growing our economy, creating jobs and improving the lives of our people.

In the case of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, this means putting in extra energy to, for example, ensure that our people benefit from sustainable use initiatives that do not harm the environment, and that communities benefit from projects to grant them greater access to our forests. Hon Chair, in the past two years we have witnessed numerous severe weather events in South Africa from devastating floods to prolonged droughts that can all be attributed to climate change, as the Minister has alluded to.

The Constitution entrenches the right to environmental protection, most notably an environment that is not harmful to the health or well-being of all the people. To ensure that this right is put into practice, a number of significant strides have been made with regard to air quality management

in terms of the National Environmental Management, which is, Air Quality Act, No 39 of 2004.

This robust measure emphasises the importance of co-operative governance structures and measurable investments in air quality monitoring infrastructure, all key to ensuring that our air is breathable and not harmful to anyone. Our work through the environment programmes enjoins us to identify and ensure implementation of programmes that employ Expanded Public Works Programmes, EPWP principles.

The EPWP contributes towards addressing unemployment in line with the decent employment through inclusive economic growth outcome, by working with communities to identify local opportunities that will benefit the society at large. I am pleased to announce that in this financial year, we created about 71 035 work opportunities in the nine provinces through our EPWP projects.

A total of more than 532 100 hectares will receive a follow-up clearing of invasive plant species, 115 wetlands will be rehabilitated, and 90% of wildfires will be suppressed. Our work through the Working on Waste continues to create

sustainable livelihoods through recycling of waste, as alluded to also by hon Labuschagne.

With regard to greening and open space management, the focus is on restoring, enhancing and rehabilitating open spaces, maximizing measures towards pollution mitigation, improving climate change adaptation through minimization of biodiversity loss and encouraging the use of greener technologies to mitigate against environmental degradation.

Through the environment programmes, we have conceptualised the in-house model, which allows the department to implement and manage its projects using its own resources. This means that the Department is able to employ more EPWP participants due to savings on project management fees. It enables the department to be in control and ensure the timely payment of wages.

The in-house model facilitates direct partnership with local government. In so doing, the department pays stipends and UIF, whilst municipalities provide PPE, tools of trade and commit also to picking up collected waste. As our people collect the waste, then the municipality must make it a point that they collect that waste. This is a true partnership in which both parties are accountable for success of the programme.

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Our department has engaged with the National Treasury and the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to help municipalities to purchase trucks for waste collection and landfill operation under the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, MIG.

In order to accelerate service delivery to the public, I had the pleasure of launching the Waste Management Intervention Cleaning and Green Project in Vryburg, North West, in your province Chairperson Modise. Issues of waste and pollution are just as important as dealing with the challenge of good air quality.

Pollution of our rivers, streams, the ocean, and the land leads to a number of complications, not only affecting human health as people drink from polluted water resources, but also through the seepage of chemicals in materials dumped or burnt illegally into the soil in which many plant their food. That is the reason why the department has placed so much emphasis on issues of waste management, and is assisting local authorities with the development of skills and the supply of equipment to ensure that unsightly waste is collected and properly disposed of.

Statistics SA indicates that a quarter of South African households do not have access to refuse removal services provided by municipalities. Consequently, illegal dumping is on the increase, as we have indicated in the Select Committee some few days ago. Critical waste infrastructure, such as buy-back centres, transfer stations and landfill sites and waste trucks are not safe guarded and are subjected to vandalism and are not maintained. Hence our intervention as the department.

An important part of our environment is our forests. Forestry is one of the leading sectors in our economy that has capacity and capability to contribute to the growth of this country. Through the forestry sector masterplan, we have placed the focus on interventions that will yield growth, investment and the transformation of the sector. This plan is now in the third year of its implementation.

During the second year, we were able to improve delivery through increased availability of the means needed to ensure means were made to ensure the escalation of the implementation plan. Through this plan, state plantations currently managed by the department are being transferred over a four-year period to communities through leasing agreements in line with the National Forests Act 84 of 1998.

