

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 1

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

PROCEEDINGS OF THE JOINT SITTING

Members of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces assembled in the Nieuwmeester Marquee at 14:03

The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces took the chair and requested the members to observe the moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

DEBATE ON THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

(Announcements)

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Before we continue with today's business, I would like to ask the members not to move any of the tables within the dome as this would affect the microphones. Thank you very much, hon members. Order, hon members. Order, hon members. The secretary will read the order

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 2

of the day. Debate on the President's State of the Nation address.

Hon members, I have received a copy of the President's address delivered at the joint sitting on the 12th February 2026. The speech has been printed in the minutes of the Joint Sitting.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: Hello.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Chief Whip, may we request hon members, the sound is too strong. Please try not to speak closer to your mic. Thank you very much.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: Thank you very much, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Your Excellency, the President and Deputy President of the Republic, hon members, and fellow South Africans. It is my privilege to convey my deepest condolences to the family, the friends and comrades of Jessie Jackson who passed away earlier today at the age of 84. Jessie Jackson was a great friend of our people and a progressive human being.

IsiZulu:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 3

Mongameli ngiyafisa ukukuhlalalisela ngenkulumo yakho obuyibhekise esizweni oyethulile ngolwesine ntambama. Ngiyafisa ukusho ukuthi inkulumo yakho inike abantu baseNingizimu Afrika ithemba la ikhombisa indlela la ofuna siyekhona. Ngithi uma ngikuhlalalisela ngifuna ukwengeza ukuthi le mibono oyibekile ngivumelana nayo.

Ngicela uMongameli ayibheke le nto yamanzi. Aluhlonzze lolu daba lwamanzi esibhekene nalo silufake kuloluhlelo lwenhlekelele ukuze ukuthi uma ngabe kunezinhlekelele loku kuzosilekelela uma sifuna ukusebenza ngaphandle kokwephula imithetho yaseNingizimu Afrika, futhi kufanele sivele nezisombululo ezizosilekelela ekuxazululeni le nkinga.

Okwesibili ngiyayesekela kakhulu inkulumo yakho. Enkulumeni yakho uyakusho ukuthi uMnyango Wezolimo kufanele uhambe ngamandla ukuqinisekise ukuthi imfuyo yabantu bakithi iyagonywa. Ngifisa ukuthi ekugonyweni kwemfuyo yabantu bakithi bekunqinisekiswa ikakhulukazi ukuthi abalimi abasafufusa nabadla imbuya ngothi abasezindaweni ezingamelwe amakhosi nabantu basemakhaya kube yibona abazoqhakanjiswa ngoba kujwayelekile ukuthi uma kufika uhlelo olufana nalolu uthole ukuthi uma selufika ezindaweni zasemakhaya alufiki ngesikhathi

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 4

okufanele lufike ngaso. Ngiyafisa nokusho Mongameli ukuthi kulo loluhlelo kuqinisekiswa ukuthi uma imfuyo isigonywa igonywe ngalolo suku olufike ngalo lolo hlelo.

Ngiyafisa nokusho ukuthi Mongameli uma imfuyo igonywa igonyelwa amatele kukhona umgomo ongavumeli ukuthi imfuyo yehle yenyuka, isuke ezindaweni ezinye iye kwezinye izindawo ngoba lokho kukodwa kubangela ukuthi singagomeki kalula le sifo samatele kanti sinomthelela omubi ikakhulukazi kumfuyo yakithi.

Ngiyafisa Mongameli ukusishayela ihlombe isinqumo sakho. Ngiyakhumbula ukuthi ngonyaka we-2021 wamemezela ukuthi uzoqasha abantu abazokwelekelela abantu abalimayo labo ababizwa ngokuthi ama-extension officers. Baqashwa ngonyaka we-2021 kodwa akwaba isikhashana esingakanani ngenxa yesimo sokuthi isabelomali sasingakuvumeli ukuthi balekelele ngokwanele. Ngiyafisa ukusho ukuthi manje njengoba sekuzokwenzeka ukuthi kuqashwe abanye abayizi-10 000. Kuyisifiso sami Mongameli ukuthi uma siqala siqasha, asiqale kulabo bantu abayi-5000 esasibaqashile sabayeka ngoba isabiwomali singavumi. Emva kokuqashwa kwabo bese siyangeza

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 5

sesifaka laba abanye okufanele sibafake ukuze sifinyelele kunani le-10 000.

English:

Please allow me to join you in celebrating a historic occasion in our country and its people. The 70th anniversary since the women of 1956 march to Union-Building in which we deservedly recognised and invited the Joint Sitting of our Parliament to applaud Isithwalandwe, Seaparankoe Mama Sophie de Bruyn and her generation during the state of the nation address. Our country and our people are indeed blessed with many heroes and heroines. These are men and women who chose to dedicate their lives to the service of the people.

This generation was prepared to sacrifice everything, including their lives, if this was necessary for the liberation of their country and its people. Although as extraordinary as our heroes and heroines are and have been, they were and are human beings produced by the same society that produced all of us. We must continue to pay tribute to them, recognising that while in every respect they are ordinary human beings, who have nevertheless shown themselves to be capable of doing extraordinary things.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 6

In this context, I must also salute and pay tribute to the 1976 generation whose heroic deeds have made it possible for our country to celebrate the highest matric pass rate in the year 2025. All of these are our heroes and heroines whose sacrifice and enduring commitment to the liberation of our people must forever be honoured and celebrated.

Madam Speaker, I'm of the view that in paying tribute to the outstanding work done by this generation, I would like to make a reference and quote a poem by H D Carberry whose poem reads as follows:

There shall come a time
When these children in the rags
Who litter the streets
Who know the crushing mastery of poverty and the curses of
dirt and slavishness
Shall walk with heads erect
Proud owners of a new world
Masters of themselves
Admitting no inequality
Feeling no inferiority
Only a great humanity and wonder

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 7

For the destiny shall be theirs
Together we must make it happen.

Madam Speaker, there's no doubt that in my mind the vision of the 1956 generation was also shared by the conviction and the determination of all generations that came after birth.

There shall come a time when we too can act in ways in which our children who still litter in the street due to unemployment, crushing poverty, can be noticed in the future, walk with their heads erect. As was done by the generation who came before us and together, we can make it happen. We equally stand at a profound milestone in the life of our Republic.

This is a year that marks 30 years since the birth certificate, our Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was signed into law.

Three decades ago, we made a solemn commitment to move beyond the past defined by a culture of authority and arbitral power to a culture of justification, where every exercise of state power is rationally tested against the supreme law of the land. Madam Speaker and hon members, perhaps today it is more

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 8

befitting that we must briefly recite the Preamble of our Constitution which says and I quote:

We the people of South Africa recognises the injustices of the past, honour those who sacrifice for justice and freedom in our land, respect those who have worked to build it and develop our country and believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

Madam Speaker, unavoidably a question arises as we begin this debate on the state of the nation address. What kind of society did we set out to build? The fundamental positions spelt out in our Preamble of our Constitution should inform our conduct as we continue to engage in the reconstruction and development of our country. Madam Speaker, in the landmark judgement of *The State versus Makwanyane* in our Constitutional Court handed down by Justice Arthur Chaskalson, define this vision as a historic bridge between a past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy, peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex. However, Madam Speaker, we must be

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 9

honest with ourselves and with the people for many that bridge still remains incomplete.

However, the interventions presented by the President during his state of the nation address point towards a direction to resolve these historical and historic contradictions that continue to define the face of our nation. In his book titled *The Promise*, Damon Galgut offers a searing metaphor of our current moment. In this novel, he depicts a nation's history through a single neglected vow, a promise of a house for a domestic worker named Salome that remains unfulfilled for decades as his family also disintegrates.

Like the Swart family in the same book, we face the danger of moral evasion and ethical paralysis. We risk turning our constitutional promise into a deferred justice that eventually loses its power to heal. It is a tragedy of our time that national identity is fraying.

The proportion of citizens who identify primarily as South Africans rather than by their ethnic group has declined. We are retreating into ethnic and racial distrust with many of our people believing that the government discriminates against

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 10

their own specific group. This is a shouting economy where loud exclusionary voices drown out the subtle messages of reconciliation. Through the Criminal Justice System Initiative and the Whistleblower Protection Bill, you are cutting out the moral rot exposed at the parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee and the Madlanga Commission of Inquiry.

To address the unfulfilled promises of our socioeconomic conditions, we welcome the President's continued commitment to investing in public infrastructure. Madam Speaker, the author I refer to in this novel warns us that a diminished family results from a breached promise. We choose a different path as South Africans. We choose the altruistic and humanitarian philosophy of *The State versus Makwanyane* the case I referred to. The state serves as a moral role model, valuing every life as a citizen. Let us continue to build the bridge. Let's ensure that 30 years from now, the promise is no longer a story that might have been, but a testament to what we have achieved. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. [Applause.]

Mr D D D VAN ROYEN: Hon Speaker, hon House Chairperson, MK president, president Jacob Zuma ... [Applause.] ... and officials of the MK party who are in attendance, hon members,

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 11

members of MK party in all the nine provinces of our beloved country.

Sesotho:

Setjhaba se heso, setjhaba sa Maafrika Borwa.

English:

Last week, the President rose before this House and presented what he called the state of the nation address. It took us more than two hours of listening and more than R7 million from our national coffers.

But the MK party says, it was not a state of the nation address. It was a state of intent address. It described plans, committees, task teams, another investment summit, and what government hopes to do. It failed to report an account to the nation about the performance of the disunited so-called government of National Unity, GNU. And the nation in crisis, hon House Chairperson, cannot be governed by intention.

In 2018, the President kick-started his tenure with a Thuma mina's [Send me] slogan and went on to introduce South Africans to an imaginary story of "Tintswalo" [democracy's

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 12

child]. Under this slogan and story, we only have promises. Economy will grow. Infrastructure will be accelerated. Crime will be defeated. Corruption will be uprooted. Jobs will be created. Municipalities will be reimagined. But the lived experiences of our people tell a different story.

In Johannesburg, communities line up at water tankers, in Africa's most industrialised city. In rural provinces, families are still sharing stream water with animals. And their calls for reliable sanitation fell on deaf ears.

Because of lack of commitment by the GNU to MK party's call for free education, year after year, students face registration and accommodation challenges. [Applause.]

Compounding this situation, even those young people with qualifications sit at home excluded from the economy. This is not what we must celebrate as recovery. It must be acknowledged for what it is. It is stagnation.

The President says we have turned a corner, but growth remains weak. Unemployment remains structural. Poverty remains entrenched. The President wants us to celebrate what he termed economic growth, citing minor quarterly growth. South Africa's

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 13

population grows faster than its economy. If a nation's economy grows slower than its population, it is not progressing, Mr President. It is what we call per capita decline, where more people fall into poverty.

Mr President, I think your business experience enables you to make sense of this basic reality. Not unless you use Mr Paul O'Sullivan's crash course acquired knowledge to understand it.

Hon Chairperson, as the MK Party, we can't celebrate when the masses of our people are pushed into poverty trap or turned into perpetual dependents of social grants. We welcome the cooling off of consumer price inflation because it helps to lessen food prices.

What concerns us as the MK party is that low inflation in the midst of poverty and high unemployment is not good enough. Hence our insistence that low inflation must be accompanied by economic growth. We can't lower interest rates but fail to increase expenditure on growth-prone infrastructure. We don't need the current austerity approach by National Treasury to take advantage of low interest rates. If youth unemployment

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 14

remains the highest in the world, then we are not harnessing our demographic potential. We are wasting it.

Municipalities continue to deliver basic services, water and electricity, not consistently because of the systematic problem of infrastructure.

Hon members, the President speaks of rebuilding institutions after state capture. But institutions, Mr President, deteriorated only after what you call nine wasted years. Collapse only came after 2018. Rail capacity declined only after you took over in February 2018.

Port efficiency worsened after you took over. Cape Town became the worst port in the world in 2022. Energy supply collapsed from 2020 and turned into rolling blackouts under the incompetent André de Ruyter who was dubiously appointed at the expense of a pool of black professionals within the energy sector. It is interesting for South Africans to know that with pride, Eskom is somehow stable under the same black professionals overlooked when the de Ruyter was appointed.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 15

Hon Speaker, it is a national embarrassment that after four years, before 2030, the National Development Plan deadline, the so-called GNU, can't measure the success and failures of what is supposed to be South African national plan.

The global order is shifting. Nations are pursuing industrial strategy. Unlike the so-called GNU, they are protecting strategic sectors crucial for the development of their countries. Our country is massively endowed with mineral resources. We have no excuse not to re-industrialise. We must reverse the industrialisation decisively. They are investing aggressively in infrastructure and domestic production.

South Africa cannot afford this termite reform that was cited in the speech.

Sesotho:

Ntate Ramaphosa, ha o na la mahlo, o a bona, ha o na le ditsebe, o a utlwa.

English:

In the same breath ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 16

IsiZulu:

... sithi kuwe, ...

English:

... South Africa stands at the crossroads.

IsiZulu:

Umuzi uyasha.

English:

[Inaudible.] ... we can't continue with committees, task teams and commissions without consequences, announcements without enforcement. The people of South Africa deserve more than this managed decline that you pronounce. They deserve a better state of the nation.

As you know, the MK emerged in a few provinces in 2024. This was a historic emergence. Our party currently has footprints in all the nine provinces. Barely known as the President, always shocked by development in his own country. Voters in all these provinces have requested us to convey the following message to you. Because of your inconsistent and unfulfilled sonar promises, they will make sure that your party is

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 17

severely punished during this year's local government elections. [Applause.]

They say because of the GNU, when you work with people that are opposed to Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, B-BBEE, and transformation agenda. Your party will be voted out. And no amount of vote rigging will deter them. They say they want an alternative government that will grow their country's economy, create jobs, fight crime, combat illegal immigration, and remove them from the apartheid created poverty threat.

The MK party is ready to offer that alternative. We hope the outcome of this year's local government elections are not going to shock you. Because we are warning you now. You are not going to come after the election results and say the results shocked you. Chairperson, we are very grateful as the MK party.

Thank you

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Chairperson, hon members, Mr President, today, as I rise to respond to President's state of the nation address, I do so with a sense of measured optimism

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 18

but also renewed determination. The President's speech reflected a country that has begun to turn the corner after years of stagnation, crisis, and lost hope.

Under the Government of National Unity, GNU, we have achieved real, tangible progress. And let me be clear, much of this progress bears the unmistakable imprint of the DA's principled participation, our relentless push for reform, and our unapologetic focus as a government on what actually works for the people of this country.

Our economy is growing again—four consecutive quarters of positive gross domestic product, GDP, growth, a feat that seemed unimaginable not so long ago. Inflation is at its lowest level in 20 years. Two consecutive budgets of surpluses, stabilising our national debt and earning improved credit ratings. Interest rates are easing, borrowing costs are declining, the rand has strengthened. And as we heard today, Mr President, the unemployment is at the lowest that it has been in five years.

These are important signals but intentions, hon Van Rooyen, that work done under the 7th administration, a coalition

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 19

government, and the first not under single party rule, is making a positive impact, and the world is taking notice. South Africa is today a better place than it was on the eve of the 2024 election.

I am proud of the DA's presence in this government, it has been a force for good, injecting competence, fiscal discipline, and pro-growth policies into a system that was long weighed down by mismanagement and cadre deployment.

But, hon members, while we celebrate these achievements, we cannot afford complacency, a projected growth rates of around 1,5%, it falls far short of the 3% or more needed to lift millions out of poverty and to create the millions of jobs our young people so desperately need.

Too many South Africans wake up every day to the harsh realities of joblessness, crumbling municipal infrastructure, a rampant crime in our communities, and local government that too often fails those it should serve.

The lived experience of ordinary citizens, communities protesting for water, entrepreneurs battling red tape,

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 20

families fearing for their safety at night—has not yet matched the macroeconomic headlines. We have turned the corner, yes, but we are nowhere near the destination.

And that is why, today, I say clearly and unequivocally today: we must move faster, much faster. We need urgency now:

Firstly, by accelerate economic liberalisation and private sector involvement. Operation Vulindlela, Mr President, has delivered results in energy and ports, we now need to expand it to rail, water, and telecommunications.

Unbundle, concession, and privatise where necessary to unlock investment and efficiency. Replace restrictive black economic empowerment, BEE, policies with genuine broad-based empowerment that includes skills, ownership, and opportunity for all, not just a connected few.

We must also replace failing empowerment frameworks with ones that genuinely tackle poverty. The DA's 'Economic Inclusion for All' Bill represents a significant step toward achieving a vision of genuine economic empowerment for all South Africans and is the type of reform our country disparately needs.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 21

Secondly, we must get local government working. Outlaw cadre deployment once and for all, appoint on merit, hold officials accountable, and root out corruption. Competence must determine who runs our cities and towns so that our people are served by their local government, not the other way around.

Thirdly, double down on job creation and youth opportunity. We must Mr President, expand the successful models already implemented, but pair them with real structural changes, ease labour market rigidities that deter hiring and incentivise businesses to hire more South Africans.

Fourthly, tackle crime and insecurity head-on. The deployments announced are welcome, but we need sustained, intelligence-led policing, faster courts, and communities empowered to partner with devolved law enforcement closer to the people.

And finally, let us recommit to the GNU's founding promise of stability for reform, not reform stalled by politics. The announcement by the President that foot and mouth disease has been classified as a national disaster is welcomed. This will assist the government to unlock a coordination and much-needed resources and supports the new national strategy that moves

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 22

from a fragmented outbreak reactionary response to a whole-of-society, scientifically based, proactive war against foot and mouth disease in South Africa.

Make no mistake, tackling foot and mouth disease, FMD, is a massive challenge, and it will require collaborative, transparent and sustained effort to resolve. The FMD has been a reality in this country long time before we came into government.

But we appreciate the enormity of the impact on farmers, both financially and emotionally. But Mr President, we have, for the very first time, a plan, backed by science, and that is involving the private sector every step of the way. This plan will succeed, and when it does, the consequences will be profound, and positive, as markets previously closed to South African beef are once again available to us and certainty will return to the red meat sector.

We are also determined to take urgent steps to help those in greatest need as a result of this outbreak. Securing a sustainable, reliable supply of vaccines has been a major priority. South Africa lost its ability to produce vaccines in

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 23

2005. And since then, we have relied on vaccines from the Botswana Vaccine Institute only. Under the new strategy, we have for the first time, secured new international suppliers, strengthening our response.

In addition, for the first time in over 20 years, the Agricultural Research Council, ARC, has produced a batch of vaccines for operational purposes. The facility has been capacitated to produce 20 000 vaccines per week initially, up to 200 000 per week in 2027.

Millions of vaccine doses are being procured, and today I can announce that on Saturday we will be receiving a delivery of one million vaccines from Biogenesis Bago. This will be the largest single import of vaccines to date. And this will bring much needed relief to the most affected provinces and regions. And this will be followed by additional vaccines from other countries.

In total we anticipate that by end March, we will receive over five million vaccines from three different suppliers. Mass vaccination will continue and be accelerated. Already more than two million vaccinations have been administered, and

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 24

daily vaccines are being administered across the country. We are also working on veterinary capacity is being expanded.

And Mr President, today I can also announce that, in terms of the Animal Disease Act, private veterinarians can register to administer vaccines as part of the rollout strategy. This will greatly improve the available manpower to ensure that we are able to meet our vaccination target of 80% of the national herd by December this year.

Because protecting agriculture as we have seen from the latest economic data, is not only about farmers. It is about protecting economic growth, jobs, and stability.

The DA remains fully committed to this coalition because it is delivering where single-party rule failed. But let me be very clear, commitment does not mean blind loyalty. We will continue to fight for faster, bolder change and ensuring every cent of public money works for the people and not for not politicians.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 25

Hon members, this is the opportunity of a lifetime to build the country of our dreams, but opportunity only means something if it is seized!

Our children will never forgive us if we fail to capitalise on this moment by driving faster and deeper reform that confronts the things that hold our country back, head on.

To every South African listening today, the progress we have made is real, but the work ahead is urgent. And we will lead that charge, championing freedom, fairness, opportunity, and excellence.

Together, in this Government of National Unity and beyond, we can build a South Africa that rises faster. But the time for cautious steps is over. The time to sprint toward prosperity is now! [Time expired.]

Mr J S MALEMA: Chairperson of the NCOP, President of the Republic of South Africa, the people of South Africa, Mr President, we warned you eight years ago that the Oppenheimers and the Ruperts will neutralise you and your legacy will be that you auctioned our country and its strategic asset to the

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 26

highest bidder. You did not heed our warning. You have auctioned our sovereignty to asset management companies such as BlackRock, which is why you have praised the growth of the JSE. You have auctioned off our country by selling our ports, our railways, and our energy generation capacity to the private sector. And now you want to do the same with water. You do not take responsibility for creating jobs. You do not take responsibility for fighting crime. You do not take responsibility for infrastructure development, and you do not take responsibility for growing our economy.

There is no sign of any infrastructure of a bullet train; there are no design plans for a smart city, and there is not even a curriculum for an institution of higher learning in Ekurhuleni as you have promised. You asked us to send you by saying, Thuma mina [Send me]. We made a mistake and sent you. As your term of office comes to an end, you have nothing to show for it. Under your leadership, crime has spiraled out of control, and your deployment of the army is the last resort. You admit that you have failed to fight crime. The people of Gauteng have been terrorised for far too long by the so-called zamas zamas. With regard to the deployment of the army, we

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 27

have no choice but to support you because you have destroyed law enforcement capacity.

Our concern is: How do you deploy a military which has been crippled by austerity measures to fight crime? We know that our military is under strain, under-resourced and has been humiliated in war zones abroad. How do you intend to ensure they can fight crime domestically? Additionally, we have warned you before that the army is combat trained and is not trained to enforce laws on civilians.

The scale of crime in our country cannot be dealt with by the army alone because crime is a national crisis and a social crisis. If you do not resolve the challenges of unemployment, the challenge of alcohol and substance abuse and the high dropout rates of the youth from schools, then crime will be a permanent feature in our society. Crime in South Africa is organised through drug syndicate, protection fee rings, sex trafficking rings and gangs. It has infiltrated all forms of government and putting guns in the streets alone will not resolve this crisis.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 28

Mr President, the rot in our criminal justice system begins with your political party, which has functionalised law enforcement and intelligence on the basis of who emerges in your conferences. The biggest syndicate is the political party you are leading, Mr President. Mr President, subjectively, this government has done nothing to grow this economy or to strengthen our currency. Let us take this opportunity to remind you of your own commitments.

Last year on this same platform, you committed to growing the economy by 3% through infrastructure, investment, structural reforms and inclusive growth and employment. You no longer speak of this figure. National Treasury itself predicts economic growth at 1,5% and will most likely reverse this projection downward as the year progresses because that is their tradition. You speak of the achievement of a budget surplus as a positive economic indicator, but it is more of an indication that you are implementing austerity and spending less on serving the needs of the country. Why would you be proud of a budget surplus in a country with massive unemployment, collapsing municipal infrastructure and poverty which is the leading contributor to the deaths of children in the Eastern Cape? Your pride when it comes to Expanded Public

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 29

Works Programme, EPWP, jobs is something you should be ashamed of and not mention at this level of governance. Those are temporary jobs which are used to secure income for volunteers of your political party. It is slaves' jobs with no security because you cannot secure a car or a home with an EPWP job.