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To ensure that communities continue to benefit from this initiative, the department will, in collaboration with industry, ensure that post-settlement support is provided, instead of us just handing it over and leaving it to fend for themselves. We will then always be there for them, post settlement and support and the industry working with us.

We have noted and appreciate that the process of settling land claims is a protracted one, and this is precisely the reason why the department has decided to transfer the plantations in phases. Further engagements with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to find ways to speed up the processing of land claims in commercial plantations. In terms of expansion of the forestry footprint to support the value chain, about 30 500 hectares have been identified to undergo the Environmental Impact Assessment process so as to ensure that new afforestation can take place.

Chairperson, as the Sixth Administration draws to a close, I am reminded of the words expressed by the founding father of our nation Tata Nelson Mandela when he said:

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I dream of our vast deserts, of our forests, of all our great wildernesses. We must never forget that it is our duty to protect this environment.

As I conclude House Chair, I would like to thank our Minister, Mme Barbara...

IsiXhosa:

...uyimbokodo.

English:

I have worked with the Ministers and I think you are my third Minister. You are the one of the best. Thank you very much for the guidance. Thank you very much to our director-general and our six women deputy director-generals, the CFO who is also a woman. Out of eight deputy director-generals in the department, six are women. Thank you very much Minister, Chairperson and the members of the Select Committee, you rock. Thank you very much.

IsiZulu:

Ms L C BEBEE: Naziya! Ngiyabonga, Sihlalo weNdlu, ngibingelele kuwena Mam' u-Lucas ngibingelele noSihlalo uBab' uMasondo, ngibingelele uNgqongqoshe womnyango uMam' u-Barbara Creecy

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neSekela lakhe uMam' u-Maggie Soty, ngokukhethekileyo nama-special delegates esinawo ikakhulukazi lawa aphuma KwaZulu-Natal oNtombikayise Sibhidla noLusiwe Ngubane ...

English:

Before I can start, I would like to pass my condolences to the family of uMama Ntombizodwa Doris Sikhosana who was buried in May 2023 at Ophepheni Highflats in KwaZulu-Natal. She worked in the ANC underground with various leaders of the ANC whilst in the country when those leaders were forced into exile. She went to exile in Swaziland, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Angola, you name it.

IsiZulu:

... Lala ngoxolo mama wesizwe. Uwenzile umsebenzi wesizwe. Siyabonga ngamagalelo akho osifundise wona

English:

The ANC has declared this year as the year of decisive action to advance the people's interests and renew the movement. This is occurring as part of the process to transform the country from its apartheid colonial past and to transform the lives of the people. The ANC-led government has a programme of transformation to reverse the challenges of poverty,

inequality, unemployment, and a historic economic exclusion. Inclusive economic development, growth, as well as job creation needs to occur in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The National Development Plan, NDP, envisioned that by 2030, the country will transition to an environmentally sustainable climate change resilient, low carbon economy, and the just energy transition be well underway. Achieving these requires attaining the NDP outcomes relating to the transformation of society and economy, which is internally competitive, equitable, job creating, and sustainable resilient green and low carbon. The NDP sets out a vision for promoting environmental sustainability in South Africa by making an equitable transition to a low carbon economy and transforming human settlements, for improved local government, and spatial integration.

Managing the issues which impact on the environment in South Africa is critical as global warming is a reality. Incremental weather changes are not just a global phenomenon but have also impacted on different provinces in the country. In the past year, incremental weather has caused flooding in different parts of the country, with the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal,

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Eastern Cape, and parts of Mpumalanga being most affected. The incremental weather changes which caused flooding in different parts of country affected the lives of many communities who lost much. This has also had a negative impact on these provinces in social economic terms as the flooding had the effect in disrupting social services and economic activities in these areas.

The ANC-led government provided support to the victims of the floods and have begun ensuring and restoring infrastructure in the affected provinces, especially KwaZulu-Natal's future infrastructure development.

Spatial development must ensure that it takes cognisance of the incremental weather changes, the storm water infrastructure, and wastewater infrastructure must be strengthened as incremental weather changes not only does it have a negative impact on the lives of our people but also on the environment.