Mr President, the electricity crisis in South Africa is far from over. The mistake you are making on declaring an end to the electricity crisis is the same mistake you have made with the water crisis for decades in this country. Now that the people of Sandhurst in Sandton no longer experience electricity outages, you no longer view it as a crisis, while forgetting the people of Soweto, Mdantsane, Seshego and Ditsobotla. You have given load shedding a new name and that new name is load reduction.

On top of that, you have lost control of the pricing regime of electricity. The National Energy Regulator of South Africa, Nersa, is pronouncing an increase in the cost of electricity every few months. Your municipalities do not have an idea of the infrastructure they are seized with governing. It does not matter how many billions of rands you give them to revive water infrastructure, the fact of the matter is your Ministers

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 30

and your mayors do not know the town planning of where water infrastructure begins and where it ends. This is why they respond to burst pipes and leakages as they happen, running from one pipe to the next.

In Ekurhuleni, we have an EFF member serving as a Member of the Mayoral Committee, MMC, of water and sanitation who is managing a water infrastructure there and has been declared as a water champion. When your Minister was running around complaining about water, our MMC of water in Ekurhuleni was given an award the same week and declared a water champion. Instead of benchmarking against the DA which struggles to provide clean water to residents of the city in this township, you should go and benchmark from the EFF department there in Ekurhuleni on how to fix the water crisis.

Mr President, you will not fix our municipalities if you do not revise the backward and outdated equitable share model which allocates more funding to the national and provincial spheres of government while giving the least allocation to local government. The idea that all municipalities can be self-reliant on revenue generation when you know you preside

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 31

over a country that is massively de-industrialising and is suffering massive unemployment is misguided.

We need to focus on strengthening municipal capacity, but in addition to that, we should focus on recovering revenue from major industries which consume electricity and water in bulk. These companies must be given rate-based incentives that will compel these industries to invest in developing municipal infrastructure such as roads, water, electricity, clinics and schools.

Mr President, we want to say to you that we fully support you on your posture when it comes to international relations - your support for Palestine, the people of Western Sahara, South Sudan and the people of Cuba. We agree with you that Africa must begin to negotiate its trade relations as a bloc and with unity and that no nation must ever again think it has got the right to bully us and impose on us who our friends must be and who our enemies must be. We agree with you that no civilians must take the law into their own hands and harm foreign nationals. You must tell those in your Cabinet and your supporters that they must not campaign using violation of human rights and hostility toward foreign nationals. They

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 32

claim you agree with their stance. You must continue to denounce such actions, Mr President. Others are killing people to perform rituals as we approach local government elections. They think that by killing foreigners, they will win elections. They must ask their friends who came here with the name of killing foreigners. They did not win elections. Xenophobia will never win elections. Some of them are in your Cabinet. You must remind them as you meet them in the corridors that xenophobia will not make them presidents, perhaps you may have made them Ministers.

We call on you to exhibit your courage by closing the Israeli Embassy, which is a resolution of this nationalism. You have already declared their representative as a *persona non grata*, and the skies did not fall. Now, close their embassy and cut relations with this genocidal nation. The USA has sent a rampant racist as its diplomat in this country, and we must exercise our rights to refuse co-operation with the individual whose sole intention is to dictate to us what our foreign policy must be.

Mr President, your Phala Phala Scandal has rendered you ineffective in dealing with corruption and incompetence in

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 33

your party and in your Cabinet. When Dr Zweli Mkhize was found to be involved in Digital Vibes scandal, you did not have the courage to remove him, he resigned. Today Zweli Mkhize is the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. When the hon David Mahlobo was identified as being a key part of the corruption in the State Security Agency by the Zondo Commission, you did not remove him - instead, he is the Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation. When Senzo Mchunu was exposed last year for having formed a part of the infiltration of the SA Police Service and disbanding of the Political Killings Task Team, PKTT, on new year's eve, you did not remove him. You have retained Senzo Mchunu at the taxpayers' expense and called him your political burden to bear. Today the people of this country do not have water.

Instead of consequence management against the hon Pemmy Majodina who does not have a clue with what she is doing, you create another task team for water which is chaired by you because you do not have the courage to remove her. If you have the courage to remove her, remove her now so that you demonstrate that you have the courage. You have your premier who tells us he is inconvenienced and his solution is an elite

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 34

one - it is to take a shower at hotels while your citizens do not have that luxury of going to take a shower at the hotel. You did not reprimand him and demanded that he apologise unreservedly to the people of South Africa.

When you assumed office, you promised that it would be a transparent presidency but proceeded to seal CR17 documents for funding of your own presidential campaign and also your political party majority in Parliament to block the investigation into the Phala Phala matter. Where is the transparency you were talking about? You said you are going to be an honest man who is going to be an open book, and that your door will always remain open. Today, your door remains closed, you even installed burglar-proof doors to make sure that no one accesses you and the documents that are attributed to corruption.

Let me reassure you, Mr President, as long as the EFF is still alive and in this Parliament, Phala Phala will never die.

Thank you very much. [Interjections.]

[Applause.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 35

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, hon Malema.

[Interjections.] The next speaker on my list is the hon Minister in the Presidency. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Speaker? Speaker?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Order, hon members.

An HON MEMBER: Speaker, it's not a point of order, it is a point of procedure. I just want to inform the House that president Jacob Zuma is in the House together with the deputy president ...

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon member, I can't see who is speaking. I didn't give you permission to do that. Can you please follow the Rules of the House? What are you rising on, hon member?

An HON MEMBER: Speaker, I am rising on a point of procedure to tell the House that president Jacob Zuma is in the House together with the deputy president, Tony Yengeni. Can that be acknowledged?

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 36

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: No, hon member, please. Hon members ... [Interjections.] Hon member, there is no provision for me to agree with what you are saying. Please let's proceed with the sitting of the House. Over to you Minister.

[Interjections.]

Ms L MATHYS: Chair?

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Ms K P S Ntshaveni):
Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces ...

Ms L MATHYS: Chair: on a point of order.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Yes, you may proceed.

Ms L MATHYS: House Chair, I think you need to go and read the Rules correctly regardless of how you feel about former President Zuma. We acknowledge presidents in the House. He hasn't been impeached. [Interjections.] Nothing has happened. When we open this Parliament ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 37

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon members, I can't hear what the hon member is saying. Okay, if you may repeat please.
[Interjections.]

Ms L MATHYS: It's the sound system. I don't know who ... We experienced the same problem last time. We are quite happy with the EFF for helping with the sound but let's not talk about that for now. Hon, you still cannot hear me? Hon Speaker, you need to go to your Rules. Apologies, not Speaker - hon House Chair. You cannot say that there are no provisions to acknowledge a former President. [Interjections.] It's not true. Whether you like former President Zuma or not, and whether he is a member of your party or not, it's immaterial. He was once upon a time a president. Do the right thing.
[Interjections.] Well, you even acknowledged De Klerk - the whole murderer, who is roasting now in hell, but you can't ...

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon member, could you please allow me ... I have made a ruling in that regard. Can we please proceed? [Interjections.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 38

Ms L MATHYS: House Chair, which Rule did you need to say that? Can you refer us to the Rule that states that you must not acknowledge a former President?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Mathys, could you please respect the ruling?

Ms L MATHYS: Which Rule? But you can't just rule out of your head, hon House Chair. You just can't go on a wimp here, this is not an ANC NEC meeting. We are in Parliament. There is our Rules here and there are procedures. You have acknowledged ... [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Minister in the Presidency, please continue with your speech. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Ms K P S Ntshavheni): Madam Speaker and the Chairperson of National Council of Provinces, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa and Deputy President Mashatile, hon members, the 2026 State-of-the-Nation Address went beyond recounting our progress and future intentions. It challenged us to act so that we can rise together, and that we must use strategies that have made us succeeded in the past,

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 39

"To fix what we must," if I may borrow your words, Mr President.

What made us succeed in the past, is the ability of the President to mobilise business, labour and civil society to contribute their expertise and part, hon Malema, around a focused plan to resolve specific problems. This is the secret behind the success of the reform programme driven through Operation Vulindlela, colloquially known as OV, since the sixth administration under the ANC. We cannot expropriate Operation Vulindlela; it is an ANC initiative.

We must fix what we must, Mr President - so you directed us. On the water crisis, the President elevated the co-ordination of interventions to address this crisis to a National Water Crisis Committee that he will chair. The work has already commenced, Mr President. The OV team, with the Department of Water and Sanitation, have started with the assessments towards a Water Action Plan that should be ready by mid-March 2026.

A call for technical capacity, as part of mobilising resources and expertise to support municipalities in crisis, is in the

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 40

works, and that includes support to the Ekurhuleni Municipality because there is a water crisis in Ekurhuleni. The current draft Water Action Plan is focused on addressing immediate crisis, propelling reforms in the water sector, and unlocking investments in the municipal water infrastructure.

You have also directed us that we must act to Strengthen the criminal justice system to fight against organised crime. To do that, Mr President, you have directed that the State Security Agency should re-vet members of the senior management structures of the SA Police Service, and vet members of the metro police departments. We have also commenced with work in this regard.

To ensure progress, the SSA have indicated that they are prioritising the re-vetting of police officers and management implicated at the Madlanga Commission; while in the metro police departments, they will start at the Ekurhuleni metro police department. Engagements with the SA Police Service on the re-vetting process have commenced to ensure full cooperation of affected members.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 41

The re-vetting will include officers due for promotion into the SA Police Service SMS structures. To ensure their co-operation, we are, as the SSA, going to share the SA Police Service Re-Vetting Plan with the National Commissioner of Police, the Acting Minister of Police and the Joint Standing Committee of Intelligence by end February 2026.

The work under way to implement the Madlanga Commission findings is not an exception. We have not only been implementing the Zondo Commission Recommendations Action Plan, which was submitted to Parliament; but we have been reporting the progress to Parliament through Scopa. In March 2026, we will submit the third progress reports to Parliament and the fourth report no later than June 2026. To date, 57% of the action plan has been implemented.

You have called on us to streamline Firearms Licensing Regulations. The National Conventional Arms Control Committee will, in the month of March 2026, consider the Firearms Importation Control Regulations and consult with the Minister of Police in line with the Firearms Control Act for purposes of streamlining licensing, possession and trading in firearms

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 42

and ammunition, so that we remove fire power from the hands of criminals and strength the fight against organised crime.

In 2024, we made Regulations for Co-ordination of National Intelligence for the first time in the history of our country. In 2025, we started the full co-ordination of national intelligence structures through Nicoc, to ensure implementation of the National Intelligence Priorities to achieve national security and we have moved to use technology. We secured the G20 through advanced technologies, including biometrics, AI and analytics, and we are expanding the technology coverage towards the fight against organised crime.

In terms of the 2019-2024 National Intelligence Priorities, which was released last year, national intelligence structures have identified illegal immigration as a threat to national security. Therefore, this year, we will strength our support to Home Affairs to deal with illegal immigration; not only at the ports of entry but also to support the labour inspectors of the Department of Employment and Labour to curb the employment of undocumented foreign nationals, also through the use of technology.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 43

We are consolidation the gains of our development, Mr President. However, hon Malema will argue that we have nothing to show for it. Maybe we need Economics 101, because I also heard hon Van Rooyen arguing the same. This morning, Statistics SA released the fourth quarter Quarterly Labour Force Survey. Our economy has winged, in a sense, Mr President.

Employment increased by 44 000 jobs in the fourth quarter of 2025. The number of unemployed persons decreased by 172 000 to 7,8 million during the same quarter. [Applause.]

[Interjections.] Official unemployment rate decreased by 0,5 percentage point, from 31,9% in the third quarter of 2025 to 31,4% in the fourth quarter of 2025. We are not there yet, but we are solidly on the way.

The budget surplus may again, on Economics 101, assist us to pay down existing debt. It lowers our debt servicing costs, therefore meaning we release the money to be available to fund our infrastructure development and social programmes, which are important for the livelihoods of our people. It also increases economic confidence.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 44

We are making progress in the turnaround of Transnet, although you wish to say we have privatised it. We have not privatized it. We need to know our strengths and determine who we can partner with. There is nothing wrong with government partnering with South Africans to deliver services for the best interest of South Africa. Minister Creecy will elaborate on the details of the improvement in performance at Transnet.

Again, you said there are no plans for the passenger rail, but you are in Parliament and not in government. Those plans are in the executive - separation of powers, Moshabi! However, the passenger rail, again, is gaining momentum. We are taking on more commuters, reducing the cost of commuting between home and work and from home to other destinations, using our own, "Istimela-sa-bantu." Again, Minister Creecy will provide details on that.

Mr President, we commit to perform and deliver on the timelines that you have set against us, and as the Presidency, to co-ordinate the work of government to make sure that we deliver and focus Cabinet on that delivery. We are the daughters of Sophie De Bruin. We are the granddaughters of the women of the 1956 March, in whose footsteps we are committed

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 45

to serve the public purposefully and intentionally for the rise of South Africa, as you have called us to action. Rise South Africa, rise! [Applause.]

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, hon Minister Ntshavheni. Hon members, before I call upon the next speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of the former President of the Republic of South Africa, hon Zuma, who is here with us today. [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS: Your Excellency, the President, the hon Speaker and the hon Chairperson, hon members, fellow South Africans, I speak today as the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs; a Minister in Government of National Unity, to which I and the IFP have pledged our full commitment. I speak also as the leader of the party with a long-standing values and principles that will not be compromised, for they offer South Africa what our country, our economy, and our people need, which is integrity, stability and hope.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 46

I have said that the IFP entered the Government of National Unity, GNU, with the aim of rebuilding South Africa. And I am proud of the IFP's performance within the Government of National Unity. The successes outlined by the President during the state of the nation address stand as a testimony to the strength of a multi-party democracy in which diverse voices are truly represented. More especially, they point to intentional, sustained, sacrificial, and hard work to keep the GNU stable. We do this for the sake of furthering our initial gains. Yes, our economy is finally growing. But it needs to grow faster. It needs to outpace the growing inequality in our society, the mounting social needs, and the burgeoning unemployment that plagues us.

South Africa has a potential workforce that is staggering in its sheer size. Indeed, the productive potential in our country is unique from a global perspective. But the potential to fail our people, to fail our youth, and to fail to achieve what we are capable of is a real and present danger.

Hon President, the social grant system is a crucial safety net for the vulnerable. But it demands a fundamental redesign to genuinely assist those in need. Our parallel priority must be

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 47

the empowerment of our citizens towards self-help and self-reliance. In the long-term, this will create a fertile ground in which our economy may flourish, when everyone can stake a claim in South Africa's success, and everyone is able to make their contribution.

The women of 1956 showed extraordinary solidarity and courage in the face of injustice. Our women of 2026 unfortunately face daily gender-based violence, femicide, and crime. The youth of 1976 displayed a compelling unity of purpose. Unfortunately, the youth of 2026 face unemployment and the enduring economic inaccessibility of higher education. Our women and youth do not stand alone. These crises are ours - collectively. And collective action across all government spheres is required to solve these challenges.

The vast dormant resource of unemployed graduates must be awakened through opportunity, not only through the Presidential Stimulus Fund, but also through the creation of a multitude of development and employment programs across all spheres of government and massive mobilisation of the private sector.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 48

As the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, I must emphasise - Your Excellency - the words that you indicated during the state of the nation address on the centrality of fixing the many dysfunctional municipalities. A task which is being tackled and will be completed by 31 March 2026 through the review of both the White Paper on Local Government and Municipal Funding Model which will be a gamechanger to our local governance system. Deployment of officials will have to be on the basis of competency and professionalism, not political deployment.

The White Paper on Local Government Review will place municipal governance on a sound footing, facilitate efficient co-operative governance and harness the potential within the institution of traditional and Khoisan leadership, creating genuine governance partnerships with traditional and Khoisan leadership.

Your Excellency, the White Paper on Local Government Review will yield great and progressive change if political parties - come elections of local government - will deploy competent political leadership as Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Exco, Speaker

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 49

and Municipal Public Accounts Committee, MPAC, Chair, who will drive and become the agents of change and service delivery.

The IFP commends the establishment of the National Water Crisis Committee as a temporary measure to fix a much wider range of malaise of water prices that has accumulated over decades. An emergency solution is necessary, and we believe that this committee, as a temporary measure, will bring great relief. But the long-term solution is building capacity in municipalities, ensuring that the competent leadership in municipalities do maintenance timeously on an ongoing basis, build more reservoirs, and deal with a multitude of water losses as a result of infrastructure that is failing to perform because it was never attended to timeously.

Hon President, there is another leak that we must fix, and that is the leak of economic and social resources through unchecked illegal migration. The IFP classifies the pervasive presence of undocumented foreign nationals as a threat to state security. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. [Time expired.] [Applause.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 50

The MINISTER OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE: Greetings, Chairperson of the NCOP, ... [Interjections.] ... so leave them. Let me start ...

Ms L MATHYS: It's NCOP. Let us do it together, Minister Gayton. N-C-O-P. [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Order, hon members! Can we allow the speaker on the podium to deliver his address.

The MINISTER OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE: The watch must not go. I have a lot to say. Let me start by thanking the people of George. The people of George have voted in the past three weeks in three by-elections overwhelmingly for the fastest-growing party, the PA. Thank you.

Without wasting time, hon President, the people that voted for the PA have sent me here to say thank you to you for listening. When we said illegal foreigners are a problem, you, Mr President, are an example to all our mayors across the country, to all the mayors of the different political parties. You listen to your coalition partners. You are a President that is consultative, and you are listening.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 51

Therefore, today, we have 10 000 labour inspectors that will go around the country. Therefore, today, any businessman hiring an illegal foreigner shall the arm of the law.

Most importantly, Mr President, and very emotionally for our people, thank you for listening to our cries when we said that you must bring the army to our areas. Thank you, Mr President. Thank you, Mr President. We would like you to add the Eastern Cape, because more people die in the Eastern Cape than anywhere else.

Mr President, these ones don't want the GNU. They don't want the DA, but they want the GNU. I can tell you, we are very happy in the GNU. There is no space for you. We will see you in the next election maybe, but not now.

Mr President, there is a difference between reality and perception. The perception from our enemies is that the GNU is doing nothing. I stand here today to tell South Africa that; indeed, we have turned the corner. We had 10,5 million tourists flocking to our country. We had the highest matric pass rate ever in the Government of National Unity. The rand has stabilised, and it is strong. Load-shedding?

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 52

Setswana:

Sputla o e nyesitse.

English:

It is done. It is finished. There is no more load-shedding.

Now, I find it very ironic ... Hon Malema did not mention my name but he was talking about me. Unlike you, I am going to mention your name. It is very ironic that you speak about the high crime rate, while you have contributed to the crime rate through your conviction. From now on, when you say bandiet [prisoner] you must specify which bandiet [prisoner] you are talking about - me or him? You must specify; you must be very clear. He is a convicted criminal. He is a bandiet [prisoner].

Mr President, in March ...

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Minister, can you please hold on? [Interjections.] Hon members, order!

Mr M V DANIELS: Chairperson, on a point of order: The person on the podium is the Minister of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture. It is not a thing. My reservation I have is

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 53

the reference made to the Minister as, that thing. They need to withdraw. That is not a thing. That is the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture and the president of the fastest-growing party in South Africa. They need to withdraw.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Minister, please, proceed.

The MINISTER OF SPORTS ARTS AND CULTURE: Hon President, in March, we have 54 of the world's top golfers coming to our shores. We have sold 75 000 tickets. South Africa is the premier destination for people that see the GNU ...

Sesotho:

... e ya sebetsa.

English:

Minister Majodina, your only crime today ...

Setswana:

... ke go apara ...

English:

... red because you look so beautiful in red ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 54

[Interjections.] ... how incompetent you are. You look very nice and you are working very hard. Don't listen to people who don't know what is going on in government. I am a Minister and I am sitting in Cabinet and you are a government in forever waiting and waiting and waiting.

In conclusion, I want to say that the GNU does not work because of a particular party. The GNU is working because all parties are working very nicely together.

Sesotho:

GNU e ya sebeta, re tswela pele, re ya pele. Dira ha di sale, rona re tseba moo re yang teng.

English:

The GNU is the best. We must ask real economists, not pap [weak] economists. Real economists will tell you that we have turned the corner.

Afrikaans:

Ons het om die hoek gedraai.

Sesotho:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 55

Re fetotse maemo.

English:

President, your tie is very nice. Thank you very much.

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Chairperson, on a point of order: ...

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon member, can I request that you speak a bit louder? I can hardly hear a thing. There is an echo from where I am seated. It is very difficult to hear you. Please, that is what I am requesting of you.

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: I want to understand if it is parliamentary for a Minister of Sport to stand up and say absolutely nothing about the department that he is leading - Sports, Arts and Culture. Is it parliamentary and is it allowed?

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon member, that is a very subjective question and it is not related to the Rules of the Joint Sitting.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 56

Dr C P MULDER: Hon Chairperson, hon President, at your inauguration after the 2019 election, you said the following:

Yes, South Africa, thuma mina" [send me]. I pledge here today that I will serve you, I will work with you, side by side, to build the South Africa that we all want and deserve.

I respect you for that and I know that you are still trying every day. Today, I am going to speak in my home language, Afrikaans, but out of respect for you, Mr President, I have provided you with a translated copy of my speech.

Afrikaans:

Na daardie toespraak in 2019 ... [Onhoorbaar.] [Lid se toespraaknotas is ingevoeg] ... was daar enorme verwagtinge in Suid-Afrika. Daar is geglo dat dit 'n nuwe begin sou wees wat Suid-Afrika sou stuur in 'n positiewe rigting vir almal. Almal was gereed om saam met u te sê "Thuma Mina - Stuur ons"

Maar nou, sewe jaar later, is dit duidelik dat dit glad nie so uitgewerk het nie. Dit was vermoeiend Donderdagaand om net te

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 57

luister na die lang lys van probleme wat u genoem het, om nie van al die nuwe taakspanne te praat nie.

Elkeen van hierdie probleme het nie maar toevallig gebeur nie. Nee dit het gebeur onder die bewind van die ANC die afgelope 30 jaar. Entoesiasme en taakspanne verander dit nie.

Ons is nou op die punt waar hierdie land tot stilstand knars en vasval in die modder. Baie daarvan kan direk terugherlei word na ANC-ideologies gedrewe beleidsrigtings waaraan u en die ANC bly vasklou. Beleidsrigtings soos kaderontplooiing, swart ekonomiese bemagtiging en regstellende aksie wat nie werk nie.

Ek kan kortliks net drie ander sake aanspreek. Die eerste is waterverskaffing. Om skoon water te hê, is 'n basiese mensereg. Die krisis oor water is só groot dat u as president self daarvan beheer moet neem.

Watertekorte het nie oornag gebeur nie. Dertig jaar van ANC-wanadministrasie en geen poging om die infrastruktuur in stand te hou nie, het dit veroorsaak. In die meeste dele van die land is daar meer as genoeg water, maar die pype lek en die

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 58

pompe werk nie weens kaderontplooide amptenare wat nie weet hoe om die werk te doen nie. In Johannesburg is bereken dat tot 50% van die water met lekkende pype verlore gaan.