The country still needs to develop the infrastructure to harvest rain, to compliment the current water supply. Disaster management plans need to be developed for the provinces as this will assist the provinces which are vulnerable in

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incremental weather conditions. KwaZulu-Natal has all those disaster management plans. In all the corners of KwaZulu-Natal, you'll find that there is disaster management.

The select committee report notes the working of the department with the SA Weather Service, SAWS, to ensure early warning capacity of disaster management. This means implementing the Framework for Climate Services to promote the rollout of early warning system through media, television, and community radio stations, especially for the areas that are going to be affected, and to ensure that they reach the rural and informal communities. Disaster management and infrastructure development needs to mitigate the effects of incremental weather in the provinces which are affected by the flooding.

Ensuring the safety of the people is of paramount importance. South Africa is a water scarce country, and wastewater treatment plants should be optimally functional so that it can minimise pollutant flowing into estuaries and the sea. Recycled water can also be utilised for many different purposes, and it is currently being used for construction of building of roads. The wastewater management monitoring needs to continue, and the programme strengthened as the end of pipe

monitoring process indicates if there are pollutants which are being discharged in the environment. The permits which are issued by the department needs to maintain regulations and standards after the testing processes and those that pollutes needs to be held accountable.

The floods in KwaZulu-Natal created challenges in accessing areas affected by wastewater spills, and all stakeholders concerned are attending to it. Whilst there are concerns with the budget for water equality monitoring allocated to integrate coastal management, the department has been engaging in water testing. The department has been running the water quality programmes for the past three years, including testing and monitoring the quality of water flowing into estuaries. There has been notable progress made this far and this is appreciated. The continuation with the rigorous water testing by the department needs thriving for constant improvement in environmental standards.

Climate change has not only become an important issue of focus in South Africa, but it is also a major global issue of concern. South Africa has both local target which it must meet in terms of carbon emission and global target and commitments. It is important that the Climate Change Bill is developed and

brought to Parliament as it is an important and transformative piece of legislation, which will realise the goals of the NDP in creating a sustainable environment whilst ensuring that inclusive economic development and transformation occurs simultaneously.

Green energy industry must be encouraged and developed whether in power production or recycling as part of ensuring a sustainable environment which enables the development of future generations.

It is imperative that job creation occurs. The department and its entities are involved in many areas which create jobs like those of the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, ...

IsiZulu:

Siyazi abanye abayifuni le-EPWP, banenkinga ...

English:

... but the ANC ensured that each department has the EPWP to create jobs like others which are career oriented such as SA Weather Service, and SA National Parks, SANParks. Programme 6 of the department is dealing with environmental programmes which have a budget of R3 257 06 billion, this is nearly 30%

of the departmental budget. It is this programme that funds the work of the EPWP. Unemployed people are employed in this sector to remove alien plants and vegetation which affect water supply. This contributes positively to water conservation. These jobs creating areas need to be enhanced, especially youth, women, and people living with disabilities must be informed about these job creation opportunities which exist in environmental conservation and environmental sustainability. Indirect jobs are also created through the work of the department at the SANParks and wildlife conservation, which are tourist attractions, and so are the costs of the country, which are linked to the oceans economy. Communities must be able to access jobs which the ANC-led government is making available to them.

The entities that report to the department play a critical role in environmental sustainability and the economy. The transfers of the entities have increased from R1,31 billion in the 2022-23 financial year to R1,609 billion in the 2023-24 financial year. Four entities experienced increase in their transferred allocation. The SAWS, SA National Biodiversity Institute, SANBI, National Regulation for Compulsory Specifications, NRCS, and the Marine Living Resources Fund,

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MLRF, whilst the transfer to two entities decreased:

iSimangiliso Wetland Park and the SANParks.

The department has injected capital amounting to R1,945 billion up from R582,40 million in 2021 into the SAWS, which is to the tune of R133 million, iSimangaliso got R189,6 million, the SANParks got R1,268 million, and the SANBI got R325 million towards maintenance development and infrastructure projects of the entities.