Tweedens buitelandse beleid. Daar is geen verskil in die buitelandse beleid wat u in verskeie staatsredes hier uitgespel het voor en ná die totstandkoming van die Regering van Nasionale Eenheid, RNE, nie. My probleem is dit bly die ANC se beleid en nie die beleid van 'n RNE nie.

Tydens u toespraak het u oor buitelandse sake nek styf gemaak en 'n ramkat-houding ingeneem: Ons staan op ons soewereiniteit en ons sal ons nie laat boelie nie. Dit is als goed en wel, maar hardkoppigheid en blindheid vir wat tans in die wêreld aangaan, is nie 'n verskoning nie. Ons buitelandse beleid lei tans daartoe dat Suid-Afrika enorme ekonomiese skade lei.

U sê: "Suid-Afrika bly 'n helder en duidelike stem ter ondersteuning van internasionale reg, geregtigheid en menseregte." Dit is glad nie waar nie. Toe Rusland Oekraïne inval, toe vergeet Suid-Afrika van die internasionale reg. Toe Iran duisende van sy eie burgers doodskiet en vroue soos Zahra Tabari en Masha Amini ter dood veroordeel, toe maak menseregte

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 59

nie saak nie. Nie 'n enkele woord van veroordeling van Dirco of die RNE nie.

Verlede Vrydag het die Minister van Vroue, Sindisiwe Chikunga, 'n toespraak by die Iranse ambassade gehou ter herdenking van hul rewolusie, maar nie 'n woord oor hierdie menseregtevergrype nie. Hierdie standpunte is nie in nasionale belang nie en die VF Plus verwerp dit ten sterkste.

Mr T M KAUNDA: Hon Chairperson of the NCOP, Hon Speaker, Your Excellency, Cyril Ramaphosa, Deputy President, hon members, traditional leaders in our midst, ladies and gentlemen, fellow South Africans, I stand before you, hon Chairperson, representing the province of KwaZulu-Natal ...

IsiZulu:

... esenze kahle kakhulu kwimiphumela kamatikuletsheni kuleli lizwe. Sadlula zonke izifundazwe zaseNingizimu Afrika. Kodwa isifundazwe esakhiwe izindawo eziningi ezisemakhaya.

English:

It gives me great pleasure to participate in the 2026 Sona debate, delivered during the significant month of February, a

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 60

month that marks the release of former President Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. This is also the month where we celebrate the birth and commemorate the passing of the founding president of the ANC, Dr John Langalibalele Dube, ...

IsiZulu:

... Mafukuzela okhanya njengelanga!

English:

Although he departed this earth many decades ago, we continue to draw inspiration from his philosophy and ideals rooted in education, economic self-reliance, and interracial harmony. It is, therefore, no coincidence that, in pursuit of this vision, he established the Ohlange Institute that promoted agriculture, industrial training, alongside academic learning. We must continue to draw lessons from his legacy as we confront the challenges of our time.

You will agree with me, hon Chairperson, that one of the pressing issues we face is water security and the decline of core services in our municipalities. Yet we stand today with

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 61

renewed purpose as decisive action is being taken by the President to reverse this trajectory.

IsiZulu:

Sikwethulela isigqoko, Mongameli, ngenkulumo yakho ebenohlonze futhi ikhombise ngokuthi iveze izinkinga ilizwe elibhekene nazo futhi iveze impumelelo nebanga ilizwe esilihambile ukuguqula izimpilo zabantu bakithi zibengcono. Phakathi kwezinguquko esizibonayo kwezomnotho okuzodala amathuba emisebenzi uphinde uphelise ububha kumphakathi wakithi osaphila esimweni esinzima.

English:

We welcome the establishment of the National Water Crisis Committee, chaired by the President, this is not merely another structure, it is a clear demonstration of national resolve. By placing this committee under his direct leadership, the President sends a powerful message that the water challenge demands urgency, co-ordination, and unwavering oversight. This is leadership that rises to meet the moment. We further express our appreciation for the R156 billion investment committed to water and sanitation infrastructure.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 62

IsiZulu:

Singakhuluma ngesifundazwe sakithi, kunedamu elikhulu laphaya i-Steven Dlamini Dam, kuMkhomazi ongenhla nongenzansi okuzoletha izixazululo kwizinkinga ezibhekene nabantu bakithi uma sikhuluma ngamanzi, ikakhulukazi imiphakathi eyakhele izindawo zakithi ezisemakhaya nasemalokishini kanye nasemadolobheni.

English:

This commitment comes at a critical time, as communities across the country face severe water scarcity, ageing infrastructure, and repeated service disruptions. This injection of resources is not only timely, but also essential to restoring dignity and protecting the fundamental right to water for every South African household. We must be honest about the challenges before us. The declining performance of water, electricity, and solid waste services in our municipalities undermines constitutional rights, restricts economic opportunity, and limits job creation. Our eight metropolitan municipalities where this challenge is severe, account for more than two-thirds of South Africa's economic activity. Their decline is not merely a municipal concern; it is a national risk.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 63

That is why the performance-based grant introduced by National Treasury is a game changer. It shifts us from funding failure to rewarding performance. It incentivises metros to reverse the deterioration in electricity, water, wastewater, and solid waste services. It demands a new governance culture built on accountability, capability, transparency, and measurable improvement. These reforms require that trading services be managed with professionalism and discipline. As dedicated business units and utilities, these models are tried, tested, and proven locally and internationally to deliver efficient and reliable services. At the heart of these reforms lies a strong accountability framework that demands; a single, empowered point of management accountability; an organisational structure consolidating all necessary functions; a clear service compact between the municipality and the service entity; full financial transparency; and a credible, funded business and investment plan. This moment calls on us to restore trust in public institutions by ensuring services work consistently, transparently, and sustainably. This is not merely technical reform; it is a moral obligation. Hon Chairperson, we acknowledge the leadership demonstrated by eThekweni in advancing the District Development Model, DDM. Through the DDM, they have been able

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 64

to streamline their planning and facilitated the establishment of a one-stop shop for Environmental Impact Assessments and Water Use License approvals.

Through the funding from Infrastructure South Africa, eThekweni Municipality has been able to unlock critical infrastructure for major catalytic projects such as the R10 billion Brickworks Development in Avoca, north of Durban and the R15 billion Shongweni Development in the outer west. These economic projects have injected economic growth and jobs and economic opportunities were created. It is important, hon Chairperson, to mention that along the N3 corridor, a bold vision is taking shape - the development of a new urban node connecting Durban and Pietermaritzburg. This corridor is becoming the economic spine of KwaZulu-Natal. The intention to establish a Midrand-equivalent hub for the province reflects strategic foresight, anchoring logistics, industry, commercial development, and residential growth along one of the country's busiest transport routes. The Cato Ridge Dry Port Development is attracting significant investment and will ease pressure on the Port of Durban, improve freight efficiency, and strengthen export competitiveness. Major the SA National Rail Agency Limited, Sanral, upgrades to the N2 and N3 corridors which

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 65

together carry close to 300 000 vehicles daily will further stimulate the economy of the province and create sustainable jobs and economic opportunities.

This investment in infrastructure has significantly improved business confidence in eThekweni. The latest Business Confidence Index report from the University of KwaZulu-Natal indicate that business confidence index rose from 52,12% in Quarter 3, 2025, to 63,38% in Quarter 4, 2025, a clear signal that reform and investment are restoring trust. Recently, the City of Durban has been ranked among the world's top destinations to visit by *Time Out Worldwide*. In its newly released list of *The Best Places to Travel in 2026*, Durban secured 14th spot globally, cementing its status as a premier destination for tourism, leisure, and entertainment.

Hon Chairperson, no discussion of growth is complete without confronting the youth unemployment challenge. Therefore, every development agenda must place youth employment at its core.

Key interventions should include Mandatory youth hiring quotas linked to catalytic projects; DDM Youth Economic Zones focused on digital economy, logistics, green industries, and township manufacturing; Youth Work Readiness Programmes tied to

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 66

infrastructure grants, ensuring every rand spent builds skills and vocational employment, this should be a collaborative effort between TVET Colleges and the private sector. This must prepare the youth to become job creators and not jobseekers. A targeted Youth Public Employment Guarantee in high-unemployment communities; Youth must be involved in projects such as pothole patching, grass cutting and road marking and installation of solar panels.

Hon Chairperson, to achieve the Sona 2026 Presidential Directives, we must return to the Constitution. We must focus decisively on section 217 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which governs public procurement. Section 217 is not a procedural clause; it is a transformative directive. It instructs that when the state contracts for goods and services, it must do so in a manner that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective. But critically, it also empowers the state to advance persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.

Hon President, if we are serious about tackling unemployment, inequality and poverty, then we must unapologetically use section 217 to place key provisions of basic services,

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 67

especially water, sanitation and infrastructure maintenance in the hands of structured, accountable social enterprises. We strongly believe that basic services must build local economies. Every municipality procures plumbing services, waste collection, road maintenance, stormwater maintenance and community facilities. These recurring services must be deliberately structured for youth, women, people with disability, military veterans and community-based social enterprises. Allow me to state this categorically, our economy cannot transform if we rely on a procurement system that was never designed to uplift the marginalised. Therefore, we must place social enterprises at the centre of economic reform because they are the most powerful engine of inclusive growth that we have as a country.

Social enterprises turn procurement into empowerment. Every contract awarded to a social enterprise becomes a job created, a family supported and a community uplifted. Social enterprises reach communities the mainstream economy has ignored. Social enterprises do not just provide economic activity; they promote economic justice. They convert social problems into economic opportunities. Where others see obstacles, social enterprises see potential. If we want growth

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 68

that is fair, inclusive, and sustainable, then we must invest in organisations whose mission is community benefit, not only a few. Social enterprises offer transparency, measurable social impact, local economy and ensures that localisation is realised wherever our communities are. Your Excellency the President, spoke at length about the urgent need to stabilise and strengthen local government. During the 2024 state of the nation address, he directed the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to lead a comprehensive review of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government. This review comes at a critical juncture for our democracy. We commend the people of South Africa who actively participated in the consultation process and made meaningful contributions. Their voices will help shape a new framework for municipalities that is responsive to the realities of today while remaining anchored in constitutional principles.

We are confident that this review will address persistent shortcomings in governance, financial management and service delivery, and will chart a path toward building an ideal municipality that is; Democratic and accountable; Responsive to community needs; Capable of delivering services sustainably; A driver of inclusive social and economic

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 69

development; Committed to creating safe and healthy environments; Encouraging of meaningful community participation; and Clear in the assignment of roles and responsibilities to leadership and management

Equally important are the proposals under consideration to restore financial sustainability of municipalities. A review of the financial model for local government is being explored and must be accelerated. One that directly addresses the structural imbalance where expenditure continues to outpace revenue, while service delivery declines. Without reform, this trajectory is unsustainable. The proposed trading services reforms hold promise.

By strengthening the management of core revenue-generating services such as water provision and others. Together, these reforms signal a decisive commitment to building capable, ethical and development-oriented local governments, institutions that are not only administratively functional, but are engines of growth, dignity and opportunity for all. We are confident that the reforms will also clearly define the role of traditional leadership as we go forward.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 70

IsiZulu:

Sithi, Qhubeka, Mongameli. Siyibambe siye phambili. [Kwaphela isikhathi.] [Ubuwelewele.]

Mr R A P TROLLIP: Hon President, you said we must avoid trade where might is right, yet you choose to align us with autocratic and despotic regimes across the globe where might is the only fare and in so doing you alienate our trade partners from the democratic free world. You are recklessly navigating a new world without a moral compass at our collective peril.

Mr President you continue to pay lip service to stopping illegal immigration and illicit trade which goes hand in hand. My colleague the hon Allan Beesley bought cigarettes and alcohol within one block of this precinct at fraction of the price of the regulated products.

As long as politicians and political parties benefit from this situation nothing will change despite the fact that this product compromises the health of South African citizens and destroy their access to employment not to mention lost tax revenues.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 71

You said that corrupt criminals will face consequences yet you yourself face no consequence for the illicit possession of foreign currency to the value of \$580 000. What is more, you failed to report the theft of this contraband to the SA Police Service. The silence from your party and your Government of National Unity, GNU, partners on these stinks of the worst kind of expediency.

As for expediency: Why are Deputy President is not my house, actually it is my house Mashatile, Zweli Mkhize of the Digital Vibes infamy and Thembi Simelane of the VBS notoriety not charged and prosecuted?

Lifestyle audits my foot! Even the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, officials have refused lifestyle audits. It is clear why they do that, if you watch the Madlanga Commission and the ad hoc committee on our TV screens daily.

No Mr President, you cannot fictionalise your legacy it is not shaped by spin but by facts. You are right about your government and your bloated Cabinet Ministers promoted above the Peter Principle lurching from one crisis to another.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 72

Local government is a mess. Your stop-gap intervention in Johannesburg before the G20 Summit was like putting a plaster on a septic wound, the puss is oozing out is finishing out again and there is no water in the taps despite the Vaal River system overflowing. This is the reflection of what your government has come to represent.

Your MEC for Health says sleeping on a hospital floor is a preference. The Gauteng Premier, Antoinette Lesufi says he too is inconvenienced by having to shower at hotels. This reflects a callous disdain for lived reality of South Africans.

At last, you have intervened the foot and mouth disease disaster. This four-year-old outbreak has not been contained due to the systemic neglect and collapse of the Agricultural Research Council, ARC, and the Onderstepoort Biological Products that were one world class facilities. The previous administration spends half a billion rand to build a World Organisation of Animal Health recognised with manufacturing practice, vaccine production facility and we have nothing to show for it. The Minister of Agriculture is sitting on the investigative report and those responsible for this disgrace

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 73

are still at the forefront of controlling the disease.

Mindboggling.

This state-controlled disease is out of control. Comprehensive vaccination is no one's inspirational decision or choice, it is a desperate last resort because the spread of the disease can no longer be contained. Take note that the Western Cape government who have jumped the queue, had to get vaccines are now also wanting to procure their own vaccines because they do not believe that the bureaucratic bungling of the responsible department and Ministry will deliver them to them. If your disaster declaration is to be successful it is not to ensure the control of animal movement and further destroy economic livelihoods in the sector. Your soul focus should be the urgent acquisition and delivery of enough affordable and effective vaccines something that the department cannot seem to do. To facilitate emergency vaccination of contaminated and uncontaminated herds. Vaccination of clean herds mitigates against devastating production loss and livestock mortality. Farmers and their cattle are literally dying for vaccines.

IsiXhosa:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 74

Mongameli, woyisakele. Imfuyo yabafuyi iyaphela kunye nobomi bayo.

English:

On 5 February, 10 years ago, a mine shaft collapsed at Lilly Mine in Mpumalanga swallowing three South African miners in a container. Previously, mine rescue teams were sent to Chile, we have rescued and retrieved illegal miners, zama zamas, dead and alive from the Stilfontein and the Buffelsfontein Mines at incalculable costs to the state yet you left these three in that container.

Yvonne Mnisi says, do not remember me only on anniversaries. Remember me every time you choose profit over people.

Solomon Nyirenda says, I was left underground but my family lives above ground. Their pain has never been relieved.

Pretty Nkambule says, I went to work to earn bread for my family, I did not know I was walking into my grave. Ten years later my children have grown but I have not come home.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 75

Your Minister Mantashe has promised repeatedly in this Parliament by saying, ...

IsiXhosa:

... siza kubakhupha. Niza kubakhupha nini?

English:

Yet, the parents of these deceased and neglected miners are still stuck in despair. For the past eight years have camped 1 000 meters from the mine entrance watching zama zamas go to work at the mine where the business rescue practitioner is stuck in a careless time warp of inaction.

IsiXhosa:

Hayi, aninankathalo.

English:

You just don't care! [Time expired.]

Rev K R J MESHOE: Madam Speaker, Mr President and hon members, yesterday, *The Star* newspaper had as its top story on the front page, an article entitled, "*Public and analysts warn of another Sona of lies.*" It was subtitled, "*Critics noted that*

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 76

the President has a history of announcing initiatives that remain unimplemented." The article went on to say that the President's ambitious plans include economic growth, job creation, crime reduction and service delivery. Mr President, in short, they are saying "implement your ambitious plans."

While the ACDP and most South Africans are relieved that load shedding seems to have come to an end, we are nevertheless concerned that we now have water shedding. Pre-1994, many of us looked forward to the failure of apartheid but did not foresee a new form of suffering that would be caused by poor service delivery and the destruction of our critical infrastructure. We thought the ANC would be wise enough to retain and hire skilled engineers to maintain our water infrastructure - infrastructure that provided our major cities with clean water, while expanding to other areas. We never imagined that people in cities such as Johannesburg, Sandton, Bedfordview and Germiston would be drinking water that is dirty because of poorly maintained infrastructure.

Hon Speaker, in the 1980s, we had municipalities whose quality of tap water was rated above that of bottled water. Today, sadly, some of those municipalities no longer provide such

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 77

quality of water.

Among the Chapter 9 state institutions supporting constitutional democracy is the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic, CRL, Communities. The primary objectives of this commission are: Firstly, to promote respect for the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities, and secondly, to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity among different communities.

Mr President, I want to submit to you that the CRL Commission has failed to promote respect, or promote and develop peace and tolerance among different cultural, religious and linguistic communities. They have, instead, gone to great lengths to attempt to regulate religion - something the ACDP totally rejects.

In one of the interviews given by the CRL Commission chairperson, she said and I quote, "This thing called Christianity must be regulated."

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 78

Well, she still has to answer why she said this thing. This is definitely unacceptable and we want her to retract that and be reprimanded. She also was recorded in another instance saying that anyone who says that God spoke to them must be taken to a psychiatric ward. Again, this was very very insulting. Some of us are here because the Lord spoke to us and do not qualify to go to any psychiatric ward.

This, Mr President is offensive and we expect the President to do something about that. She must be reminded as they are making attempts to get rid of her charismatics that Jesus said, "He will build His Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The ACDP calls for her divisive utterances that undermine Constitutional values, and her fitness to serve as CRL Commission chairperson, to be investigated. We also call for an investigation into the process followed. Thank you. ...

[Time expired.]

The SPEAKER: The hon the Minister of Home Affairs.

[Applause.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 79

Can the service officers please help the Minister.

Information technology, IT, can you please sort it out!

Ms L M NGOBENI: Speaker!

The SPEAKER: Order.

Yes, hon member, what is the point of order?

Ms L M NGOBENI: Thank you Speaker, while they are busy with that these plugs do not work. There is no power in here.

Thanks.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I will also try and ask them to deal with that.

The hon Skosana.

IsiNdebele:

Nom D M SKOSANA: Somlomo ngiyakuthokoza.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 80

Lokhu kuyasitjela bona uRhulumende weBumbano leNarha, GNU, uyahluleka, Somloma. Uhlulwa yinto elula kangaka. Awa nisiphathisa amahloni.

English:

The SPEAKER: Order, hon member.

This is the work that Parliament and Department of Public Works and Infrastructure were doing in terms of the Dome not government.

The hon Schreiber.

IsiNdebele:

Kkz N V MENTE-NKUNA: Akazi litho!

English:

The SPEAKER: You can proceed.

Order hon members, we can have a five-minute break.

BUSINESS SUSPENDED AT 15:53.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 81

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. The break is now over. We will resume the debate. Order, hon members. Can you please take your seats so that we can resume the debate? Order, hon members. Can members settle down? Hon members, I will call you by name so that you can sit down. Maybe you are not hearing when I call you hon members. Madlala, you're also standing. Order. The hon Minister of Home Affairs.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon Speaker, last year I stood at this podium and outlined the key priorities that the Home Affairs ecosystem would deliver during 2025. These were to build the first components of a digital identity system; conclude a new digital partnership model with the banking sector to expand access to ID smart card and passport services; enable naturalised citizens and permanent residents to obtain ID smart cards; and build an Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA, system that uses artificial intelligence, AI, and machine learning to ensure efficient and secure processing of tourist visas.

In 2025, Home Affairs not only delivered on each and every one of these pledges; we went far above and beyond. As a result of our reforms to the online verification service and other

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 82

upgrades to internal systems, I can today announce that the turnaround times for ID smart card and passport applications have been cut by an incredible 66,7%. This is what building a capable state looks like in practice and this is why we issued a record four million ID smart cards in 2025, a near doubling in efficiency compared to the previous annual average.

Additionally, when the Constitutional Court affirmed in May 2025 that Home Affairs must reinstate the citizenship of South Africans who had been unconstitutionally deprived thereof, we turned a challenge into an opportunity.

In the past, implementation of this judgement would have required affected people to stand in long queues and fill in mountains of paperwork, but we rejected the old way of doing things and instead enabled South Africans to verify and confirm the reinstatement of their citizenship online through facial recognition within just one hour.

The technology we built for this portal is also a key component of the digital ID system that we are rolling out in 2026. If you want to get a taste of the future we call Home Affairs @ Home, simply visit myhomeaffairsonline.dha.gov.za.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 83

Afrikaans:

Die dramatiese hervorming van Binnelandse Sake maak dit duidelik dat die DA ons ondernemings aan ons kiesers gestand doen en 'n reuse bydra lewer om ons land vorentoe te neem deur die Regering van Nasionale Eenheid.

English:

The track record we have built over the past 20 months is also the reason why I can proudly tell this House today, you ain't seen nothing yet. In 2026, the best is about to come for Home Affairs.

Our showpiece reform this year is digital ID. With the core biometric technology already live for the citizenship portal, we now shift our focus to building the front-end user interface. Through digital ID, South Africans will not only be able to access the enabling documents on their mobile phone, but they will also be able to remotely verify their identities using secure facial recognition.

Of course, even in a digital world, there remains a need for greater access to secure physical documents, including the ID smart card and passport. Within the next few weeks, we will

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 84

launch the first set of bank branches offering these services through our new digital partnership model. This will mark the beginning of the end for long queues at Home Affairs.

Under the new digital partnership, you will be able to walk into your local bank branch, including in rural and underserved areas, and apply for an ID smart card in as little as three minutes.

The Home Affairs digital revolution is also enhancing border security and immigration management. Following the successful launch of the ETA ahead of the G20 leaders meeting, the Border Management Authority in collaboration with the SA Revenue Service is currently expanding facial recognition cameras to all international airports and major land ports.

Once this is complete, we will scale up the ETA to eliminate visa fraud, ensure that biometrics are recorded for every foreigner who enters South Africa, and enable legitimate tourists and travellers to obtain visa outcomes digitally within 24 hours.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 85

At the same time, the preparatory work for the public-private partnership to physically rebuild the six busiest land ports of entry is nearing completion, with an announcement to follow shortly.

These reforms, coupled with the President's announcement of more labour inspectors and greater funding for border management, as well as the proposals contained in the draft White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection, lays the foundation for major progress against illegal immigration and illicit trade this year.

Through focused delivery on these priorities in 2026, a digital-first, modern and efficient Home Affairs we are building is fast becoming unrecognisable from the problems that people had before. This is the DA difference that we proudly contribute by working together in the Government of National Unity, GNU, and in 2026, the best is about to come. Thank you. [Applause.]