These budgets are important for the entities for infrastructure development, for example, the role of the SAWS is critical for the functioning of the airports for the landing and departure of the flights. It is also important for the early warnings in case of the disaster management, and also enables planning for portable water resources possible through indicating the patterns of the rain.

It is important that the programme on the oceans and the coast are implemented as this will enable this country to access the oceans economy in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The select committee will oversee the annual performance plan of the department and its implementation very carefully in

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relation to the budget. It is important also that the department can report on the matter raised by the members to ensure transparency and accountability. Furthermore, it is important that the department and its entities can get clean audits as this is a measure of good corporate governance and financial control.

As I conclude, there must be impactful spending from the budget as people on the ground and in our communities, whether urban or rural need to feel the difference of living lives of the ANC-led government. In making ... has made over 30 years. This 30 years period, our glorious movement, the ANC, managed to at least have skills: horticulture, environment officers, management officers, and education officers on waste. That's the ANC-led government that did all those things. We never had that variety in the 300 years when people were gauzing telling us to take the stipulated skills, whereas the ANC gave these variety of skills that you are enjoying today. [Time expired.] Thank you very much my Chairperson. The ANC supports the budget.

Ms C VISSER: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon members, hon Minister and fellow South Africans, good day. Section 24(b) of the Constitution regulates the Department of Environment Forestry

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and Fisheries mandate to give effect to the right of citizens to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing because we did not inherit it from our forefathers, we borrow it from our children. Therefore, a budget must speak to the realities.

Sadly, the realities are: firstly, sewer polluted rivers and streams receiving raw untreated sewer; not complying with allowed general legal limits of South African national standard, but who cares, we are destroying the rivers. The Emfuleni Municipality has been flooding the Vaal for more than five years unabated. There is not one river in South Africa not polluted with sewer and floating solid waste washing down to our oceans. Secondly, toxic industrial effluent allowed by industries of which Sasol decants Vanadium into the Vaal from where people of Gauteng and beyond drinks the water.

Thirdly, yet the three departments, the Department of Environment Forestry and Fisheries, DFFW; Department of Water and Sanitation, DWS; and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Cogta, with their mandates roles and responsibilities the Constitution of South Africa; the National Environmental Management Act, Nema; the National Water Act the National Water Services and all relevant

regulations are in place to stop this humanitarian crisis. However, we see annually these departments adopt budget and reports despite the deterioration and destruction of our environmental status failing to implement the legislation.

Fourth, in the process of destruction human lives are exposed to the infringement of their fundamental rights, exposed to disease and an undignified quality of life. They live in sewer submerged properties, overflowing toilets, rivers of sewer and solid waste streets. However, here's your reality check, when people protest, those above and the mayor orders public order police, tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets, matter resolved. Fifth, in the Tswaing towns in the North West, there is no escape from sewer not even after death. The whole environment is constantly so in raw sewer, graveyards are submerged with sewer floods. No green scorpions, no inspections, no directives, no penalties and nobody cares.

The sixth, the majority of South Africans accessible water is unclean, making the water vulnerable for water transmitted diseases to exist. The continuous depleting and improper management and treatment of the natural resources have led South Africa to the state it currently is in. Seventh, another reality is the uncontrolled air pollution. The 75,2% of South

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Africa's energy comes from the Highveld areas where five of the 10 Eskom power stations - which are the largest in the world - is situated.

The Highveld areas are above sea level, making the oxygen level 20% less than the oxygen level in the coast. The power stations Matla, Duvha and Arnot exceeds the World Health Organisation's exposure to particulate matter by six to seven times during the winter months. The high concentration of air pollution is extremely dangerous to human health.