The PREMIER OF NORTH WEST (Mr L K Mokgosi): Hon Speaker of the National Assembly, the Chairperson of the NCOP, Your Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa, Your Excellency Deputy

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 86

President Paul Mashatile, hon members and South Africans. Hon Speaker, the year 2026 marks the 50th anniversary of June 16 Student Uprising. As we mark this important milestone, we do so cognisant of the sacrifices made by students and the youth leaders of this generation. Their enduring resilience in the face of adversity continues to inspire us to be of great service to our nation and her people. They are part of a political infrastructure which inflamed a trajectory which led to the country's democratic breakthrough in 1994, culminating in the adoption of the Constitution in 1996.

It is their sweat and blood which nourished the creation of a nonracial, nonsexist, democratic and prosperous state. Hon Speaker, we have gathered here, today, to yet again commit to our ongoing efforts of building a capable state; one that is characterised by the will of the people and can prioritise their needs and find solutions to their challenges. Hon members, many of our people still bear the burden of past injustices. The promises of our heartfelt democracy remain etched in their hearts and minds. Therefore, our participation in this debate is not merely about catchphrases and how eloquent we sound to sway public opinion. As a province, we are hard at work to turn the tide against a litany of

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 87

socioeconomic challenges afflicting our developmental trajectory. The upward trajectory audit outcomes speak to the systems we have put in place to ensure that we put emphasis on ethical leadership, and as such, eight out of 10 departments received clean audit and unqualified outcomes in the last audit cycle. [Applause.]

This stability has trickled down to the departments such as Health, as it continues to lead the pack in the drug-resistant TB management in the country, with a success rate of between 84 and 86%. These efforts have also been bolstered by the allocation of additional R200 million for the employment of nurses, doctors, specialists, as well as procurement of new ambulances. Furthermore, the National Senior Certificate, NSC, results of 2025, which currently sits at 88,9%, the fourth highest in the country after affluent provinces, is consistent with our efforts of infrastructure development in our distressed communities. ... [Applause.] ...There is equally improvement in the overall outcome of these results in our rural and farming communities, and consequently, we have managed to reduce the learner performance gap between disadvantaged schools with resourced ones. In fact, 54% of

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 88

bachelor passes in our province were recorded in no-fee schools. [Applause.]

Hon members, we are fixing local government. We are working together with the national government, and we have brought stability to the Local Municipality of Ditsobotla, following the introduction of the National Cabinet Representative. We have descended into the Matlosana Local Municipality with a view to strengthen existing intervention measures to improve the situation. On a positive note, the Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality will this Friday be signing a Memorandum of Co-operation with Infrastructure SA under the auspices of Adopt A Municipality initiative. This will see the municipality benefiting from various infrastructure projects that are aimed at expediting provision of services to the residents.

[Appaluse.] ... This municipality has ticked all the right boxes in the form of improved audit outcomes as well as honouring payments to third parties.

As a province, we have recently convened what is called Local Government KgothaKgothe, under the theme: "Every Municipality Must Work." This is part of the ongoing commitment by the provincial government to ensure that all municipalities are

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 89

functional, responsive and accountable to the people they serve. There are encouraging signs of recovery after the province recorded 42 000 new jobs in the third quarter of 2025-26 financial year. [Applause.] ... In the fourth quarter, it registered 36 000 additional jobs. This is a reduction of unemployment by 3,1%. Our efforts of creating additional 12 000 jobs are gaining traction as we seek to implement the Bojanala Special Economic Zone, SEZ, which will be anchored on investment commitment amounting to R12 billion. We envision the SEZ licence in the next financial year.

In giving impetus to this bold pronouncement, we will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding, MOU, with the Department of Public Works and infrastructure this Friday, to resuscitate the Pilanesberg Airport. [Applause.] We will be collaborating and working with Infrastructure SA. Once fully operational, the airport will serve as a strategic access point to Sun City, Pilanesberg National Park, as well as a Special Economic Zone, SEZ, thus creating various economic opportunities for our locals. This economic drive is further amplified by the implementation of four critical road projects at Madibeng, Moses Kotane, and Taung Local Municipalities, and

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 90

they will serve as strategic corridor routes between the provinces of Gauteng and the Northern Cape.

We have set aside a budget of R980 million this financial year so that we are able to create employment and sustain our jobs.

[Applause.] The Department of Public Works and Roads, additionally, has been allocated another R256 million, which includes around R150 million in the form of disaster relief funds to address repairs of roads and bridges that were damaged during the floods last year. Moreover, the construction of 2 900 housing units across the four districts of our province is well underway. We have resolved to use 80% of the budget to complete all blocked housing projects in the province. [Applause.] To date, 70% of those projects have been completed. Just last year, we have handed over 300 000 housing units to residents of Tshing, extension 19, in Ventersdorp, in the JB Marks Local Municipality. [Applause.]

We have resuscitated Operation Bulela Metsi. Several water projects in the province are in various stages. In Dinokana, Tlhabane, Ipelegeng, Ikageng, Lonely Park, Jouberton, Ellaton and Kanana. All these projects are at different completion stages. Plans are already in motion for the commercialisation

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 91

of rural and communal farms at Springbok in Ditsobotla Local Municipality. Over 100 farmers across 23 villages will benefit from this R40 million initiative in Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. The provincial disaster management centre has been activated to assist farmers and help them to arrest the spread of the foot-and-mouth disease in the province. We have put measures in place for farmers to adhere to the details of the protocols for the movement of cattle to avoid and curb this new infection.

As I conclude, Madam Speaker, the Nigerian author and novelist, Ben Okri avers, and I quote: "Where there is perfection, there is no story to tell." We have never claimed to be perfect; but will be true to the cause of reversing all the injustices meted out on our people over 300 years of colonial apartheid rule.

Setswana:

A me a kalo. A re tsweleng go direla baagi ba rona.

English:

Let us build communities together.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 92

Setswana:

Ke a leboga.

English:

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: Madam Speaker, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa, His Excellency Deputy President Mashatile, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, hon members of all parties, my condolences to the family of Rev Jesse Jackson.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Speaker, I mean, can we be respected?

Everybody who has been addressing us there has been standing. Now, this one is addressing us seated. This is unfair. No, no, it's wrong.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order, hon Maotwe. That's not a point of order. I do think we need to respect one another because nobody chooses the height that he or she has. Hon Minister, you can continue. You are standing. We can see you.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 93

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: Thank you, hon Speaker. Those comments really don't offend me, hon member. They are much more a reflection on you.

My condolences to the family of Rev Jesse Jackson, a principled friend of the people of South Africa and our struggle for freedom.

I also wish the government and the people of China a happy New Year.

With respect to the fight against corruption, violent crime and organised crime, including gang violence and illegal mining, the President's Sona address on the 12th of February was, in my opinion, the most significant in the last decade.

The President's speech recognised that the well-being and security of our people must be the core priority on which inclusive economic growth and the proper functioning of our democratic institutions is dependent.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 94

He set out a clear vision for the coming decades as well as detailed action plans that must be implemented if we are to achieve our objectives.

I confirm that the National Commissioner of the SA Police Service and the Chief of our army met yesterday to finalise the deployment plan which will begin in the next 10 days. And, by the direction of the President, I can confirm that the deployment will include the Eastern Cape. [Applause.]

Mr President, this decision is appreciated in communities across our country, from Umtata in the Eastern Cape, to Phillipi and Khayelitsha in the Western Cape, to Gauteng, to Reiger Park ...

The SPEAKER: Order, hon Minister. Can you take a seat? Hon Reddy, what's the point of order?

Mr V G REDDY: Hon Speaker, will the Minister be prepared to take a question?

The SPEAKER: Minister, are you prepared to take a question?

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 95

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: I will continue with my speech. It's a maiden speech, hon member. I don't need to remind you of the Rules.

Hon President, before the interruption I said that this is a decision appreciated across communities that I have visited, including Reiger Park and Westbury.

We have agreed that the method of deployment should learn from past experiences in our own country, as well as elsewhere, respect the respective mandates of the SA Police Service and the SANDF, as well as the Constitution, having regard to the imperative obligation to restore calm and stop the killings.

In addition, I have asked the national commissioner to take further steps to strengthen the antigang units and to deploy specialised units of the SA Police Service, on which I'm expecting a report in the next two weeks.

It's also going to be critical in this period to implement steps to strengthen the capabilities that are required for intelligence-driven approaches to dismantle the networks behind organised crime. Multidisciplinary task teams,

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 96

including the National Prosecuting Authority under the able leadership of its newly-appointed Adv Mothibi, skilled and experienced detectives, the Special Investigating Unit and the SA Revenue Service, will be targeting the leadership, finances, firearms and logistics of these criminal cartels.

I will be setting up a multistakeholder organised crime advisory council, which will be overseeing the implementation of this comprehensive and integrated strategy to combat organised crime. It will rely on open source information and analysis to support the monitoring and oversight responsibility of the Ministry.

We also have to implement an all-government approach to the fight against crime, including organised crime, as provided for in the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy.

This is a critical intervention because crime also has socioeconomic roots. The social cluster departments of government, including provincial and local government, have a critical role to play to improve safety and security of our people across the country.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 97

The provincial governments of the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal most affected by gang violence and various forms of organised crime, including extortion and illegal mining, have an important role to play in ensuring that service delivery and the development needs of our most-affected communities are attended to.

We cannot fight gang violence and criminality by relying on law enforcement alone. Young people in these communities need opportunity and the prospect of a meaningful and dignified future. In this regard, I am in full agreement with the Cape Crime Crisis Coalition that has emerged in response to the gang violence in the Western Cape; an organisation with which I am in constant contact.

The levels of gender-based violence, rape and femicide in our country are unconscionable. Therefore, the classification of this as a government disaster by the President has provided us with the impetus to tackle this issue with renewed vigour.

In my visits to communities in many parts of the country, particularly in the Eastern Cape, I have been shaken to the core by the kind of violence in our families, in the most

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 98

intimate spaces between husbands and wives, adults and children.

I have therefore asked the Deputy Minister of Police, Dr Boshielo, to lead a process supported by the Civilian Secretariat ... to make an assessment of the gaps in the current response of the SA Police Service and to propose remedies.

Our approach will include expanding and strengthening the family violence and child protection units in the SA Police Service to improve docket quality, DNA evidence and victim support at police stations.

It will also require working with the departments of Social Development, Health and Justice to ensure the provision of shelters, psychosocial support and survivor-centred services.

Fighting crime and improving safety also requires an all-of-society approach. At the inauguration of our democracy, there was a strong commitment to community policing. It appears to me that this project has lost some direction and impetus, and that a renewed effort has to be made to involve communities

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 99

across the country through community policing forums, patroller programmes and neighbourhood watches.

We do not have to impose a one-size-fits-all approach. Let me say, however, that I am particularly interested in the role that an expanded, incentivised patroller programme can play in supporting communities in the fight against crime. One option for funding to be sourced by provincial governments ... from the Presidential Employment Stimulus or the *Expanded Public Works Programme*, EPWP, programme.

I see this programme also having social benefits because it has the potential to provide additional income support to families in distress ... [Time expired.] [Applause.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr H Holomisa): Madam Speaker, hon President and Deputy President ...

Mr J S MALEMA: Speaker. Speaker. Hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Sorry. Order, Deputy Minister, can you take your seat. Thank you. Hon Malema.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 100

Mr J S MALEMA: I just want to check if this is parliamentary. When the Minister was choking, I asked hon Mantashe to give him water. He said, we must give him wine. [Laughter.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon member. I think both of you were involved in what is unparliamentary. There is water there. It is available in this House. Thank you. Hon Deputy of Defence.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr H Holomisa): Madam Speaker, hon President and Deputy President, hon members of this House, Nxamalala. [Applause.] The Government of National Unity will not be judged by the promises tabled during the opening of Parliament, but by whether that skeletal plan is implemented with urgency, discipline and measurable results. The Sona emphasised economic recovery and energy stability, but sustainable growth also depends on protecting our environment and critical infrastructure from vandalism, illegal mining and sabotage that damages ecosystems and investor confidence.

We are strengthening enforcement, deploying co-ordinated security, but sustainable growth also depends on protecting our environment and critical infrastructure from vandalism,

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 101

illegal mining and sabotage that damages ecosystems. I repeated that deliberately. We are strengthening enforced, deploying co-ordinated security and accelerating prosecutions because environmental protection, stability and growth are inseparable.

The Government of National Unity, GNU further recognises that development cannot flourish without security. Therefore, we welcome the deployment of the SA National Defence Force, SANDF in support of SA Police Service, SAPS in crime epicentres such as the Cape Flats, Western Cape in general as well as Eastern Cape and now in issues related to mining as well.

In line with the orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, President Ramaphosa, I confirm that the Department of Defence is seized with operational requirements to support stabilisation interventions in consultation with the Justice Crime Prevention and Security cluster.

IsiXhosa:

Mqwathi, mandikuqinisekise Mhlekaazi ukuba amasela ixesha lawo liphelile. Yekani ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 102

English:

... the law enforcement agencies ...

IsiXhosa:

... zenze umsebenzi wazo zingaphazanyiswa. Aba bafuna intlawulo yokhuseleko bade bavale neekliniki eKhayelitsha iphelile loo Krismesi kuza kusetyenzwa.

English:

The honeymoon is over.

Corruption and maladministration have not merely touched the state, they have engulfed it, reaching even into our law enforcement agencies. The rot did not spare the Department of Defence and Military Veterans either. That is why we acknowledge the President's decision to sign the proclamation authorising the Special Investigating Unit, SIU to investigate these matters and more. Accountability cannot be selective. It must be decisive and it must reach everywhere.

At a briefing to the Portfolio Committee and Joint Standing Committee on Defence and Military Veterans, the SIU, the Military Police, and the Hawks assured us that we have

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 103

recovered over R1,6 billion linked to corruption and mismanagement within the Department of Defence and Military Veterans. This is just a start of restoring the image ...

The SPEAKER: Hon member, your time is up. Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr H Holomisa): Okay, ...

IsiXhosa:

... kanjalo nje? Kanjalo?

Mr S S ZIBI: Mr President, when we spoke last year, before you proclaimed the Madlanga Commission, I said two things. The first was that it was the right decision to ventilate such matters in public, and under oath, especially with a highly capable team led by Justice Madlanga. Nearly every day, South Africans get to know who is undermining our public institutions and the rule of law and making all of us less safe. In that way, they can put pressure on you and all of us to make sure that these people are held accountable.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 104

In this respect, I want to commend you for responding to what is in the hearts of every South African, that the senior ranks of law enforcement must be re-vetted and cleaned up. South Africans are not only angry but afraid to report crime because they do not trust those who have taken an oath to protect them. The process of vetting must be adequately resourced and urgently done.

This leads me to the second thing I mentioned last year, which is that South Africans want you, Mr President, to cane someone on the streets, proverbially that is. They want to see people in court, and then in orange overalls as quickly as possible. They want to see wrongdoers fired. I urged you to be unrelenting in pushing the relevant Ministers and National Police Commissioner to complete this task as soon as possible, and keep Parliament appraised.

What we have heard being revealed at the commission amounts to treason, and we must be unforgiving and harsh in dealing with it. These people have to learn that at the end of a treasonous journey lies great punishment, for the South African people have waited too long for a safe country to be undermined by greedy people who have no care for society.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 105

I also noted that you dealt with the issue of local government. Mr President, I want to encourage you to use more blunt language. Local government is a very weak link in the economic recovery chain. The level of mismanagement, misallocation of funds, and corruption in municipalities undermines nearly everything that is being done at the national level to drive economic recovery.

Key underperforming municipalities must be placed under administration. Why? Because every business that employs people is in a municipality, and the failure to deliver basic services continues to strangle investment. Lord knows how many investors are thinking twice about investing either in the City of Johannesburg and other cities where there are water problems. Of course, this man-made crisis needed decisive action a long time ago; and given how little time we have to avert a bigger crisis, a more decisive intervention is needed.

Lastly, effective deployment of the budget requires us to make hard political choices and decisions. Only about 4% of the Health budget goes to capital expenditure, and about 3% to education. This formula is unsustainable, yet resources are limited. That means we must pick our battles and prioritise.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 106

Therefore, the composition of expenditure is the next frontier of the things we must tackle, and I challenge my fellow hon members in Parliament to push the Minister of Finance in that direction. To govern is to choose. We must choose where to direct our limited resources. We must choose between what is urgent now, and what must wait until later. Because if we lack the courage to prioritise, we guarantee that nothing of substance will get done. I thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr J MAMABOLO (Gauteng): Madam Speaker of the National Assembly, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, His Excellency the President, the Deputy President, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, premiers, Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, hon members, councillors, distinguished guests, fellow South Africans, on behalf of the Premier of Gauteng, hon Panyaza Lesufi, whose apology I am pleased to convey, please receive our sincere greetings.

We congratulate His Excellency the President on a state of the nation address well delivered. We believe that the address was delivered so well that it reverberates and echoes in the hearts and minds of the people of our country. Well done, Mr. President. [Applause]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 107

We appreciate the manner in which you correctly reminded us of our past and the militant struggles waged by women and youth. We also appreciate that you invited and paid tribute to the contribution of Mama Sophie de Bruyn, who is a resident of our province. Indeed, Mr. President, the clause in our country's Constitution, "united in our diversity", is a product of various struggles waged by different generations. Our task is to sustain national unity in diversity.

Hon members, Gauteng province welcome the state of the nation address. In particular, we appreciate the strategic thrust that resonates across the speech, that the three spheres of government working together, led by the President, the premiers and the mayors, with the people.

We believe that this profound principle constitutes a decisive turning point and certainly a new normal in how government across the three spheres and organs of state should work in a coordinated, integrated and cooperative manner.

As Gauteng province, we hold a strong view that what the President has put before us, namely, the three spheres of government working together should not be seen or treated as

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 108

isolated fragments, one intervention here, another there, but this should be understood as inaugurating a unity of purpose for the renewal of intergovernmental relations to deliver a better life for all, to grow the economy and to improve the quality of life of our people.

We say this because the persisting and stubborn legacy of colonialism of a special type was a nationally coordinated project, national oppression and exploitation of people across the length and breadth of our country.

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon Mamabolo, if you can take a seat. Hon Reddy, what is the point of order?

Mr V G REDDY: Thank you, hon Speaker, I just want to know if it is parliamentary for a full Minister to take his biltong, eat in front of us and then tell the country there is no poverty. Is that allowed in the House? Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon Reddy, I will once again ask my camera people to show. Hon Reddy, we are missing you. The camera hasn't seen you today, but I take the point. And this is a point for all of us as hon members. Thank you very much. Hon

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 109

Mamabolo, you can proceed. And if you can just move a little bit away from the mic. Yes, thank you.

Mr J MAMABOLO (Gauteng): Thank you very much, hon Madam Speaker, we say this because the persisting and stubborn legacy of colonialism of a special type was a nationally coordinated project, national oppression and exploitation of people across the length and breadth of our country.

That is why it continues to reproduce poverty, inequality and unemployment. We cannot address this legacy through fragmentation, blame shifting, pointing fingers and working past one another. We need national unity of purpose.

This is how we, as a province, we understand what the President has put before us. It is precisely through working together as national, provincial and local governments that Gauteng successfully hosted the G20 World Leaders' Summit last year. [Applause.]

As Karl Marx taught us, philosophers interpret the world differently; however, the point is to change it. Hon members are definitely within their rights to interpret the state of

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 110

the nation address as differently as they wish. However, we do not have the luxury of diverse interpretations only. We need unity of purpose as outlined by the President to work together to change the lives of the people.

If we do not adopt this new normal as put forward by the President, we run the risk of what Karl Marx would have advised us "easy come, easy go". In other words, we must not in any other way do anything except what the President has advised us to do.

Let me give some few examples to demonstrate why as a province we believe that the President has inaugurated a new strategic line for the rest of us, for the country and why we need to rally behind that.

Now, let's take the issue of water security. We want to say President, we welcome the establishment of the National Water Crisis Committee, which will be chaired by the President.

Already, we have seen the President send Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Water and Sanitation and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to attend to the water challenges in our province. We are pleased to announce that there has been

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 111

significant improvement in stabilizing the water network. We are attending to a number of required interventions, such as increasing water storage capacity in municipalities, reducing non-revenue water, responding promptly to water leakages, replacing old water pipes and improving the delivery of water infrastructure projects. We also welcome the provision on financial resources to address water infrastructure backlogs. Alone as a province, we will never be able to achieve this.

I would like to thank hon Majodina, the Minister of Water and Sanitation for excellent leadership and guidance. I would like to thank the Minister. Thank you very much for good work, well done.

On fighting crime and lawlessness. Mr. President, we welcome the decisive announcement on the deployment of members of the SA National Defence Force, SANDF, to assist in the fight against illegal mining. We are confident that this effort will strengthen our fight against crime and gender-based violence and femicide.

In addition, we recognize the support and we say thank you, Mr. President for the support we received working with the

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 112

Ministers towards resolving the problem affecting our traffic wardens. We are very pleased, President, that the traffic wardens are now formally recognised and designated as peace officers. We are very clear that working alone, Mr. President, we would never have achieved this. I would like to thank you.

Let's take the economy and creating jobs. You have clearly and correctly stated: "All our actions now are driven by the need for rapid and inclusive economic growth to create more jobs and better quality jobs." You further indicated that the Cabinet has adopted and approved a comprehensive implementation plan to drive growth and inclusion as the economic hub of this country.

We can say without any shadow of doubt, President, to achieve the objectives of the plan, we need to work together as the three spheres of government. No single sphere can grow the economy and create jobs, particularly fight with unemployment on its own. We do need to work together. For that, we thank you, President.

Let's take health and the National Health Insurance, NHI. We welcome the fact that you visited Dr. George Mukhari Hospital

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 113

and further welcome your approach at working with various public and private financing institutions to finance the building and revitalisation of healthcare facilities. This will certainly enhance our readiness for the National Health Insurance. Even on this, we need to work together to realise the objectives of the NHI.

On energy, we welcome what you said Mr. President. You correctly said: "We will work in each province to address transformer overloading, illegal connections and equipment failure with the objective of eradicating load reduction by next year." While the province has been doing some work in this area, but once more President, to achieve these objectives, the three spheres of government should work together because our national oppression was national coordinated. We need to work together to resolve it.

On issues relating to infrastructure. We applaud what you say President. You have said: "Infrastructure is much more than an investment in brick, mortar, concrete and steel. It is an investment in jobs, productivity and growth." We do need better coordination across the three spheres of government to

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 114

deliver infrastructure. No single sphere working alone can realise this.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. Your time has expired.

Mr J MAMABOLO (Gauteng): It is for this reason that we welcome the President. We call on the House to accept, welcome and endorse the state of the nation address. Thank you very much.

[Time expired.]

Dr M A MAIMANE: Fellow South Africans, ...

Setswana:

... багаetsho, dumelang.

English:

Mr President and Deputy President, on Thursday last week, you delivered a state of two nations. There is a nation where upon which South Africans are enjoying reduced interest rates. They enjoy a stronger currency. They welcome the removal from grey listing. For them, the lights stay on. And ultimately for others, they enjoy blue light brigades and police for safety.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 115

In all fairness, Mr President, there are more police in this precinct today than there are in Nyanga and Gugulethu where I was last week.

Except Mr President, there is another South Africa that we need to talk about. It's the one the statistician general puts at 50% below the upper poverty line. This is where the 12,4 million South Africans are unemployed. This is where they are not feeling relief from the words from last week Thursday. They waited patiently Mr President, to hear you speak about the completion of the establishment of the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency. It has not been done.

You spoke about the woman who marched, but I bet you every woman in South Africa waited to hear about the 16 sexual offenses courts which were said to be established in this financial year. They have heard nothing. So, Mr President, I want to commit to you, we are here to build one South Africa, and I want to work with you to ensure that all South Africans enjoy the true freedoms that you speak about.

So, when we speak about your speech, we must divide it into three areas: the good, the bad and the ugly. Here is the good,

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 116

Mr President: I celebrate that we are off the grey listing list. I celebrate the fact that this has been ratified by the European Union, EU. I celebrate that Africa is the pathway. This is a good thing.

On the bad, Mr President, you spoke about many promises of things to come, here in truth, none of them were costed. Here are some costs that you need to count. The SAPS will cost us R435 million if we are to increase them. A single unrest scheme is R950 million. A commission of inquiry is another R1 billion. If you are looking at an army deployment for six months, that's R147 million. So Mr President, if you want to send the army to the Cape flats, R64 million. If you want to deploy illegal mining, it's R140 million. If you want to expand covid grants, that's R35 billion. So,

IsiZulu:

... iphi le mali ...

English:

... Mr President? Where is the money coming from? From the ugly bits, Mr President. It may be unpopular to say so, hon members, but we can send the Army as a short-term measure, it

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 117

will not reduce the 64 murders that take place every single day in this country. So hon members, here's what we need to do if we are serious about the work that we have to do. Mr. President, I want to ask you, when you respond on Thursday, maybe let's appoint a new ambassador to the US. Secondly, Mr President, whilst I congratulate the class that just finished matric, we cannot have them pass at 30%. Let's improve our skilling culture so that more of our young people can pass.

If we are serious, Mr President, let's cut the security that goes to Deputy Ministers and put them to the Minister of Police so that we have more policing in the townships. Mr President, please promise the people of this country that you will not tax them more to fund your promises. If you commit to those things, I will be the first one to support your plan and ensure that corrupt politicians end up in jail and we build one South Africa that works for all. Thank you very much.

Mr V ZUNGULA: [Applause.] Progressives, ...

IsiXhosa:

... ndiyanibulisa.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 118

English:

South Africans needs a leader they can confidently say: the President hears our cries and is on our side. They want a leader that sympathises with them. A leader that will not gaslight or chastise them when they are expressing their views on what affects them. You believe in the private sector to address our problems. Hence last week, you mentioned private-public partnerships more than eight times. When citizens turn to their own activism because the state is clearly failing them, their answer is not to label them vigilantes, but to fix the problem that gave rise to it.

You have had eight years as President of this country. In those eight years, the rich have become richer, poor - poorer. Even the economy you say is growing is not creating jobs at the rate required. Instead, companies are closing. When over a million young people apply for 5000 SAPS vacancies. It is a crisis that should be declared a national disaster. The reality is over 40 million people in the country are living below R3000 a month, yet the food basket price is R5300.

In your eight years as President, black people have been displaced from the entry-level sectors of the economy and

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 119

jobs. Black people have resorted to taking their own lives to escape their daily suffering. It is black children that are dying in pit toilets, from eating snacks from spazas, and have to walk over 20 kilometres just to get to school. Black people in Randfontein are refugees in their own country, fleeing illegal miners that are enabled by porous borders and weak immigration controls. Black students do not have accommodation in Cape Peninsula University of Technology, CPUT, and Nelson Mandela University, NMU, and the state unleashes the police and private security on them.

Black businesses receive a tiny share of government spending, are made to pay bribes for their invoices to be paid, and to receive funding from the Public Investment Corporation, PIC. If they don't pay bribes, they are blacklisted. A black nation of AmaHlubi is still not recognised. Yet historically, they are one of the oldest nations in the country. Inkosi are sidelined in the land their forefathers fought for. It was iNgonyama Langalibalele, Chief Autshumato, Inkosi Jongumsobomvu Maqoma, who were amongst the first political prisoners in Robben Island for resisting colonisation. Yet the institution of monarchs is undermined by the current government.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 120

It is a travesty of justice for a party that was formed by Amakhosi, treats Amakhosi like second-class citizens. We have to ask this, Mr President: Why is it so difficult for you as the ANC to advance the interests of black people? We are the majority and native to this land, yet black people are the ones who suffer the most in this country.

What hurts people the most is that it is the black government that has failed them, even with basic services such as water, electricity and safety. So last week, Mr President, when you were saying we are strong as a country, you were definitely not referring to black people, rather to your white private sector.

As the ANC, you hate black people. Hence you chose to govern with parties that are against Black Economic Empowerment, BEE, and affirmative action. Parties that openly practice apartheid in Cape Town and are pushing for Cape Independence. Fellow South Africans, we must rescue the country from the failures of this GNU ...

IsiXhosa:

... yobumene-mene, amanyoro-nyoro namawexu-wexu ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 121

English:

... in these coming elections. We must vote them out. Mr President, Phala Phala. You are still going to account for Phala Phala. Thank you. [Applause.]

THE PREMIER OF THE EASTERN CAPE (Mr L O Mabuyane):

[Interjections.] ... You are obsessed ... [Interjections]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): Hon members, order! Members of the ANC and members on this side ... [Interjections.] Hon members, you know full well that it is against the Rules to boo someone. It is unparliamentary, and I request you to refrain from doing that. Hon premier, please proceed.

An HON MEMBER: It's premier of malnutrition. Deputy Speaker, just a correction, it's premier of malnutrition.

THE PREMIER OF THE EASTERN CAPE (Mr L O Mabuyane): Deputy Speaker, greetings to the hon President, Deputy President, the Ministers, Deputy Ministers, premiers and acting premiers, hon members ... [Interjections.] ... Please, don't be obsessed about me ... [Interjections.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 122

As public representatives entrusted with the historic responsibility of advancing a better life for all, we do not gather in this august House merely to debate policy, but to also reflect on whether our collective actions are improving the lived realities of the people of South Africa.

From the rural hinterlands, small towns and industrial corridors of the Eastern Cape comes a clear message: When we invest in people, infrastructure and security, development becomes visible and hope becomes tangible. We are rolling out the massive work in our province of building the state-of-the-art schools and health care centres in our rural areas. We are connecting our people to service centres by revitalising their village towns through our multimillion investment on small town revitalisation programme. We are steadily restoring dignity of our people as enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

It is on these bases that we support the state of the nation address as a programme of action to deepen opportunity, restore confidence and advance the promise of our democracy.

We welcome the President's announcement that the SA National Defence Force, SANDF, will be deployed in all areas where they

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 123

are needed most. We want to see that, Mr President, in our northern areas. We want to see that ...

IsiXhosa:

... phaya eMampondomiseni. Sinengxaki phaya yokubiwa kwemfuyo, abantu abasixakileyo umhla nezolo nakwaBhaca ngokunjalo. Abantu bephondo Mongameli bafuna ukubona amapolisa aphindaphindiweyo. Ngumsebenzi omhle kakhulu lo wenziwa yi ...

English:

... National Intervention Unit, NIU and the Tactical Response Team, TRT.

IsiXhosa:

Bakhona abakhalayo kodwa madikuxelele ukuba eMthatha kuyahanjwa kakuhle ngoku ...

English:

... because of that intervention. Thanks to the Minister of Police.

IsiXhosa:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 124

Kuyabonakala ukuba umsebenzi omhle uyenziwa kwela phondo likhokelwa yiANC ngaphandle kokubambisana, kwaye anikazi kuyifumana iMpuma Koloni nisaziphethe ngolu hlobo.

English:

Security support is also essential to protect critical infrastructure investment ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): Hon premier, please take your seat. Hon member who has now raised their hand, could you please indicate the point of order that you are rising on?

An HON MEMBER: Can the member take a question on his master's degree and the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, progress?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): No, that is not how it works. Hon premier, do you want to take a question?

THE PREMIER OF THE EASTERN CAPE (Mr L O Mabuyane): Not at all. Not now, when I am done, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): The premier does not want to. So, please, proceed.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 125

IsiXhosa:

INKULUMBUSO YEPHONDO LEMPUMA KOLONI: Uyaphapha nje lo.

An HON MEMBER: That is not parliamentary, no. Withdraw, please. Withdraw ... [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Point of order!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): Hon premier ...
[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: We are not in the Eastern Cape ...

An HON MEMBER: The obsession!

THE PREMIER OF THE EASTERN CAPE (Mr L O Mabuyane): Our rural districts ... [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: The speaker is right!

THE PREMIER OF THE EASTERN CAPE (Mr L O Mabuyane): Please, don't be obsessed with me ... [Interjections.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 126

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): Hon premier, please take your seat ... [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: The premier is correct!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): Hon members, and I am including the hon premier here, any comments have to be made through the Speaker; do not engage with the members directly. The Rules are for everyone. Premier, please take your seat, there is a point of order. Hon Skosana, what precisely is your point of order?

IsiNdebele:

Nom D M SKOSANA: Sekela Somlomo, ngiphakamisa bonyana undunakulu okhulumako ngaphambili akabuyisele emuva amagama athi ilunga elihloniphekileko liyaphapha.

English:

That is unparliamentary.

An HON MEMBER: Speaker?

IsiXhosa:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 127

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILEYO: Uphapha ngokwenyani.

English:

An HON MEMBER: The premier did not name anybody. He said this one. Who is this one?

IsiXhosa:

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILEYO: Musani ukuphapha maan.

IsiZulu:

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILE: Ningaphatheki kabi ke uma nathi sinitshela ukuthi niyaphapha ...

English:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): Hon members, please switch off your microphones. I have not recognised any of you. There is no one on the floor now besides the presiding officer.

Hon members, I am again cautioning everyone, including the premier. Please refrain from making comments directed at the members. Hon members, the premier said that the hon member is too forward. I will then ... [Interjections.] ... Hon members, I will then consult the Hansard and come back with a ruling.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 128

We will now proceed ... [Interjections.] ... Hon members, that is my ruling. Hon premier, please proceed ... [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: We are not in the Eastern Cape here. This is not the Eastern Cape.

THE PREMIER OF THE EASTERN CAPE (Mr L O Mabuyane): Hon Deputy Speaker, for the Eastern Cape rural development, the rural development is both an economic necessity and moral imperative. Infrastructure investment, roads, bridges, water and connectivity are improving access to markets, reducing travel time for learners and patients, and unlocking economic activity in historically marginalised communities.

Every road built narrows the distance between poverty and opportunity. Rural infrastructure is therefore not only about mobility; it is about dignity and inclusion. What we are doing in partnership with the South African National Roads Agency, Sanral, has turned our province into a construction site. We are doing a massive road infrastructure because we believe on what Chinese are saying, "if you want to be rich, build roads".

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 129

Furthering further the improvement on our logistics network, we are also working hard on ensuring that Bisho-Bulembu airport is going to be a cargo international hub. We are also attending to the huge backlog of our rural gravel roads network, and surely more support is needed there.

The Eastern Cape remains a cornerstone of South Africa's manufacturing capability, with the automotive sector anchoring industrial stability and sustaining thousands of jobs. We must continue to support investment retention, supply-chain resilience and the speedy conclusion of key reforms to ensure policy certainty and competitiveness, while confronting the challenge of increasing imports of finished goods.

Localisation remains essential if we are to deepen industrialisation and expand employment. The Eastern Cape is now feeling the experience of catastrophic effects of 30% US tariff imposition on the automotive sector, but as resilient people, we shall overcome this imperialist attack.

We are working hard on diversifying our economy. Over and above the renewable energy programme, Green Shoots, we want an aggressive approach on oil and gas, particularly the shale gas

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 130

exploration that is currently underway in the Karoo. We will be launching that programme now in March. We are calling on an urgent implementation, Mr President, of all the delayed catalytic projects that have been pronounced here in this House in the previous state of the nation addresses, like Ukuvuselela project, which we think that is key to connect the Eastern Cape to Gauteng, our economic hub.

Our Liquefied Natural Gas, LNG, investment in our terminal construction post to create more capacity and performance of our best performing special economic zones, SEZs, in the country. The Coega SEZ and East London Industrial Development Zone, IDZ. The Eastern Cape alone will not be able to reverse this challenge of historic and deliberate systemic economic exclusion of that part of the country. We need more focused and concerted efforts with a more collaborative arrangement with all spheres of government.

Complementing this, we are also working very hard with the agricultural institutions to ensure that we are using agriculture as an alternative in diversifying our economy. Our department of agriculture is working hard on that.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 131

We are also rolling up our sleeves in ensuring that we are conforming the foot-and-mouth disease, FMD, challenge. Commercial farmers in the Eastern Cape have been demanding from me that government must relax the regulations around this. They would want to procure the vaccine because government has delayed so much and our fear is that this thing is now spreading like veld fire.

In terms of the progress that we are making in stabilising government in our province, all government departments in our province are on unqualified audit. Many of them are clean with clean audits, that includes our education and health, we are now on unqualified after so many years. We are stabilising our province and focused on our province, and we are making sure that we are turning the tide around the corner.

Madam Speaker ...

IsiXhosa:

... umntu ngumntu ngabantu.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 132

National programmes continue to make a measurable difference in our province, strengthening services and social cohesion. We welcome the emphasis on strengthening frontline human capacity through social workers and agricultural extension officers.

In the province this is complimented by the employment of over 800 Early Childhood Development, ECD, teachers alongside the recruitment of doctors and other medical professionals. These investments ensure that the developmental state is felt where it matters most, in homes, clinics and classrooms.

Our response to malnutrition continues through targeted programmes supporting children and vulnerable households. We are not going to bury our heads in the sand when we are confronting this challenging problem. Our government is investing more than R35 billion for child support grant and Social Relief of Distress, SRD, for our elderly people. Our challenge is that we need to strengthen the law. Those who are making children and leave them in the Eastern Cape and go away with grants must know that they are breaking the law and then the law must follow them wherever they are.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 133

We are also responding decisively to this challenge of FMD, as I said, Mr President. We also wish to take this time to honour the late Bishop Bolana, whose life embodied compassion, humility and service to humanity.

Hon members, it also saddens me to report to you the passing of our late ANC veteran, who distinguished herself during times of our struggle for liberation ...

IsiXhosa:

... uMama uDebra Komose ...

English:

... whose lifelong commitment to the struggle lives an enduring legacy of courage and community upliftment.

The Eastern cape progress is inseparable from the national trajectory. When national policy succeeds, our municipalities experience tangible improvement in opportunity, services and hope. Our task now is to deepen implementation, strengthen accountability and accelerate delivery, so that progress is measured in everyday lives.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 134

Nation building is a collective responsibility, not a responsibility of howlers. From rural heartland to the industrial centres, we are building infrastructure, strengthening industries, as I have indicated.

Let us therefore leave this debate with a renewed resolve to act with urgency, protect the vulnerable and unlock the full potential of our nation because the true measure of our work will not be in the debates we hold in this House, but the dignity we bring to our people ... [Time expired.]

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Mr fake diploma!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): Hon members, business will now be suspended for 15 minutes for a comfort break. Bells will be rung to alert members to the resumption of business. Business is now suspended.

BUSINESS SUSPENDED AT 17:07 AND RESUMED AT 17:34.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 135

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr A Lotriet): Hon members, we shall now resume the debate on the President's state of the nation address. I now invite the hon Stofile.

Cllr B STOFIE (Salga): Deputy Speaker, President ...

IsiXhosa:

... welizwe lakowethu emhlab'uhlangene, Sekela Mongameli, ...

English:

... the Speaker of the National Assembly, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, the executive leadership in the Cabinet, the premiers of our provinces, the House Chairperson, hon members and different political leadership that are in this House, we greet you this afternoon.

On behalf of organised local government, in a contribution towards the state of the nation address which has been made by the President of the Republic, and which has dealt with a number of issues that our nation is pursuing and the work that lies ahead, we express our gratitude to the President for dedicating a significant portion of his address to local

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 136

government, particularly in light of the considerable challenges faced by this sphere in serving our people.

For citizens, government is always perceived in a manner and way in which every day they experience governance weaknesses and the development thereof. It is perceived in a tap that flows or runs dry, a light that remains on or extinguished, refuse that is collected or left to decay, and roads that enable safe movement or hinder livelihoods. Local government is where democracy becomes tangible and where dignity is either upheld or deferred.

We share the President's concern that this is not merely a municipal problem. When services fail, citizens experience a failure of the state. This year, as we all remember and been reminded by the President, we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of our Constitution and the establishment of developmental local government, which positioned municipalities at the core of transformation.

It is the same year that we are celebrating the establishment of Salga and Malatjie as the founding president and other leaders that have built this organisation. That promise

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 137

remains valid, but it must be renewed through practical reforms, capable institutions, and sustainable funding.

At the centre of this conversation is the fiscal reality. Municipalities bear critical responsibilities, yet frequently lack sufficient support, rendering co-operative governance an unfunded obligation. Municipalities are expected to generate approximately 90% of their revenue internally, despite sluggish economic conditions and limited affordability in many communities.

Local government is accountable for approximately 46% of the 100% constitutionally assigned to different spheres of government, yet municipalities receive only 9,5% of the total government budget. This discrepancy is unsustainable and directly undermines reliable service delivery. President, this is ... [Inaudible] ... by the Salga research that we have conducted when we put this matter on the table. The Salga research highlights a cumulative funding gap of R1,5 trillion to R1,8 trillion. A current annual shortfall of approximately R150 billion.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 138

President, municipalities are owed and are owing in that process because one thing that you have not done properly in our engagements is that we together in South Africa when we were struggling for the country to be free, encouraged the citizens not to pay. We have never encouraged the citizens back that it is about time to pay because if you do not pay for a municipal service, you are collapsing the government.

If the state expects municipalities to deliver, then the state, business, and society must also honour their payment obligations, and the rules must be applied consistently.

Hence, integrated enforcement is essential where for instance President which you are suggesting that it can't be proper for a country united such as South Africa, we are told that banks are collecting 100%, SA Revenue Service is collecting 100% and municipal space is not collecting, but they are operating in South Africa.

It means there is something that we need to do differently.

That includes when a vehicle hits a municipal pole and a poor mayor has to go and steal money somewhere from the budget, and that money that fixed the pole that was not even budgeted for

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 139

cannot be recovered anymore. This is the issue that we probably need to look at.

As Salga we expresses our appreciation President for endorsing the review of the White Paper as we have been asking this for a long time. Looking at your previous state of the nation address and looking at the recent one, you gave an update and we are very appreciative of that fact. [Applause.] This process is crucial as it must address a key constraint facing municipalities at large.

President, the current funding model or formula is a matter that needs to be relooked at. The existing funding model is misaligned with the responsibilities of local government, limiting municipalities' capacity to deliver reliable services and undermining co-operative governance in practice.

President, the critical question here is, as we look into the freedom that we have achieved over the past 30 years, the question that we must ask or ponder around is how much it costs to address and redress the imbalances of the past and spatial planning that we have encountered. It is important for

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 140

us to look at that as we look at the engagement regarding the funding model of municipalities.

Salga therefore advocates for a comprehensive review that prevents performance regression, strengthens accountability, improves financial sustainability and revenue management, and mitigates the destabilising effects. In this process, we are requesting the political parties that are leading us to play their role. It is political parties that take councillors to council. There is something that is missing there in-between. What is that something? I think it is a matter that we probably need to talk about and address it as we deal with that issue so that we can avoid governance failures.

Salga welcomes the President's prioritisation of water as a national issue and the establishment of the National Water Crisis Committee. Let us explain why we are appreciating this, which in the state of the nation address you said you are going to chair. We support the co-ordinated deployment of experts and resources, because water security is inseparable from public health, local economies, and social stability. Importantly President, this approach gives practical meaning and effect to section 154 of the Constitution, that the

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 141

national and provincial government must support local government.

In this way, we are driving that support directed and committed in addressing the challenges which obligated national and provincial governments to do that, municipalities to manage their affairs, exercising their powers, and perform their functions. Municipalities are struggling to manage water and electricity costs that are rising above the Consumer Price Index, compounded by ageing infrastructure, increasing bulk tariffs, service backlogs, climate shocks, and inconsistent support conditions that elevate the risk of systemic failures.

You can see this President, when we did the planning of local government in South Africa the population was standing at about 18 million. The population today is about 64 million with the unaccounted people that have visited the country and using the infrastructure. Therefore, the infrastructure is bound to collapse because it consumes more than it was planned for.

While maintenance is crucial, the growing disparity between municipal tariffs and bulk charges is leading to unfunded

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 142

shortfalls that councils cannot sustain indefinitely. Financial pressures can swiftly escalate into a community crisis. For instance, the Ekurhuleni Metro adjusted electricity tariffs, including fixed charges, in response to public backlash as the public were pushing back, while the City of Cape Town where we are, has tried the same following the introduction of the new tariffs. [Time expired.]

Dr K LITCHFIELD-TSHABALALA: Deputy Speaker, I recognise His Excellency, ...

IsiZulu:

... uNxamalala ...

English:

... and the MKP leadership ...

IsiZulu:

... emuva. [Ihlombe.]

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 143

Mr Ramaphosa, there is a fundamental difference between diagnostic analysis and symptomatic analysis. There is no difference between the Sona ...

IsiZulu:

... nomuntu ogulayo ozwa izimpawu bese udokotela emuxilonga ...

English:

... and diagnose them. What you gave us last week is based on symptomatic things ...

IsiZulu:

... ozibonayo eNingizimu Africa.

English:

Because if you had diagnosed ...

IsiZulu:

... ubuzokwazi, akusho mina, kusho abahlaziyi, ...

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 144

... academic analysts are calling your tenure from 2018 until now, the lost decade. [Applause.]

IsiZulu:

Futhi banesizathu sokuyibiza ngeshumi leminyaka elilahlekile.

English:

In the lost decade, the economy only managed to grow by 0,7% annually. Meaning the economy was growing at a lower rate than the population. So, in the lost decade that you produced, South Africans have become poorer. [Applause.] National unemployment has chronically refused to go below 30%. Youth unemployment is sitting at 46%. Now listen to this one, and I'm sure you won't howl on this one, your lost decade has produced 2,8 million chronically food-insecure South Africans. [Applause.] It has produced 3,6 million food insecure South Africans. These are not numbers, these are people ...

IsiZulu:

... owuthi uma umthinta eseDutywa akhulume ...

English:

... on how they have gotten used to hunger.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 145

IsiZulu:

Uma ukhuluma naye athi, hhayi, la ekhaya sagcina ukudla kuthangi, uthole ukuthi ...

English:

... it is Friday that day.

IsiZulu:

Bathi, akukho muntu la, uchakide uhlolele, imamba yelukile.

English:

There is no leadership. That is why the people who are leading come and tell the nation, ...

IsiZulu:

Mina ngigeza ehhotela uma ngingenawo amanzi.

English:

That is why your Minister for Sport, Arts and Culture ...

IsiZulu:

... enesibindi sokusitshela ukuthi ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 146

English:

... how many tourists come to South Africa.

IsiZulu:

Asikuggqizi qakala lokho thina. Sifuna ukwazi ukuthi nina nabelungu benu be-Government of National Unity, GNU, ...