The eighth, report raised alarms over the state of provincial nature reserves where protected areas critical to the country's biodiversity and conservation efforts are being badly mismanaged. Conservationists are gravely concerned about the decline and the declining standards in South Africa's provincial nature reserves which are in a shocking state compromising the long term survival of wildlife and ecosystem. The reality is perfect laws no implementation. The department failed in its mandate to protect South Africa's environment. That is our course, we have to stop that. South Africa, sorry to say, the ANC destroyed our country. I thank you, Deputy Chairperson.

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Mr N M HADEBE: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, hon permanent delegates and special delegates, the Salga representatives, the IFP would like to acknowledge the positive political progress in the Development of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment under the leadership of Minister Creecy. The department has been one that has been long neglected by slow progress is in shape with certain projects.

However, we still have concerns about certain divisions that are underperforming and that can and should be optimised through measurable key performance indicators. From the audit reports submitted to the portfolio committee of the department, we want to highlight the fact that the department did not meet its performance targets. This concern was listed in the recommendations of the portfolio committee reports which indicates that there is a need for attention to the divisions which are not meeting optimum performance. We trust that you will give a due attention to all the items that are included there.

Hon Chairperson, the IFP is additionally concerned with the decaying infrastructure such as broken fencing of some of our game parks around the country specially in KwaZulu-Natal.

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There have been cases where animals from the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Park have escaped and wandered into human populated areas. These wild animals are a cause for concern for many people as they fear for their safety and the safety of their children from being attacked. We must reaffirm our commitment to maintaining sanctuaries for wild animals to roam free as their presence is intrinsic to humanity.

However, this cannot be all the cost of the safety of our people. I must reiterate that we are speaking for the safety both humans and animals and call on this department to urgently address this issue. Our wildlife in this country we all know is one of our greatest assets in terms of attraction for tourism and the wellbeing of our environment. So, simply stated is that we call on the government to attend to the decay of our game parks and even work on new models of how we would like to see them refreshed.

Hon Minister, whilst we look forward to your response to this issue and understand that it will take place in collaboration with other departments, we must also highlight the damage to the environment that overflowing sewerage has. Our townships as in rural areas in particular, have a problem with environmental damage which directly affects the wellbeing of

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our people. Chairperson, when sewage overflows or is not properly managed through treatment they are breakouts of dangerous viruses that people can contract from the environment through rivers, food and general hygienic areas. These are basic necessities that need to be addressed so that we may fulfill our section 24 constitutional commitments of providing a safe, clean and healthy environment.

Deputy Chairperson, you know one issue which comes to mind is the time when many poor South Africans make a dash for the beachfront during December, but especially on the 16 December. It is a one time in the year release for many families who have loved ones studying, living and working far away from each other to reconnect and enjoy God's gracing and natural environment. Last year we had major issues with the *Escherichia coli*, E.coli, outbreak which placed at risk many people in jeopardy and much needed South African pass time. We need your department to play ... [Inaudible.] ... and attending to the importance of making sure this environment is safe. Hon Deputy Chairperson, the IFP supports the Budget Vote. I thank you. [Time expired.]

Mr C F B SMIT: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon Minister, Deputy Minister, members and fellow South Africans, Minister, you are

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correct that this is your last budget debate for the 6th Parliament but you forgot to say that this is also the last debate for the ANC under your Ministership. That's you as a Minister also your time is running out. So, you quickly need to abandon the ship as the Titanic is sinking quickly.

Nevertheless, I want to say thank you, Minister, for the services that you have given to this country. You are an exception of the ANC in general in that you are actually trying your best. Unfortunately, your ANC are dropping you as your equals in other departments are actively working against you or don't take you serious at all. Municipalities are now the main culprits for the pollution of our rivers and environment with sewer and waste due to system failures.

Deputy Chair, municipalities are standing by while highly endangered tree species are cut down for wood and they do nothing to even try to curb this crime against future generations. On the other hand, budget wise, Treasury is not giving you the money you need to do the work that you need to do. So, again you are being failed by the ANC there. The police do not know how to deal with crimes related to the National Environment Management Act and the National Water Act. They play dumb and refuse to open cases when approached.