English:

... how many Africans have you empowered in Pretoria or somewhere else?

IsiZulu:

Bangaki? La eduzane eSwatini, ...

English:

... how many formally marginalised people can visit eSwatini? That is why your Minister of Defence ...

IsiZulu:

... engakutsheli ukuthi ...

English:

... which defence force are you going to deploy?

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 147

IsiZulu:

Abanawo amabhuzu, bayazithengela amabhuzu. Abanayo imifaniswano. Bayazithengela imifaniswano. Izikebhe Zombutho Wamasosha Asemanzini zibambeke la e-Simon's Town.

English:

We can't provide enough soldiers because there are no funds ...

IsiZulu:

... ngoba kushoda uphethilomu. Wena uzositshela la ...

English:

... based on symptoms of the lost decade ...

IsiZulu:

... alibonile abahlaziyi, ukuthi ...

English:

... you will deploy the defence force.

IsiZulu:

Wena, ngesiZulu, kumele sikubheke emehlweni sithi, uhlulekile.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 148

English:

You have failed.

IsiZulu:

Hamba!

Sesotho:

Tsamaya!

IsiZulu:

Hamba manje! Ngoba uyabona lolu khetho loHulumeni basekhaya, uzothwala izandla ekhanda. Kuyoqhuma nhlamvana ezinye ziyofeketha. Sizonikhipha esamagundwane. Siveza amagundwane. Le-R26 million elambile nale-R4,6 million engasebenzi engafuni ukunibona, sizoyiqoqa thina siyilethe kuthina. Uma ufuna ukubona ukuthi abukho ubuholi ...

English:

... under your tenure, it is described as the worst-performing economy. There is deindustrialisation in key sectors of manufacturing. But then again, if you had diagnosed, you would have known the neoliberalism that you are

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 149

following would lead to forced deindustrialisation.

[Applause.]

IsiZulu:

Thatha Mkhonto, ngoba kuyehlela la. Thatha Mkhonto, ngoba akukho bantu la. Thatha Mkhonto, ngoba kunokudideka la.

Thatha, Mkhonto, ngoba akunamholi. Gwaza, Mkhonto.

[Ubuwelewele.]

Ms N K SHARIF: Deputy Speaker, Mr President, you stood before this House and the nation and paid tribute to the brave women of 1956. You reminded us of their resilience, courage and sacrifice in shaping our country. You invoked the image of struggle heroes marching to the Union Buildings with 100 000 signatures to the doorstep of a Prime Minister who, in your words, "did not dare to meet them." Your portrayal of the women of 1956 reveals a stark parallel: the courage that drove their protest still mirrors the battles women fight today.

Seventy years later, the struggle has changed but not its urgency. It is an injustice that, decades later, women again stand at your doorstep demanding action. In 2018, the Total Shutdown Movement led us to the Union Buildings, demanding an

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 150

end to gender-based violence and femicide, GBVF. In 2019, we filled the streets outside Parliament. In 2021, I submitted a petition on behalf of the Post Office to Parliament calling for the creation of a National Council on GBVF. In 2023, I stood before you at the City Hall and warned that declaring GBVF a pandemic without ring-fenced budgets, proper implementation and support for frontline workers is misleading. Yet here we are again. In April 2025, Women for Change led us to gather at the Union Buildings carrying a casket filled with one million signatures, drawing strength from the women of 1956. But again, you did not dare to meet us. On 21 November 2025, only after mounting pressure and on the eve of the G20, you classified GBVF a national disaster. Yet at the Sona, only six sentences out of around one hour and forty-three minutes addressed a crisis that devastates lives daily. You missed the opportunity to outline the government's response to the classification of GBVF as a national disaster.

While policy progress matters, South African women do not experience GBVF as a policy issue alone; it is a constant threat to survival. Hon members, the Thuthuzela Care Centres are intended as one-stop facilities to support survivors and strengthen prosecutions. Yet many faces funding gaps, staffing

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 151

shortages, weak co-ordination and limited accountability. DNA evidence remains backlogged, with approximately 140 000 samples outstanding in 2025. When evidence sits unprocessed, justice is delayed. Eliminating the backlog through expanded forensic capacity and effective public-private partnerships is essential. But justice responses alone are not enough. Ending GBVF requires action across the government and society, prioritising prevention, early intervention and survivor support. The Department of Social Development is central to this effort through shelters, psychosocial services and prevention programmes. Yet capacity shortages, budget pressures and systemic failures limit its reach. Social workers carry excessive caseloads, and shelter access remains uneven. We must audit shelters, police stations and survivor services, publish findings, and ensure protection systems work where they are needed most.

Mr President, in your reply on Thursday, women of this country expect clear plans to address the DNA backlog; Resourcing of Thuthuzela Care Centres; Lack of social workers; Lack of training of frontline workers on mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse; Lack of transparent GBVF crime data; and

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 152

Resourcing of the National Strategic Plan and the National GBVF Council. No more excuses.

Mr President, you cannot honour women in history while failing them in the present. Like those brave women, 70 years ago, we stand before you again and say, "We shall not rest until we have won for our children their fundamental rights of freedom, justice and security." A nation that cannot protect its women and children cannot claim to be free. A nation that does not prosecute perpetrators cannot claim to be just. A nation where 15 women are killed, and 117 women report rape every day, cannot claim to be secure. I thank you. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COMPETITION (M Z Godlimpi): Deputy Speaker, Madam Speaker, Chairperson of the NCOP, hon President and Deputy President, hon members, we participate in this debate on the President's 2026 State-of-the-Nation Address at a moment when our primary task is clear: To accelerate growth, rebuild our country's productive capacity and create jobs at scale.

The President has called for faster and more inclusive growth driven by higher investment, increased infrastructure

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 153

expenditure, trade expansion and a broadly capable developmental state. Naturally, Industrial policy is central to this programme. It is through continuing industrialisation that we will expand production, promote innovation, deepen localisation, transform ownership and create sustainable employment. This is the core of the ANC's economic programme and the 10-point plan to reignite growth and employment.

Hon Speaker, the debate on economic growth must be anchored on the objective realities of the economy, not impressions.

The President's 2026 State-of-the-Nation Address spoke about an improving but not perfect economic environment. That improvement is not a coincidence; it is visible in the data and is being driven by deliberate structural interventions to stabilise the macroeconomy, restore credibility and defend productive capacity.

South Africa has now recorded a fourth consecutive quarter of economic expansion. [Applause.] The latest growth forecasts project South Africa's economy to grow at 1,3% and 1,6% in the near term, with growth expected to strengthen as improvements in energy, logistics, increased infrastructure expenditure and

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 154

new investments take effect. This is the signature of an economy that is regaining momentum beneath global headwinds.

Inflation has also eased materially. The SA Reserve Bank revised its forecast for headline inflation to 3,3% for 2025 and 3,5% for 2026 and noted progress in inflation expectations towards the 3% goal. The shift to a 3%-point target with 1% tolerance band lowers inflation expectations.

The lowered inflation expectation are helpful when they begin to lower the cost of borrowing which is an instrumental condition for higher fixed investment and industrial expansion. Interest rates have begun to fall for households, and the cost of government debt is also falling.

South Africa's exit from the FATF grey list on 24 October 2025 removed a material reputational and transaction-cost penalty from the economy. This has helped us with the first sovereign ratings upgrade improvement in around two decades. [Applause.]

Externally, the trade numbers also show resilience. South African exports have improved in 2025 despite the volatile global trading environment. The SA Revenue Services recorded a

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 155

trade surplus of R21,8 billion in September 2025, with exports of R186,4 billion and imports of R164,6 billion.

These are not abstract indicators, they reflect the regained capacity of the economy to earn, produce and export. Overall, the data shows resilience even amid global shocks. This data matters because it proves that when we fix network constraints in port performance, logistics co-ordination and expanded market access, South African producers can expand exports even when global conditions are volatile.

This is why we say the corner is being turned; not because we simply folded our arms and wished it so, but because we have been working to stabilise fundamentals in ways that create space for growth. Of course, we are quite clear: Stability is not the destination; it is the platform on which we anchor our growth agenda.

We know that to reduce unemployment meaningfully, we must lift growth to at least 3% and beyond, because below that threshold, the economy does not produce new firms at scale, and the labour market does not absorb new entrants at scale.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 156

Hon Speaker, the global trading system is being reshaped by protectionism, unilateral measures and supply-chain competition. In that environment, South Africa's trade posture must be both defensive and expansionary. We are actively defending existing market access that sustains jobs, while diversifying into new markets and building regional value chains.

First, on the African continent, the data shows both progress and unrealised potential in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, AfCFTA. *TradeMap* data indicates that South Africa's exports to AfCFTA implementing countries were R32,75 billion in 2024, and R28,19 billion in 2025, up to end-September. Yet preferential utilisation under AfCFTA remains low. Sars data shows that from January 2024 to October 2025, South Africa's exports under AfCFTA preferences into non-SADC implementing countries were about R2,26 billion, with imports at R1,58 billion, yielding an AfCFTA utilisation rate of 3,85%.

Africa is already a major market, but we are still at the early stages of using AfCFTA preferences to scale industrial exports into new markets. The AfCFTA currently provides new market access in 13 non-SADC countries on 90% tariff coverage,

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 157

while negotiations continue to finalise the remaining 10% of sensitive and excluded products. Our task is to drive utilisation, firm-by-firm, product-by-product, so that the AfCFTA becomes not only a trade agreement, but a platform wherein South African manufactured goods reach all corners of the continent. [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, we are pushing new market openings and defending existing ones. Our trade strategy is not a set of announcements; it is action oriented to defend, diversify, and industrialise through trade. Just a week ago, Minister Tau returned from China. We have an early harvest with China that is envisaged in the recently signed framework agreement of expanding duty-free access and building new export corridors for South African products into a growing market of 1,5 billion people, whilst attracting Chinese industrial technology firms into South Africa.

The Southern African Customs Union negotiations with India are progressing toward a preferential trade agreement that would open access into a market of more than 1,4 billion people and attract Indian manufacturers into South Africa. Trade engagements with Gulf economies are unlocking new investment

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 158

and market opportunities in agro-processing, green hydrogen and advanced manufacturing exports.

The renewal of Agoa, even for a limited period, provides important relief for exporters and is a positive signal for continued strategic engagement with the United States. On that note, hon Speaker, I wish to take this moment to pay tribute to Rev Jessie Jackson, the legendary civil rights leader of the United States, who passed away today peacefully at the age of 84.

Rev Jessie Jackson was a lifelong friend and dependable ally of the people of South Africa, and the ANC. Rev Jackson tirelessly championed our cause of freedom during Apartheid, and up to his last days, he continued to champion the truth about democratic South Africa against hostile political opinion in [Inaudible.]. [Time expired.] I thank you.
[Applause.]

Ms M MAKESINI: Hon Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, greetings to the president, the commander-in-chief of the EFF, Comrade Julius Malema, commissars, fighters, and the ground forces of the dejected masses of our country. It is nice to be in the

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 159

construction site of the Government of National Unity called dome.

IsiXhosa:

Sihleli ententeni. Yiyo inyaniso ekufuneka bayazi abantu baseMzantsi Afrika. Abantu baseMthatha kuMasipala weDolophu iKing Sabatha Dalindyebo bathe xa bemamele uMongameli kwiveki ephelileyo baphelelwa lithemba. Kaloku, oko babegutyungelwe zizikhukhula, baya kubekwa eNorth Crest. Nanamhlanje basahleli kwela holo babebekwe kulo kungekhonto eyenzekayo. Ndinga ukuba nibalibele aba bantu nibabeke phaya. Bona bathi uMongameli weza wathi uze kubo kuba uhambisa i "Thuma Mina". Bathi phinda ubuyele kubo ubanike impendulo yokuba baza kuhlala emaholweni kude kubenini na.

Abantu bakuMasipala weNgingqi iNkomazi, eMpumalanga, abaseTshakuma, kuMasipala weNgingqi iMakhado nabakuMasipala weNgingqi iThulamela nabo bathi basalindile kuba babegutyungelwe zizikhukhula ngowama2025. Kunanamhlanje, akukabikhonto eyenziweyo, basalindile. Mongameli, musa ukujonga izikhukhula ezenzeke izolo, cinga ngabo bangakwazi ukuhlala nabantwana babo. Basabambelele ethembeni nangoku.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 160

Kwakhona Mongameli, kukho aba bantwana banezidanga zemfundo, esidibana nabo abanye babo ngoogqirha, bahleli emakhaya, nezo zatifiketi zabo zilele uthuli.

English:

There is no hope.

IsiXhosa:

Uninzi lwabo lwasiwa eChina ezikolweni ngurhulumente kodwa basalinde ukuba bafakwe [placements] kwizithuba zemisebenzi ukuze bakwazi ukuncedisa kurhulumente. Isibhedlele saseMarble Hall eLimpopo, kusebenza ugqirha omnye kuphela ngeempelaveki. Kuye kunyanzeleke ukuba intsumpa yesibhedlele isishiye isikhundla sayo, okwethutyana, incedise kumagumbi ezibhedlele kuba akukho bantu ababafaka kwizithuba zemisebenzi.

Ngoko ke Mongameli, sithi thina bantu baseMzantsi Afrika kudala siziva iintsomi zakho. Kwanele Mongameli, iintsomi maziphele kuba abantu bafuna unikezelo lweenkonzo. Ibali labantu baseMthatha ababegutyungelwe zizikhukhula kwiminyaka elishumi eyadlulayo alikapheli. Aba bantu basa linde ukuba bakhutshwe emaholweni bafakwe kwizindlu abaza kuthi bakwazi ukuhlala neentsapho zabo. Kukho abantu abagqibe iminyaka

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 161

engaphezulu kuma20 behlala kwizindlu zexeshana. Uphathiswa wesebe kwiphondo laseMpuma Koloni besimxelela kwikomiti yemiCimbi yeSebe ukuba balibele ngabantu baseMthatha.

English:

The President also told us about the story ...

IsiXhosa:

... ekudala silimamela elingomntwana ogama linguTintswalo ofumene inkululeko. Namhlanje, ooTintswalo bahleli namaxwebhu okucela imisebenzi emakhaya, abasebenzi. Namhlanje, ooTintswalo balahlekelwe lithemba basebenzisa ngokugqithisileyo iziyobisi. Xa nina nisithi "Thuma Mina" musani ukulibala ngabantwana ebenibathumele ezikolweni kuba baphelela kwiziyobisi. Mongameli, kuza kufuneka ubengathi uma ngeenyawo.

English:

President, you also told us about the story of the billion rands that you are going to invest in the infrastructure, establish yet another national crisis committee but you never spoke about ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 162

IsiXhosa:

... abantu abalinde amanzi kuba iimpompo aziphumi manzi. Uthi mabawafumane phi amanzi? Ngekungcono ukuba ubufunde isicwangciso sokuba benze ntoni abo bantu bachaphazelekayo ingakumbi phaya kwela phondo laseGauteng eligqibe ama27 eentsuku lingenamanzi. Awumxelelanga umama onama75 eminyaka ukuba xa efuna ukusela iipilisi zakhe enze njani. Sime apha kuba sithunywe ngabantu boMzantsi Afrika asizimelanga apha.

Bacela into enye kuwe Mongameli woRhulumente woBumbano kaZwelonke, ukuba uyeke ukulawula ngezithembiso, nceda wenze kubonakale, abantu kudala belindile.

English:

The Department of Water and Sanitation has been placed under special focus in 2025, Yet again, in 2026, there is a water national emergency crisis committee.

IsiXhosa:

Kulo nyaka ophelileyo besinixelele ukuba sikhona isicwangciso enisenzayo ngeSebe laManzi noGutyulo lweLindle. Ukuba uMama uPammy Majodina akakwazi ukusebenza makahambe abuyele eSterkspruit. Iimpompo zethu zomile abantu abanamanzi.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 163

Sitsibatsiba kwilindle apha phandle elichichiza ezitalatweni. Abantwana badlala ngaloo manzi angcolileyo anelindle. Sithi ke Mongameli, sicela ukhe ujongane nokulungisa oomasipala bethu.

English:

You also admitted that municipalities under your stewardship are dysfunctional.

IsiXhosa:

Mongameli, ewe, siyavumelana nawe ukuba oomasipala bethu abasebenzi. Kodwa Mongameli, lo Mthetho wecandelo le139, onika igunya urhulumente wephondo ukoxutha iintambo zolawulo koomasipala xa begqwidiza awusancedisi. Ingxaki uthatha amagosa abehlulekile kwindima abeyenza koomasipala babo ubenze abalawuli (administrators).

English:

Identify people who are capable of doing work. Secondly, Ditsobotla Local Municipality in the North West has experienced eight administrators since the dawn of democracy making it the highest in South Africa to be under administrators. Today, there is no service delivery happening in Ditsobotla Local Municipality.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 164

IsiXhosa:

Siyakucela Mongameli ukuba izinto ezinjalo uzijonge kuba awukwazi ukuthumela amagosa, owaziyo nawe ukuba ahlulekile, ibengawo asebenzisa lo Mthetho wokuhlutha iintambo zolawulo. Umama u... [Inaudible.] 00:11:55 angandingqinela kuba naye kuMasipala weNgingqi iMafube iinkampani azihlawulwa ngumasipala.

English:

The third parties are not being paid.

IsiXhosa:

Abantu bayasokola bade bathathe umhlalaphantsi bengafumananga naloo mali. Ikhona ingxaki nakuMasipala weNgingqi waseMfuleni eGauteng ngokungabinamali. Nabo, banale ngxaki yokohluthwa kweentambo zolawulo ngurhulumente wephondo ukusukela ngowama2018. Kutheni sineemeko ezinjalo kwisizwe sethu?

Mongameli, masingene phaya kwaba masipala balandelayo: Nithi niza kwenza ukuba kungabikho kungenelela ngokwezopolitiko (Political Interference.) kuMasipala weNgingqi waseMatjhabeng, Masipala oMbaxa iMangaung, Masipala weNgingqi waseMafube, Masipala weNgingqi iMasilonyana noMasipala weNgingqi iNkomazi.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 165

English:

Last week, we went to Nkomazi Local Municipality ...

IsiXhosa:

... apho igosa elibekwe nguMthetho wecandelo le139 lifihle ingxelo yentlekele yaseWard 11 kuMasipala weNgingqi waseNkomazi kodwa abantu bachaphazelekile.

English:

The disaster team exposed the administrator ...

IsiXhosa:

... bathi bona bayile kwaWard 11 bafumana izindlu ezingama283 ezichaphazeleke kakhulu yintlekele. Siye asayamkela loo ngxelo yabo, sayikhaba ingxelo emva koko saphumeza ingxelo siyikomiti yeqela lentlekele.

English:

It was not only Ward 11 of Nkomazi Local Municipality, premier of Mpumalanga but was also Ward 5 and Ward 17 of Mpumalanga.

IsiXhosa:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 166

Iingxelo zewadi ezithile bebengafuni ukuzifaka phantsi kwale kwentlekele. Lo mgunyathi woRhulumente woBumbano kaZwelonke wenu eniwuthanda kakhulu, uthule kuba kumnandi. Kaloku ayikhonkothi iphethe ithambo. Bahleli njee, abasebenzi bafana noSekela Mphathiswa waManzi noGutyulo lweLindle, olilungu leDA, esingamaziyo nokuba wenza ntoni na. Asimazi nokuba uya emva okanye phambili. Into ayanzezo kukutya nje qha uhlohl'isisu ufuna ukulingana noBhambham. [Kwahlekwa.]

Mongameli, ingaba oomasipala bethu bamelwe ngoobani?

English:

You also told us that you will create policies that are going to deal with our problems.

IsiXhosa:

Imnandi into yokuba uyavuma ukuba sinengxaki koomasipala bethu kodwa yona into yomkhosi ayisayi kusinceda, Mongameli.

English:

Appoint credible people to these committees of yours that will give services to the people.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 167

IsiXhosa:

Sithetha ngabantu abaza kuyazi ukuba xa impompo igqabhukile baza kuthatha umtywini ayilungise. Ukuba umbane awusebenzi kufunwe umntu oza kuyazi ukuba ulungiswa njani ukuze iiplagi zisebenze. Ngoko ke Mongameli, ukuba ezi komiti azisayi kusinceda nganto, abantu bakuthi baya kuhlala behluphekile.

English:

Maybe, you are doing this because you are aware that you are losing power in the coming 2026 local elections.

IsiXhosa:

Ngoku eyona nto oyizamayo ngezi komiti zakho zininzi kufuna ukulawula aba masipala. Awuzukwazi ukuyenza loo nto.

English:

You will not do as you wish.

IsiXhosa:

Anisayi kuba ngoku ... [Interpreter interfering with the speaker]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 168

THE PREMIER OF FREE STATE (Ms M Letsoha-Mathae): Hon Speaker, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, His Excellencies Mr Matamela Ramaphosa and Mr Paul Mashatile, Members of Parliament and Premiers.

IsiXhosa:

Mandiqale ndikulungise apha lungu elihloniphekileyo sisi Mandisa. Okokuqala, ndivuyela nje ukuba uhloniphe uMongameli wethu ... [Ngokungavakaliyo.]

English:

You know some of these issues that we are raising today about municipalities in the Free State. Main contributors ...

[Recording insufficient. Member's speech not reported in full.]

We rise today to express our support for the state of the nation address, delivered by President Cyril Ramaphosa, which we regard as a profoundly people-centred address that spoke to the collective aspirations, dignity, and rights of our people.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 169

On behalf of the people of the province, Mr President, we also wish to extend our sincere gratitude to you for attending the Men's Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, GBVF Summit held in Bloemfontein last year. This event brought together over 5 000 men from all walks of life across the province. Hon President, your attendance underscored the commitment of our government to ferociously confront gender-based violence and femicide.

There are moments in the life of any nation when it must pause and ask itself a simple but profound question:

"Are we building a future worthy of our children?"

It is to this question that this Sona debate is directed.

Hon Speaker, The ANC-led government resolved that early childhood development, ECDs must be moved from social development to basic education to achieve an integrated education system. Since the migration of the ECD function from social development, the province has refurbished and provided maintenance to 62 ECD centres throughout the province, with 13 completed in the current financial year.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 170

The province further managed to complete construction of one fully-functional state-of-the-art Lindokuhle ECD Centre in Botshabelo, Mangaung, with a second centre currently in construction in Zastron, Gariep district.

Through the Bana Pele mass registration drive and awareness campaign, 222 new ECD centres were formally registered, bringing the total number of centres to 1 642 to date. This gave access to 97 540 children.

Since the beginning of the 7th administration, four new schools have been successfully completed in the province, namely Dr Tate Makgoe Primary School, Dr Sello Primary, Malebogo and Tlholo.

In the same breath, seven new public ordinary schools and three technical secondary schools are being constructed in various towns in the province to address the shortage of schools caused by rapid urbanisation and population growth, as well as accommodating technical and vocational stream.

In addition, we completed two modern hostel facilities in Bloemfontein and Gariepdam, expanding access to quality

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 171

education for learners from undeserved communities. These are not mere structures of brick and mortar; they are theatres of social transformation.

Hon President, your administration has prioritised access to quality education for all learners. We have repurposed under-utilised schools by offering multiple learning pathways leading to general education certificates, technical occupational certificates for learners with mild intellectual disability.