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When cases are opened, dockets disappear. A good example, Minister, is the cases that we even opened in Mokopane in your department. Thank you very much for the follow up on that sewer that has been flowing freely into the Dorps River and Rooislot River, where your department came and follow up and also open cases beyond the DA opening multiple cases before, and again, the docket disappeared. As you should also know by now. It is found out that this practice of dockets disappearing are actually happening throughout the country. It happens in the North West it happens in Mpumalanga and even in Gauteng.

Minister, I want to know what are you doing to attend to this undermining by your own ANC-run governments and the police? I am sure that you are frustrated and fed up with this situation as we all are. I just want to tell you, Minister, not to lose hope because there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Your DA membership stands ready for you to sign as we take environment seriously. You will get full support from the DA moon shot pack government. I will send you a link directly after this debate to apply to become a DA member and even a candidate. Thank you very much.

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Mr I NTSUBE: Hon Deputy Chairperson, the Chief Whip of the Council, the House Chairpersons, both Minister and Deputy Minister, special and permanent delegates present here, since the ushering in of a democratic South Africa, which enabled us a political freedom, the ANC-led government has a critical role to play in its programme for the liberation of the majority of the people of South Africa, particularly those who were previously advantaged by the apartheid regime and to deliver them from the economic bondage through our superior policy positions that we have adopted in government.

The ANC-led government, has developed programmes for the economic empowerment, inclusive economic development and growth as well as ensuring that this relates to the transformation of the lives of the people. The Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan is geared towards inclusive economic growth and job creation.

The ANC-led government has captured this in creating a better life for all. The development of forestry and fisheries in an environmentally sustainable manner is a critical part of implementing an Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

These sectors, are major sectors of the economic development,

job creation and allows for the development of green industry through the expansion of the value chain.

Hon members, it is imperative that the department is able to execute its mandate in relation to the forestry and fisheries as well as to work with small business development, public enterprise and public works and infrastructure to ensure that those communities which have economically empowered in the forestry and fisheries sectors are able to develop viable ventures from the opportunities which the ANC-led government has made available to them to ensure the economic empowerment and inclusive development is realised.

This co-operation is important for the development of forestry and fisheries sector, to occur in environmentally sustainable manner.

Hon members, programme eight deals with forestry management and this programme develops and facilitates the implementation of policies and targeted programmes to ensure that sustainable use and management of forestry and state plantations. This programme has a budget of R586 million, and the allocation to the forestry branch make up to R7,7 million of the departmental budget. The programme reorganise some

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subprogrammes that resulted in the creation of two subprogrammes. The Forest Land Management and Postsettlement Support. Forestry Policy Management fast creating and increasing rather the number of subprogramme to four.

The bulk of the budget of 57% go to the Forest Land Management and Postsettlement support subprogramme where the bulk of the programme workforce is located.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, this is order to transfer the land communities and ensure that land claim settlements are concluded. Twenty four communities have been earmarked to receive plantations which are going to be transferred to them. These communities are going to be supported by the very same department through two chief directorates. One responsible for forestry development and the other responsible for the forest land management and postsettlement support.

The department will assist the recipients of communities to develop management plans and to identify what is required for the plantations to be sustainably managed. The department stated that it is also working with the Sector Education and Training, Seta, responsible for forestry and manufacturing to

identify the skills required and to ensure that the funding received is used for training to manage the plantations.

Hon members, the Industry Master Plan will ensure that there are industry players given to support the communities in terms of technical advice and funding to ensure economic success and development of these forestry project is in the good hands of our communities. It is important that these communities are linked to SA Forestry Company Limited, SAFCOL, which is a state-owned enterprise performing well in the forestry sector.

However, this is important for the transformation of the forestry sector. This sector has added potential of the downstream industry value-chain for the wood manufacturing. Artisans are trained in carpentry through the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP. These ingredients need to be brought together to ensure that there is a green industry, wood, furniture and paper can occur which has a job creation potential in our country. This is a transformation unfolding before our eyes in the forestry sector which all of us must appreciate.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, the forestry programme is also aligned with climate change mitigation strategies in mind. It is

important that the asset-base which the country has created in the forestry industry is now protected through the National Veld and Forest Fire legislation which has recently amended to ensure that there is a response at a local and other levels to deal effectively with veld fires as a country has had a number of devastating fires on the garden route of forests. Immediate response of the fires and co-ordinated action prevents the spread of fires and protect the country's natural resources.