In the 2024-25 financial year, two schools were successfully repurposed, and learners were admitted in different skills subjects, one in Mangaung and one in Lejweleputswa.

Furthermore, three hostels for learners with special educational needs are currently at different stages of construction in Trompsburg, Xhariep District, Leboneng, Welkom, Lejweleputswa District and Boitumelo in Thaba Nchu.

IsiXhosa:

Siyaqhuba ...

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 172

... President. In the current academic year, two additional schools are earmarked in Thabo Mofutsanyane and Fezile Dabi. On a lighter note, to my colleague in KwaZulu-Natal, Deputy Speaker, we would like to inform the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal that they should not be comfortable. Free State will reclaim its position as a top-performing province in 2026 when the Minister announces the results of the 2026 national certificate.

[Recording insufficient. Member's speech not reported in full.]

Hon Speaker, a society that does not train its youth facilitates its own demise. Through the Free State Training and Development Institute, FSTDI, and in the Office of the Premier, we have appointed 67 engineering graduates who are due to commence their graduate programme on 1 March 2026. The graduates are drawn from the areas of electrical, civil, mechanical engineering, hydrology, construction management, urban and regional planning, and quantity surveying.

These young people will not only gain practical experience, but they will also strengthen our government and improve

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 173

service delivery. Through the plumbing learnership programme NQF level 4, 81 learners from all corners of our province have recently qualified, 14 in Sasolburg, 22 in Welkom, 20 in Bloemfontein, 18 in Ficksburg, and 7 in Gariepdam. This is how we localise service delivery. This is how we restore capacity.

Hon Speaker, the declaration of foot-and-mouth diseases as a national disaster was an absolute necessity. Our province welcomes this decision. Our agricultural sectors as a whole facilitates approximately R1,2 billion per annum in export of animal and animal products. Import bans have, therefore, dealt a severe blow to our farmers, particularly milk producers.

We have adopted the principle of early detection and rapid response in investigating all suspected cases, quarantining infected farms, vaccinating livestock, and strengthening all veterinary capacity.

We have placed 136 agricultural graduates into workplaces at the cost exceeding R12 million, and we have absorbed 23 community service vets into the department. Speaker, we consider the road network as arteries of our economy. It is through the road network that people can meet and the economy

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 174

can thrive. We have ensured that we allocate adequate resources to maintain and upgrade our roads, especially those that connect towns.

In this financial year alone, our roads infrastructure programme created over 3 500 jobs, recruited through a transparent public recruitment system to ensure fairness and inclusion. These are not abstract numbers, President. They represent bread on the table and dignity restored. And we shall increase this number in the years ahead.

Sesotho:

Motsamaisi wa dipuisano, ha re tlo kena ho tsa Bophelo bo botle, re ntlafetse haholo re le provense ya Freistata.

English:

We are grateful to the ANC for introducing a progressive policy in support of the implementation of the National Health Insurance. This will ensure that the citizens of South Africa receive the greatest possible benefit. As the country advances towards National Health Insurance, our clinics and hospitals are aligning with ideal clinic and ideal hospital standards.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 175

Infrastructure upgrades and improved patient management systems are underway which will ensure that when universal health coverage is fully realised, the Free State will not be found wanting.

I am proud to report that in the Free State, 195 out of 216 primary healthcare facilities assessed have attained ideal clinic status, and 16 out of the 32 hospitals have achieved an ideal status in 2025-26.

Hon Speaker, to ensure that all citizens receive government services, the Office of the Premier utilises integrated service programmes to reach rural and underserved communities. This initiative brings together a variety of government entities, including SA State Security Agency, Sassa, Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, SA Police Service, SAPS, Health, Home Affairs, etc.

Sesotho:

Re tswela pele.

[Recording insufficient. Member's speech not reported in full.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 176

Sesotho:

Ke a leboha motamaisi wa dipuisano.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): I now call upon the hon member from ... I see a hand.

Ms L MATHYS: House Chair, the premier speaks to members and just calls them Mandisa. We are not in the back quarry yard in Welkom or something. She's hon Mandisa. Can she please come back there and call our ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): No, sorry, sorry.

Ms L MATHYS: No, Chair, she's out of order.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Her time has expired; she cannot come back. I now call upon the hon Fadiel.

Mr F ADAMS: House Chair, Mr President, Deputy President, hon Speaker and all my colleagues ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 177

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Fadiel, can you take your seat please? Hon Malema?

Mr J S MALEMA: Chair, hon Mathys raised a very important point because if you want to degenerate this House and we start calling each other like that, as if we are in a netball team, it's incorrect. You are chairing, you heard her calling Mandisa as Mandisa and not hon Mandisa. You have a duty to put this House into order. You know, if people are used to permanently staying in taverns and they address each other like that, we are not part of that.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you, hon Malema. Hon Fadiel.

Mr F ADAMS: Mr President, many things were said in your speech at the state of the nation address, Sona, but I'm going to focus on the most pressing thing for my community.

You mentioned the bullet train that you want to build, but you spoke very little about the bullets flying in our streets. We understand that for the last 30 years, the coloured people have been taken for a ride by this ANC. It is the ANC that

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 178

took away our quotas as fishermen and handed them to people in Johannesburg where there are no seas. It turned our fathers and sons into poachers. It is the ANC that closed the factories in Woodstock, Salt River and Observatory, and turned our mothers, the finest seamstresses in the world, into nothing. It is the ANC that allowed foreign nationals to take over the construction company ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Fadiel, can you take a seat, please? There's a point of order. Hon member?

Afrikaans:

Mev E N NTLANGWINI: Huis Voorsitter, nee man, ek wil net vra, kan jy hom net so vyf minute gee om die tie [das] reg te kry, asseblief man?

English:

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): No, that's not a point of order. That is not a point of order. Please continue, hon Fadiel.

Afrikaans:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 179

Mr F ADAMS: Ek het mos hier gekom as 'n gebou werker man, nie as 'n MP nie. Moenie daai vergeet nie.

English:

Not all of us forget where we come from, leader.

It is the ANC that has turned our sons into what they are. It is the ANC that allowed 27 000 guns to be pumped into our ghetto by the SA Police Service, SAPS, and then classified the report. Now, hon President, what do you want to give us to make our communities safer? You want to give us the army. We've been begging you for an army, Mr President. We ask for an army of social workers, skills developers, teachers and football coaches. We don't need more guns. If this is all you have to offer, then it is a sad story indeed.

Mr President, my community is dying for development. Our children are dying from the lack of opportunity. Our children are not involved in the tertiary education system, but you are going to give us more guns. You are going to normalise firearms, weapons, soldiers. Our communities are a community in trauma. We begged, Mr President; we will beg no more.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 180

We have asked for fairness, you gave us skewed black economic empowerment, BEE. We've asked for jobs, you've put us out of the system. Come into the Cape Flats and see how foreign nationals, undocumented foreign nationals and their children occupy the school spaces while coloured children sit on street corners.

Mr President, you are the reason, and this ANC is the reason, why the coloured community sent an animal like me to come and bat for them. Let me warn you, Mr President, they asked me to be a pit bull.

Afrikaans:

Almal die honde is gebyt daar.

English:

Ask Gayton to translate that for you. Thank you.

Mr V G REDDY: His excellency, the people's president, Jacob Zuma, deputy president, Tony Yengeni, and leadership of the MKP, all protocols observed.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 181

How do you tell 8 million unemployed South Africans that the economy is improving? Just think about that. How do you tell six out of ten young people with no jobs that this is recovery? How do you tell matriculants who passed but cannot secure university space that this is progress? Let's be honest, the last time a university was built in this country was when former President Zuma was the head of state. Because friends, hon members, the reality does not live in percentages; it lives in households.

The MKP will prioritise industrial expansion, infrastructure-led growth and state-supported manufacturing to create real, permanent jobs, not temporary statistics like we've been hearing here today.

You know, the former DA or outgoing DA leader, John Steenhuisen, described the past eight years under Mr Ramaphosa as being the most disastrous years. Today, he comes here together with the other Government of National Unity, GNU, parties to praise the so-called GNU. So, what changed, the country or the coalition?

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 182

Now, I want South Africans to know the truth today, because the lived reality that you go through every day is not what you're hearing from these GNU parties. They're saying the things they're saying today because of the perks, the blue lights and all the fanfare that comes with these positions. I mean, you heard one of the Ministers. He came and said, I need this because I love the blue lights. Openly, he declared that. Today, they come and tell you that South Africa has improved. Let me tell you, mothers that are crying out there and children that have no jobs, they are spitting on your face because what you are saying is far from reality.

You know, the MKP, we will never trade our mandate for positions. We could have done this. President Zuma could have agreed to join the so-called GNU, and we could all be having positions today. But we are a party of principles, and we want our voters to know that. When it comes to the local government elections, don't vote for sellout parties because they're going to sell you out.

You talk about 46 000 jobs in the third quarter and 34 000 in the fourth quarter. South Africa has 8 million unemployed people. What's 80 000 jobs against 8 million unemployed

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 183

people? Youth unemployment, six out of ten. This is structural failure. The MKP will implement a national youth public works and technical skills programme. We're not going to create jobs that are temporary, that just last for a month or six months, like the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, jobs. We want permanent jobs. Listen to me carefully, the best is yet to come.

You know, we've been hearing about water, and I want to tell you about water. South Africa is not running out of water; we are running out of management. Johannesburg residents in Soweto, Brixton, Westbury and in a township called uh ... there's a township in Lenasia South. They haven't had water for two years, 20 000 residents. We make a big noise when people in Sandton are complaining but the reality is that there are townships and rural areas that have not had a single drop of water in their taps for the past few years.

We, as the MKP, we're on the ground. We see this every single day in eThekweni, in Phoenix, Chatsworth, Umlazi, prolonged disruptions. In Hammanskraal and Giyani, billions were spent and yet the projects are not complete. We have enough bog

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 184

water in our dams, but the problem is governance. The problem, Mr Ramaphosa, is accountability.

You know, more than half of planned maintenance remains incomplete. Now, this is neglect. I want to share something with you ... [Time expired].

Vote MKP in the local government elections.

Mr I CAMERON: Chair, crime has become a tax on dignity, opportunity and freedom. It is the mother who prays her child returns safely from school. It is the small business owner who fearfully locks up their shop before sunset. It is the commuter who clutches a phone like a lifeline. South Africans are tired of emboldened criminals and betrayed when those criminals sit within the state itself.

The President announced the deployment of SA National Defence Force, SANDF, to assist in gang-ridden areas, specifically in Cape Town, parts of Gauteng, and today we heard in the Eastern Cape too. Where violence has reached intolerable levels, short-term stabilisation is obviously justified. Communities

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 185

under siege deserve some relief. But stabilisation is not a strategy.

The SANDF can assist with area control, but they cannot replace the investigative, forensic and intelligence functions of the SA Police Service, SAPS, or the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, DPCI. They cannot dismantle drug cartels. They cannot build racketeering cases, trace illicit firearms across multiple crime scenes or secure sustainable convictions against organised criminal leadership. Which brings us to a reform that some in the ANC continue to resist, expanding policing powers to competent local and provincial governments.

Where operational competence exists, it must be enabled and not obstructed. Where other spheres of government offer to help save lives, we must work together. Consider this. Enhanced forensic and ballistic capabilities within the City of Cape Town Metro Police, particularly in gang-related shootings, could be a total game changer. Rapid ballistic tracing, fully integrated with national systems, would allow cases to be linked more quickly, track the repeated use of illicit firearms and link cases faster, and strengthen

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 186

prosecutions, effectively amplifying the impact of the existing SAPS resources. If a reform measurably improves safety and saves lives, why would we block it?

We must ask ourselves today, is this about politics or is it about the people? Because South Africans are not interested in turf battles between spheres of government, they are interested in getting home alive. Our police officers are often under-resourced, over-stretched and placed in impossible conditions. Communities feel abandoned and criminal networks exploit systemic weakness with ruthless efficiency.

Imagine SAPS pleading for dogs to be donated while failing to even properly feed police members sent for K9 training at the Roodeplaas Academy. Yet the same SAPS supply chain division could pay the likes of Cat Matlala through corrupt supply chain commanders and processes. In fact, the Divisional Commissioner for Supply Chain Management in the SAPS is still in his position. In most cases, the men and women of the SAPS on the ground are not the enemy. They are also often victims of poor leadership, corruption above them and of a system that too often fails to protect those who try to protect us.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 187

Allegations of collusion and corruption remain unresolved. Even the Deputy President's protection thugs were allowed to stay in the SAPS after having earned that name, the Blue Light Mafia, when they violently attacked innocent civilians for no reason.

The Madlanga Commission is welcome, but South Africans have grown weary of commissions without consequences - reports without dismissals, findings without prosecutions, truth without accountability, if wrongdoing is exposed but not punished. And let us not forget the cost borne by whistleblowers and witnesses - individuals who risk not only their careers but their lives, often with inadequate protection.

Then, hon members, there was one last commentary suggesting tighter controls on lawful firearm ownership. Let's be clear, law-abiding licensed firearm owners are not the drivers of organised crime. Criminal syndicates are armed through illicit trafficking, diversion and corruption, and they are very rarely lawful owners of firearms. Disarming the compliant while illegal firearms flood our communities is neither rational nor just, and lawfully armed citizens are assets to

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 188

communities. They are responsible individuals who comply with the law while protecting themselves and their families. We will fight any attempt to disarm law-abiding citizens while illegal firearms continue to flood our communities.

In closing, history has taught us that any state that disarms law-abiding citizens does so not for safety, but for ultimate control of the populace, even in tyranny. I thank you.

The PREMIER OF KWAZULU-NATAL (Mr T Ntuli): Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the President of the Republic of South Africa, the Deputy President, hon members, and fellow South Africans, I rise on behalf of the people of KwaZulu-Natal to contribute to this important debate of the 2026 state of the nation address. Indeed, South Africa is turning the corner. Indeed, we have witnessed the stabilisation of our energy supply, renewed economic momentum, unlocking of infrastructure investment, and a gradual return of investor confidence.

The Government of National Unity has demonstrated that co-operation, when anchored in constitutional values and national interest, is both powerful and persuasive in confronting the

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 189

socioeconomic challenges facing our country. The performance of 90,6% by the KwaZulu-Natal 2025 class of matric is one more evidence of the positive direction for South Africa. KwaZulu-Natal welcomes this new chapter. We understand that political cohesion is not an abstract ideal. It is a practical instrument for service delivery, economic reform and the implementation of government's Medium-Term Development Plan. But turning a corner is meaningful only if we now move forward with urgency, discipline, and unity of purpose. For KwaZulu-Natal, the message of the state of the nation address is clear; implementation is now the defining task of leadership. We must lead from the front. We must deliver and deliver effectively.

KwaZulu-Natal is not merely another province. It is a strategic economic pillar of South Africa. We are the country's logistics gateway, home to the busiest port on the African continent. We are a manufacturing hub serving regional markets, a province endowed with fertile agricultural land, globally competitive tourism assets, and a youthful population eager to participate in the economy.

IsiZulu:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 190

Yingakho nje njengohulumeni waKwaZulu-Natal emalini engango R100 000 000 esayibekela abantu abasha, ngihambele abanye abahlomulayo, omunye wabathengelwe imoto yokusabalalisa imikhiqizo yabo nezinto zokusebenza ibhizinisi. Abanye bathengelwe izinkomo eziwu-52 kanye nogandaganda namathuluzi okusebenza babiyela ipulazi amakhilomitha amathathu ngoba KwaZulu-Natal sibeka phambili abantu abasha ezinhlelweni zokuthuthukisa abantu.

English:

These youth have delivered job opportunities for others. The bottle neck which was experienced in the Port of Durban was resolved after the introduction of more tugboats and new monster cranes. When KwaZulu-Natal grows, South Africa grows. The President's announcement of expanded public-private partnerships in ports and rail, including the modernisation of Durban's container terminal – marks a decisive structural reform. This is not incremental change. It is foundational to reshaping our economic outlook.

As the Government of Provincial Unity, we will move decisively to support this reform agenda. It is imperative that Transnet, municipalities, business, and labour align their efforts to

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 191

unblock logistical bottlenecks, accelerate freight rail recovery, and integrate land-use planning around strategic logistics corridors. Our objective is clear, to restore Durban to world-class operational efficiency and reposition KwaZulu-Natal as the preferred gateway to Southern African trade.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon premier, can you please take a seat please. There is a point of order.

Mr V G REDDY: Sorry hon speaker, will the outgoing Premier of KZN be prepared to take a question?

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon premier, would you want to take a question?

The PREMIER OF KWAZULU-NATAL: Because he is outgoing, the list may change. I will answer the question after a decision. Not now. The announcement of over one trillion in public infrastructure investment over the next three years represents a historic opportunity. Already KwaZulu-Natal is a construction site. Our N3, N2, along with some of the provincial and local roads are under construction. We are

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 192

prioritising the rehabilitation of roads and bridges following flood damage, water and wastewater upgrades across eThekweni and rural districts.

Revitalisation of industrial parks, renewable energy infrastructure, and digital connectivity in township and rural economies is on the agenda. The establishment of the Provincial Investment Office within the Office of the Premier is central to this effort. Our message to investors is unequivocal. KwaZulu-Natal is open for business and the government will operate at the speed of opportunity.

Hon Members, I agree with my leader of the IFP, hon Velenkosini Hlabisa that the President of our country correctly identified water security as a national crisis which is indeed a crisis. In KwaZulu-Natal, water insecurity threatens households, agriculture, tourism, and industrial productivity. We therefore fully support the establishment of the National Water Crisis Committee and welcome decisive intervention where municipalities fail to perform. We have seen the good benefits of such interventions such as the Presidential eThekweni working group, which is quite effective. We are working closely with the national government

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 193

to ensure that every rand allocated to water infrastructure results in reliable access to clean water for our communities.

Equally, we confront the challenge of organised crime, including construction extortion and port-related syndicates, which have undermined investment and growth. We welcome the President's firm stance on dismantling criminal networks. In KwaZulu-Natal, co-ordination between the SA Police Service, Metro Police, community safety structures, intelligence structures, and the private sector have been intensified. The outcome of such is that crime stats are showing a decrease on a quarterly basis in KwaZulu-Natal.

My mentor the late Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi made a call for the need to protect women and children from gender-based violence and femicide, GBVF. I also welcome the declaration of gender-based violence and femicide as a state of disaster.

IsiZulu:

Sonke thina esingamadoda kufanele silusukumele lolu daba ngoba seluyinhlekelele. Abantu besifazane abaphephile.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 194

Our rural economy remains central to inclusive growth. Tourism remains a key growth lever. We are strengthening safety in tourism nodes, expanding destination marketing, and promoting township and cultural tourism. Every visitor sustains livelihoods. Every event stimulates local enterprise. In 2025, we realised a significant increase in both local and international tourist visiting our province.

Deputy Chairperson of NCOP, we welcome expanded agricultural finance, strengthened extension services, and the national response to foot-and-mouth disease. KwaZulu-Natal remains the epicentre of the foot and mouth disease outbreak. This outbreak threatens both commercial and communal farmers. We welcome the decisive intervention, committing to a nationwide vaccination drive. This bold, co-ordinated response signals government's resolve to safeguard our agricultural sector, protect jobs, and restore confidence in our livestock industry.

Hon Speaker, our greatest asset is our young people. The focus on TVET reform, workplace learning, and expanded employment programmes speaks directly to our provincial priorities. We are forging a provincial skills compact with the private

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 195

sector in logistics, energy, construction, and the digital economy. The revelation by Statistics SA that KwaZulu-Natal achieved 54 000 new job opportunities is a record of progress. Fellow South Africans, hon Deputy Chairperson of NCOP, KwaZulu-Natal stands ready to move from recovery to accelerated growth, ready to contribute decisively to building a stronger, safer, and more prosperous South Africa. Let us seize this moment with courage, with unity, and with unwavering commitment to our people as we continue to lead Kwazulu-Natal until 2029. Thank you, Deputy National Chairperson. [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (Mr M Nyhontso): Deputy Chairperson and Mr President, we in the PAC of Tanzania recall that you hit the nail on the head when you said in your speech that our strength as a people comes from our natural endowment. The potential to release this strength lies in the unity of opposites and the ability to hold hands together as African patriots.

You also pointed out that many small and medium businesses, particularly those owned by black farmers, women, and young people, still struggle to gain access to the requisite

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 196

funding, resources, and markets. The role of land redistribution in this context continues to be of critical importance. We are also in full support of your decision to deploy members of the SA National Defence Force to contribute to the fight against crime in parts of the Western Cape and Gauteng, and now the Eastern Cape, as announced by the Minister of Police. This is a clear message that there will be no surrender to criminals and that the fight against crime will continue unabated until this scourge is finally defeated.

Mr President, the legislation we are currently working on, namely the draft Equitable Access to Land Bill and the Communal Land Tenure and Administration Bill, both of which aim to respond to a major call in our Constitution, also aligns with the President's vision of a state that works for the people. In our specific case, we aim to do this by speeding up the equitable redistribution of land, ensuring its productive use, and guaranteeing security of tenure. The vision and commitment that we have articulated around the need to invest significantly in infrastructure also accord with this responsibility.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 197

Mr President, the resolution of the issue of communal land tenure is firmly aligned with the call that we have made for a differentiated approach to municipal powers and the need for structured co-operation between municipalities and the institution of traditional leaders. The devastating outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease is not just an agricultural crisis; it is a rural crisis in a broader sense, as it threatens the livelihoods not only of established commercial farmers but also, and equally significantly, those of communal and emergent farmers. It will therefore be critical that our department works closely with the Department of Agriculture to ensure that the most remote communal farmers also gain access to vaccines.

Mr President, your announcement of the allocation of R500 million to phase four of the District Six reconstruction project is a testament to our country's resolve to redress the past injustices of land dispossession. It would be remiss of us, though, not to re-emphasise the need for more adequate financial support for the restitution programme in order to ensure its continuing national impact. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 198

Ms T BREEDT: Deputy Chairperson, to the President: Mr President, you spoke at length about municipalities and the critical role they are supposed to play in the life of every South African. You announced a R54 billion incentive for metropolitan municipalities to reform water, sanitation, and electricity services. You spoke about improving service delivery, about consequences for failure, and about ensuring that senior officials are qualified and appointed through an independent process, free from political interference.

Now, sir, please forgive me if I do not jump for joy. This is the third state of the nation debate I am participating in this term and the third time we are hearing this.

Afrikaans:

As ek doodeerlik moet wees, Mnr die President, om nou, in 2026, aan te kondig dat munisipaliteite die wet moet gehoorsaam, dat gekwalifiseerde amptenare aangestel moet word, en dat daar gevolge sal wees indien hulle dit nie doen nie, is – buiten dat dit voor die hand liggend is – te min, te laat.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 199

Last year, after the release of the 2023-2024 municipal audit outcomes, the Auditor-General made it clear: Local government remains in a dire state.

As of May 2025, 83% of municipalities were violating key financial legislation. Irregular expenditure stood at R87 billion. Only 3% of municipal assets are allocated for maintenance. Municipalities collectively owe R55 billion to Eskom and R21,2 billion to Water Boards.