Programme nine, hon members, deals with fisheries management which is geared to ensure the sustainable utilisation and orderly access to marine living resources through improved management and regulation. This programme has a budget of R625,2 million which constitute about R6,3 million of the total departmental allocation. The overall budget was increased by R70,5 million compared to the 2022 budget allocation.

The economic empowerment of small fishing communities in the Western Cape and other provinces is a critical part of developing oceans economy in a sustainable manner and forms an important part of implementing Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. The list of successful small skill fishers applicants has been published. The next step is the appeals

process which was opened until Friday, 28 April 2023. There after the Minister's appeal authority will consider the appeals.

Parallel to that there will be a commencement of the establishment of small scale co-operatives. The department needs to identify distinct small fishing communities.

Hon members, the department stated that it anticipates that there will be about 80 small scale fishing communities to be recognised in the Western Cape. Based on the number of successful applicants, it is estimated that about 60 small scale fishing co-operatives will be registered between now and October this year. This programme will need to be extended to communities in other provinces where small harbours are going to be developed.

It is important that the department work with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure who are engaged in small harbour development. Small harbours will enable small success of small scale co-operatives. This is also an important part of developing the oceans economy in a sustainable manner based on the master plan. There must be an integrated approach to

the development of a small scale fishing co-operatives with other departments developing the oceans economy.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, the Select Committee will monitor this process closely as the fishing industry in the country has been dominated by large companies with small fishing communities crying out for assistance to enter the industry. The department's plan is certainly progressing in the right direction for empowering small scale fishing communities. This is transformative in terms of improving the lives of our people.

Air quality management is a critical in relation to the control of carbon emission into the atmosphere. While the national department has set a standard and regulation, but the emission licences are in purview of district municipalities. Monitoring of air quality remains an issue as the country needs to reduce its carbon emission.

Hon members the coal powered stations need to ensure a reduction in carbon emission. There is a pending compliance case of Kendal Power Station handled by the Nkangala District Municipality. The department will review this process prior to granting the district municipality permits for emissions.

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A total of seven sectoral emissions targets will be issued this year. They are for energy, transport, Basis Trade at Index Close, BTIC, agriculture, human settlements, water and sanitation and DTC Winter Forecast Experiment, DWFE. Air quality management must improve as this has an impact on the health of communities and needs to be monitored and really enforced.

It is imperative that the correct balance is found between ensuring sustainable environment and economic development. Given the history of this country the programme of the ANC is geared towards transformation and ensure that correction of the historical injustices of apartheid colonialism. This means dealing with challenges of poverty, inequality, unemployment and historical economic exclusion. Therefore inclusive economic development and job creation is critical. There are many opportunities starting to emerge through emerging green industry. The department in co-operation with other industries needs to ensure that opportunities are enhanced.

Hon members, the opposition does not see the necessity of ensuring the balance between the environmental sustainability and inclusive economic development. Opposition parties take different positions from supporting the status quo to state

fundamentalism. None of which gets the country of which gets the country to be the land of milk and honey.

We will engage in an oversight on the implementation of the programme in relation to the budget. It is imperative that entities are able to deliver on the mandates and priorities. It is also imperative that the department and entities are able to get clean audit as it is the fundamental, efficient and implementation of the programme.

Hon Minister we have about more than 3 000 of the ocean. It is high time that we build the university of maritime to equip our people with the necessary skills to benefit from the oceans economy and apologetically open up the doors of the oceans economy to those who were previously disadvantaged by the apartheid regime. As the ANC we support this Budget Vote. Thank you very much, Deputy Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT: Few more minutes, hon Deputy Chairperson, because I didn't use all my minutes. You don't do that here, right. Firstly, let me thank all hon members for the important issues relating to climate change, biodiversity and loss and pollution that all of you have raised. I believe that these are issues that must be of

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concern to all South Africans and should not be handled on a party-political basis. Let me also say to you that hon Senzo Mchunu is the Minister of Water and Sanitation, and he is responsible for the issues pertaining to quality of water and also sanitation spills. I think he's actually doing a very good job and I think that he is significantly taking over some of the very problematic situations that exist, recently, having reached a good agreement with regard to sanitation spills in Hammanskraal.

However, nevertheless, I can share with you that in the past year alone we have issued 26 compliance notices to municipalities with regard to sewage spills, and quite a lot of these have subsequently resulted in reports to the SA Police Service. Believe it or not, some of them are even your municipality, so I wouldn't be such a clever character if I were you. Let me start off and say that I agree with ...

[Interjections.]

Mr F J BADENHORST: I just like to remind the hon Minister that we have decorum in this House, and if she's going to refer to me as a character, she should say hon character. Thank you very much.

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The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon member, if this is a point of order, can you please sit down. Can you please sit down. Thank you. I think you missed this part of the whole week, that's why you start now. Hon Minister!

The MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT: Hon character, let me say that I share the concern with regard to the financial situation in provincial protected areas. I think that unfortunately as budgets are cut, sometimes environmental issues are not regarded as priorities. I think what is very exciting is the Eastern Cape Grasslands National Park that I was speaking about, it's a new way of financing protected areas. I think that it's something we should all be watching closely because it's in partnership with the private sector that has this concept of stewardship which I think might help us achieve our 30 by 30 goals.

Hon Hadebe, I'm very concerned about the lions escaping from Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park. That's why I went there and examined that fence line and it's also why we are contributing R40 million in this financial year to try and fix it up. There were issues raised about illegal fishing. Let me say that I'm very pleased that we now have the National Integrated Strategy to combat wildlife trafficking. We are working closely with

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Minister Aaron Motsoaledi because in Phase 2 of the Border Management Authority we want to start to deal with this issue of our extensive sea borders and some of the concerns that hon members are raising.

Let me say that with regard to Mr ... [Inaudible.] ... case, I, the hon member in the National Assembly, did bring this to us before, but Minister Patel is telling me that there are things we can do about fronting. Let me come back to you because I think this is a very clear case of fronting. There's no truth that the fishing industry ownership is not transformed on average 78,4% of fishing companies are black-owned, and they are fairly there's an average of about 40% to 50% female ownership. Therefore, I think that would not be correct. Before I sit down, hon Smit, I joined the African National Congress in 1979. Thanks for your offer to join the DA. I'm not looking forward to taking it up. I believe the national democratic revolution still has a long way to go, and I believe the ANC remains the most important vehicle for socioeconomic change. Thank you very much, hon member.

[Applause.]

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much. Hon delegates, that conclude the debate. However, before I thank

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the Ministers and everyone present, I also just want to express our sincere condolences to the family of the Mayor of Modimolle-Mookgophong Local Municipality, Ms Marlene van Staden, as well as to the DA ... [Inaudible.] ... she was affiliated to. And we also, since Mama Bebee, reminded us of the passing of mom Doris who was one of our veterans of the ANC, I also want to express our sincere condolences there too. Throughout the week we've been speaking about hon Joemat-Pettersson, someone that I worked with for possibly almost 20 years in the Northern Cape. I want to thank members for the compassion and for the fact that in spite of our differences, that there are issues that unite us as South Africans.

Therefore, that is what I just wanted to say that I know it's because in these few weeks we didn't have motions. It's possibly why members could not really raise things of common interest. Therefore, that concludes the debates and the business of the day. Let me thank the Ministers, the Deputy Ministers, the permanent delegates, members of executive council, MECs, special delegates, SA Local Government Association, Salga, representatives and all of you that availed yourself for the sitting today. Remember, we still have a programme tomorrow. The House is adjourned. Thank you.

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Debate concluded.

The Council adjourned at 18:10.

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