Afrikaans:

Agb President, u sê dat meganismes versterk sal word sodat die nasionale regering vinniger kan ingryp daar waar munisipaliteite faal. Met respek, ons sien nie dat dit tans enigsins werk nie. In die Noordwes is 40% van munisipaliteite reeds onder provinsiale administrasie. In KwaZulu-Natal en in die Vrystaat lyk dinge nie beter nie. Inteendeel, in baie gevalle lyk dit slegter na die ingryping.

Gedurende my tyd hier in die Nasionale Raad van Provinsies het ek bitter min munisipaliteite gesien wat eindelik onder administrasie uitkom. Ek het wel baie gesien wat onder administrasie geplaas is. Ek bly self in 'n metro wat

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 200

onder nasionale administrasie geplaas is. Mnr die President, as hierdie die sogenaamde oplossing vir Suid-Afrika is, dan is die prentjie uiters donker.

English:

The FF Plus has said this for years, and reports have repeatedly confirmed this: The centralisation of power and the forced amalgamation of towns into massive new municipalities do not work. The late Mr Pravin Gordhan released a "Back to Basics" report back in 2014. One of the key findings echoes exactly what we have been saying all along, that big, multitown municipalities fail because service delivery cannot reach the outer limits. Municipalities must be smaller, with fewer towns, ideally one town per municipality.

We do not need to reinvent the wheel.

Afrikaans:

Ons moet net begin implementeer wat daar is.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 201

Mr President, we are told to welcome the establishment of a national water crisis committee. Forgive my lack of enthusiasm – yet another committee, yet another failure we are addressing. I vividly remember the task team set up to deal with the municipal Eskom debt. The answers were vague, shoulders were shrugged, and accountability was nowhere to be found. However, it is a new year, so we can only hope.

Afrikaans:

Adjunkvoorsitter, laat my toe om vir 'n oomblik weg te beweeg van munisipaliteite af en na iets te kyk wat die ekonomie tans kniehalter: bek-en-klouseer. Dit is skandelik dat hierdie siekte toegelaat is om tot 'n nasionale ramp te eskaleer. Boere het lankal gewaarsku. Spoedige optrede is talle maande gelede versoek. Daar moes reeds 'n multidissiplinêre, gekoördineerde aksieplan wees.

English:

Agriculture is one of the most important drivers of our economy. The livestock sector alone contributes over 40% of agricultural output and generated more than R172 billion in the 2022 financial year. We cannot afford indecision and delays anymore.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 202

Afrikaans:

Ons het nie mooi praatjies en leë beloftes nodig nie. Ons het nou aksie nodig. Daar moet daadwerklik opgetree word om ons landbou te beskerm, ons landbouers te ondersteun, en die krisis as 't ware soos 'n bul by die horings te pak.

English:

In closing, I want to remind this House of the words engraved at the entrance of the University of the Free State's Faculty of Agriculture, words that ring even more true today.

Afrikaans:

"'n Land wat vir sy boere sorg, sorg vir sy toekoms." Ek dank u.

Mr P SWART: Hon Chairperson, hon President, hon members, People of South Africa, good evening. Last week, the President spoke about a country that is beginning to recover. The question, Mr President, is whether we can translate economic recovery into lived experience on the ground, into jobs that last, safer streets, working municipalities, and a state that delivers value for every rand that taxpayers contribute.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 203

When there is progress, it must be recognised. If we want to rebuild trust in our public institutions and restore confidence in our economy, we must be honest about what is improving, and equally honest about what still blocks recovery from reaching ordinary families on the ground.

Afrikaans:

Ons sien, agb President, ... [Onhoorbaar.] [Lid se toespraaknotas is ingevoeg] ... ons sien geloofwaardige tekens dat Suid-Afrika se finansiële posisie besig is om te stabiliseer. Ons sien verbeterde vertroue en 'n meer positiewe markreaksie op ons fiskale trajek. In onlangse dae was daar selfs berigte dat effekte-opbrengste die laagste vlakke in 'n dekade bereik het. In eenvoudige terme beteken dit dat die land teen goedkoper koerse as voorheen kan leen, wat die druk op die fiskus verminder en die langtermynlas van skuld-diens-koste verlaag. Elke rand wat ons aan rente bestee, is 'n rand wat ons nie kan aanwend om waterstelsels reg te stel, paaie te herstel, polisiëring te verbeter, of in infrastruktuur te belê wat werkseleenthede skep nie.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 204

So yes, there are encouraging indicators, but as Members of Parliament, our duty is to ask the harder follow-up question: Will this recovery be felt in places like Beaufort West; in my hometown, Elim; in other rural villages; in townships and in struggling towns? Will it be felt by the young person who has sent out 50 CVs and received silence? Will it be felt by the pensioner whose municipal bill keeps rising, while the taps run dry and the streets are unsafe?

Therefore, we want to focus on the economic recovery road in a practical way. The GNU is not just a political arrangement. It is a message to the country that there is an alternative to paralysis, and that co-operation can produce stability.

In an election year, it is easy for people to retreat into slogans and blame. But South Africans want leaders who can build and leaders who can fix. They want adults at the table who can bring discipline back into the state, restore credibility and deliver results.

One of the important reasons that confidence has improved is that there is visible evidence of constructive co-operation in the Economic cluster. The working relationship between Deputy

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 205

Minister Ashor Sarupen, Deputy Minister David Masondo, and Minister Enoch Godongwana sends a strong signal that fiscal responsibility and reform can be advanced through collaboration, not chaos.

That relationship matters because markets, investors, and ordinary citizens respond to stability, competence, and consistency. What we need and what we are beginning to see is a more united focus on stabilisation, reform, and recovery. However, we must not confuse stabilisation with prosperity. Stabilising debt and lowering borrowing costs are necessary conditions for recovery, but they are not sufficient.

Mr President, the economy will only truly recover when growth is strong enough to absorb unemployment, when investment flows into productive sectors, and when people can build a life through work, not through survival.

Afrikaans:

Ons benodig ... [Onhoorbaar.] [Lid se toespraaknotas is ingevoeg] ... vereistes om ons vorentoe te neem? Ons benodig 'n ekonomie wat inspanning, talent en entrepreneurskap beloon, Agbare President. Ons benodig 'n staat wat belastingbetalers

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 206

se geld beskerm asof dit sy eie huishoudelike begroting is. Ons benodig 'n staatsdiens wat op grond van bevoegdheid aanstel, nie lojaliteit nie. En ons benodig 'n plaaslike regeringstelsel wat funksioneer, want sonder werkende munisipaliteite bly die nasionale ekonomie 'n teorie. Die ekonomie leef waar mense leef. Dit leef in dorpe, wyke en gemeenskappe. Indien 'n munisipaliteit nie water kan voorsien, paaie kan onderhou, straatligte aan die brand kan hou, verordeninge kan afdwing en finansies eerlik kan bestuur nie, dan onttrek beleggers, sluit klein besighede, verdwyn werksgeleenthede en verloor die jeug hoop.

English:

Therefore, we as the DA want to be very firm on corruption, particularly on municipal level. If we are serious about economic recovery in South Africa, corruption must become expensive, not inconvenient, not something that results in a transfer, a suspension on full pay, or a quiet redeployment. It must become expensive. It is the only language criminals understand - arrests, prosecutions, convictions, blacklisting and asset recovery.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 207

We must recover stolen funds, and we must remove the gatekeepers who treat municipalities like cash machines. We want to see municipal supply chain systems that are transparent and protected from political interference, and we want to see senior officials repeatedly involved in irregular expenditure lose their positions, not get promoted.

If the GNU is serious about the financial recovery road, it must become a recovery road for integrity too. And linked to corruption is crime, because crime is not only a safety issue, Mr President; crime is also an economic issue. Crime destroys investment and tourism. It destroys small businesses. It raises the cost of doing business. It turns whole neighbourhoods into fear zones.

If we want financial recovery to be felt on the ground, then safety must be treated as an economic priority. We cannot claim progress while communities live behind burglar bars and businesses spend their profits on private security, instead of expansion.

Mr President, we also must confront a hard political truth, if we want growth in this country. The policies that shape our

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 208

labour market and our investment climate must be modernised. The DA has been clear, BEE, as it is currently designed, has failed the very people it was meant to empower.

It has too often become a barrier to entry for small entrepreneurs, a tool for connected elites, and a mechanism that rewards ownership deals rather than real participation, real skills, real jobs and real growth.

We want empowerment that expands opportunity for millions, not enrichment for a few. We want the state to support broad-based participation through better education, skills, and entrepreneurship, and not through policies that shrink the economy and then fight over the remaining crumbs.

Afrikaans:

Indien ons wil hê dat die ... [Onhoorbaar.] [Lid se toespraaknotas is ingevoeg] ... Indien ons wil hê dat die werklike lewenservaring van mense moet verander, moet ons verder beweeg as blote simboliese nakoming en fokus op dit wat werklik bemagtig: funksionerende skole, vaardighede wat met die arbeidsmark belyn is, 'n omgewing waar besighede kan begin

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 209

en groei, infrastruktuur wat werk, en 'n staat wat skoon en doeltreffend is, Agb President.

English:

I want to come back to the recovery signals that we are seeing because they give us a window of opportunity. Falling bond yields and cheaper borrowing costs ... [Time expired.]

[Applause.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR (Mr N M Sibiya): Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, the President of the Republic and the Deputy President, in the state of the nation address you have centred the Department of Employment and Labour's mandate to regulate the labour market and drive inclusive growth. It is therefore our singular focus to implement the President's directive to bolster enforcement and prioritise local employment.

IsiZulu:

Inkulumo yakho Mongameli izwelile. Abantu abaningi bayamukelile bayithakasela ngoba ukhuluma ngezinto abantu abakhuluma ngazo futhi ezibathintayo babone ukuthi uMongameli uyaluzwa usizi lwabo futhi waqhamuka namaqhinga okuxazulula

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 210

izinkinga izwe elibhekene nazo. Siyakubonga ngalokho uMongameli.

English:

The Department of Employment and Labour plays a pivotal role in ensuring that economic integration is coupled with decent work, labour mobility and employment creation. We will therefore ensure the following, namely, to fully implement the national labour migration policy which provided a framework for managing the movements of workers across the borders in an orderly and predictable manner. This aim is to balance the attraction of critical skills needed for the industrial growth with the protection of job opportunities for South Africans. This is very crucial at the current time in South Africa ...

IsiZulu:

...ukuqinisekisa ukuthi amabhizinisi ayayenza imikhiqizo. Sizosebenza kanzima njengoMnyango ukusebenzisa imikhiqizo eyingxenye yoMnyango lapho sizosekela izinkampani ezincane nezinkulu ukuthi zikwazi ukwenza imikhiqizo ezokwenza inzuzo sokwazi ukuba sibenezwe elizokwazi ukuthi siye phambili ...

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 211

... especially industries identified in the Sona that deal with rare minerals, locomotive sector and agro-processing to strengthen South Africa's industrial base.

IsiZulu:

INingizimu iyizwe elizimele. Iyizwe lobaba nomama abazigqajayo ukuthi bangabaseNingizimu Afrika. Siyisizukulwane samaqhawe abafana nobabu-Olivier Tambo owayengumholi we-African Congress, Lillian Ngoyi, Mama Ruth First, Walter and Albetina Sisulu, Collins Chabane, Moses Mabhida, Winnie Mandela kanye nabanye. Mongameli basifundisa ukuthi inkululeko esayithola eNingizimu Afrika azange kube inkululeko yamahhala. Inkululeko esayilwela kwachitheka igazi kwabakhona ababoshwayo. I-ANC ebihamba phambili emzabalazweni wokukhulula abantu baseNingizimu Afrika. lokho kusitshela ukuthi kukho konke esikwenzayo kumele imigomo esibekayo sikwazi ukuthi ikwazi ukuqapha imingcele ...

English:

... the movements of our people to protect the rights of South Africans and all who are within our borders. We therefore owe it to them to ensure that we note the decade that others are saying eight years is a decade. Eight years is not a decade.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 212

We must know that a decade is 10 years. This shows that there is a good performance of mainly ANC listed companies. This is good news for the economy.

In 1965, at the founding of the African Party for the independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, Amílcar Cabral in the party directive made the famous quote: "Tell no lies and claim no easy victory." And we are not going to do that. We are not intending to do that, Mr President.

Mr President, you spoke at length when you were delivering the Sona. You made a groundbreaking announcement since 1994 that 10 000 inspectors are going to be employed in the Department of Employment and Labour. It has never been done since 1994, and it is done by you, Mr President. As the department we are going to ensure the strategic use of the President's announcement of the 10 000 additional labour inspectors. The additional capacity will assist in improving the 300 000 workplace visits annually to about 1,5 million inspections. This is how far your intervention is going to be. Further to that, over 6,8 million people in the country will have their work environment and employment conditions improved.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 213

We will also improve the R150 million that is recovered annually in the form of penalties, fines, underpayment and failure to register workers for social protection. Currently, annually, the department is able to return direct to the exploited workers and back to their pockets, over R70 million recovered from illegal deductions and underpayments. These are real funds that average between R5 000 and R10 000. We are therefore working hard to ensure that the 10 000 inspectors are on the ground without delay as it will increase the department's reach from the current 2 300 inspectors to 10 000 inspectors, which will make it 12 300 inspectors.

In passing, we must say it. One day this House will have to answer to the crime that we are committing of allowing ourselves to be abused by the cult - to allow the cult to sit amongst us and allow them to abuse us day in and day out. I think it is wrong and we should not allow that. Others come here and claim that they are going to win elections, but they have a very, very disturbing concepts where they want us to go in to the "umgqomo" [drum] and everything. What is that? What kind of leadership is that? You start to understand the challenges that we are faced with as a country.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 214

I want to say to the hon Zungula that the ANC doesn't hate black people. It is the very same ANC that has built houses, that has given black South Africans electricity, that has built roads, that has built houses for them, hat has given them water and it has given young people who are going to tertiary institutions the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, for free. They start from basic education up until tertiary education without paying a cent through this President of the ANC [Time expired.] Thank you very much.

Mr V REDDY: Hon Deputy Chairperson, the Rules are very clear that speakers must not mislead the House. The ANC has not given water, but it is taking away water.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much. That is a debatable point.

Ms M DHLAMINI: Hon Deputy Chairperson, allow me to stand on the protocol already established by the speakers who came before me.

Hon President, the state of the nation address, Sona, you delivered a few days ago was not an ordinary address, it was a

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 215

resounding account that echoes a message of optimism and renewed hope in our economic trajectory in the context of a volatile global economic climate.

South Africa stands at the dawn of a new era because of the decisive interventions that place the economy on a path of recovery despite multiple external pressures, shocks and setbacks.

Hon President, as you note emphatically that our economy is growing again, and this growth is gathering pace. To support this assertion, the Sona highlights key indicators of sustained growth, stability and recovery.

In terms of the economic outlook, international bodies, not least the International Monetary Fund, IMF, increased its forecast for South Africa from 1,2% to 1,4% for 2026 and this trend is set to increase in 2027. These are the economic figures and the reality that the country is facing.

The World Bank also issued an improved 2026 projection of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product, GDP, growth by 0,3 percentage points to 1,4% and to 1,5% next year.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 216

President ...

IsiXhosa:

... kuyaqhutywa futhi kuyasetyenzwa.

English:

These are the hard reality economic facts and figures, not fiction. Yes, this is remarkable, but it is by no means adequate to significantly tackle poverty, unemployment and inequality. However, we must build on the momentum to take our economy and our country to the greater heights.

Under your leadership, President Cyril Ramaphosa, this is possible.

Sesotho:

Bomme le bontate, bahlophehi ba rona, Matona le Batlatsa Matona ba sebetsang le Ntate Ramaphosa, re a le bona; mesebetsi e a bonahala!

English:

The objective of speeding up economic transformation, inclusive growth and job creation remains a fundamental

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 217

strategic imperative of the ANC, as clearly articulated and articulated in the January 8th statement of this year. This strategic imperative is aligned with the key priorities contained in the Medium-Term Development Plan, MTDP, which elevates inclusive economic growth and job creation.

The main drivers of sustainable economic growth include a vibrant productive industrial base. Therefore, the investments in the manufacturing value chain remain an integral part of accelerating economic development. Emphasis is firmly placed on reindustrialisation, aggressive infrastructure investment, energy security and localisation. These hallmarks of the economic recovery which has been meticulously driven by His Excellency, hon President Cyril Ramaphosa and His Excellency, Deputy president Paul Mashatile.

Our country is indeed on a path of recovery and the days of economic stagnation due to major binding constraints in energy and logistics as well as low investor confidence are receding. Major improvements in the electricity supply and logistics such as Transnet, as a state-owned entity, SOE, are expected to support industrial production as a backbone of economic growth.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 218

The approach to boosting local industrial base is driven through the localisation initiative which is anchored on a sectoral masterplan in targeted sectors such as automotive, steel, chemical, agro-industry and green technologies.

According to the MTDP review report notable progress has been made through sector masterplans as follows:

Firstly, R44,2 billion investments secured between April and September 2025.

Secondly, a pipeline of 15 battery mineral project valued at R40 billion.

Thirdly, a R4,2 billion BMW investment linked to Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle, PHEV, production.

As the ANC, it is a fact and a reality that, we inherited a country that was deliberately segregated socially, economically and spatially.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 219

The fundamental task of eliminating the core and periphery distortion requires deliberate and careful planning as a way to ensure geographically balanced economic activity.

To this end, the objective remains leveraging Special Economic Zones, SEZs, as catalysts for investment, utilising the new model derived from the Spatial Industrial Development, SID, Strategy.

Indeed, President, we can confirm that the economic zones such as Coega, Dube TradePort and Tshwane Automotive SEZ have created approximately 27 000 direct jobs, focusing on manufacturing, automotive and logistics.

Yes, indeed, these figures are not enough because of unemployment that is very high in our country. But this is the work in progress and these figures suggest to say, hon President and your Cabinet you are really accounting to the people of South Africa, and we are happy as the ANC with that accountability.

An HON MEMBER: Was this your perfect wedding?

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 220

Ms M DHLAMINI: In terms of supporting tourism sector, we must highlight that the tourism performance continues to demonstrate resilience and versatility: 7,6 million international arrivals recorded between January and September 2025; hotel occupancy reached 52,6%, surpassing pre-Covid levels; the Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA, system was also launched. High five to the Department of Tourism led by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The crown ... these achievements is ... your speech hon President, you highlighted a further milestone when you recognised that our tourism sector made history last year, recording the arrival of 10,5 million visitors. The are the figures that also translate the work in progress.

Sesotho:

E le nnete, mohl Ramaphosa le Kabinete ya hao, terene ena ya, "Roma nna," e a tsamaya. Ha e ka ba ya tloha e eme ho tloha ka 2018. Le ha jwale e sa ntse e tsamaya. Tshwara jwalo Ntate Ramaphosa le Kabinete ya hao, re a le bona!

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 221

In conclusion, hon President, I wish to reaffirm your statement that, yes, we have indeed turned a corner, now, we must look ahead and move with speed.

Certainly, our economic prospects are less gloomy as it was the case in previous years and now we are on a path of recovery. Forward ever, backwards never!

Sesotho:

Ha e le ditsebe tsona, Ntate Ramaphosa, o na le tsona tse mamelang. Ha e le mahlo ona, o na le ona a bonang. Ha se mahlo a hao fela; ke mahlo a Kabinete eo o e kgethileng, mme re a leboha ka Matona ao o re fileng ona.

Re tlo tsopella pele dikomiting tsa Palamente, re ntse re le bitsa. Re tlo le qopha ka boikarabelo hore batho ba Afrika Borwa ba kgone ho bona hore mesebetsi yona e a etsahala, mme diphethoho di a tla maphelong a bona.

Re le ANC, re motlotlo haholo ka balekane bohle ba GNU, le ba ka ntle ho GNU, hoba ha ene e se ka bona ba ntse ba re hweletsa, ne re keke ra tiisa. Jwale re tlo tiisa ho feta ha ba ntse ba re hweletsa; mme re a leboha ba nne ba re hweletse.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 222

IsiXhosa:

Amandla!

English:

AN HON MEMBER: Where is your husband, perfect wedding?

Dr L W MAHLATSI: Chairperson, greetings to the President, Deputy President and also to the former President.

Sesotho:

Kgotso, Maafrika!

English:

The 2026 State of the Nation Address, SONA, delivered by the President, continues along the same economic path adopted since 2019. These so-called structural reforms, supported by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, promote liberalisation and create private sector involvement in public infrastructure.

In simple terms, this means opening key public sectors - electricity, railways, ports, and water - to private profit-

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 223

making interests. Through a programme like Operation Vulindlela, the government is advancing reforms that shift the state away from direct control towards regulating private capital. But the question we must ask is very simple: who benefits?

Between 2015 and 2024, our economy grew at less than 1% per year. Expanded unemployment stands at over 42%. Between 10 and 12 million South Africans are without work. Inequality remains extreme, yet policy directions continue to favour private accumulation. While the share of national income going to workers declines, we cannot regulate our way out of poverty while opening strategic infrastructure to profit-driven interests.

On crime, the President rightly acknowledged its seriousness and supported the deployment of military to assist the police, as advised by the UAT Party. However, crime is not just a policing issue, it is rooted in unemployment, inequality, and economic exclusion.

Without addressing the structural drivers of poverty, crime will persist. It is also surprising that the President speaks

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 224

strongly about corruption and crime prevention without directly addressing the unresolved concerns surrounding the Phalaphala saga. When a head of state calls for accountability, transparency must begin at the highest office. Public trust cannot be rebuilt selectively. Ethical leadership requires openness and full disclosure of the serious national and international concerns that have been raised.

South Africa cannot continue with stagnation, deindustrialisation, and austerity while hoping for different results. The vision of the Freedom Charter, public ownership on monopoly industry for the benefit of the people, remains relevant today. The strategic sector must serve the national development, not private enrichment needs a strong development state, capable public institutions, industrialisation, ownership and control of the land, quality education, accessibility to health care, and real accountability.

Xitsonga:

Khanimambo.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 225

Ms L MHLONGO: Hon Chair, I would like for us to wait for the President because I do have some direct words for him, and I do not want him to miss those words.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr P Govender): No, hon member. We cannot wait. You have your time now please speak.

IsiZulu:

Kulungile. Nizongitshelala ubaba wenu ukuthi waze wayikhuluma inganekwane. Lokhu kuvela Kwamashu eSingawunqawini. Uma ngisukuma la angizile ukuzokhuluma ngalokhu kungasebenzi kwabantu. Abaphi laba bantu enibaqashile? Abantu nibakhulula ngokubahola ngokubasabisa ngokuthi uma bengayenzi intando yenu nizothatha konke kubona. [Ubuwelewele.]

I-ANC ikhulula abantu ngokuthi ibanikeze i-dependency syndrome. I-syndrome ibulala umhlaba wethu. Abantu bakithi nibakhulisa kanjani ningabaniki amandla abo? Nisitshela inganekwane. Ake sikhulume la ngabokufika, ...

English:

Over 3 240 jobs are occupied by foreign nationals.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 226

IsiZulu:

... abahleli, abangenayo imisebenzi ngenxa yenu. Kodwa nithi nina nikhulisa umnotho? Inganekwane. Ake sikhulume ngogogo bethu abasikhulisile. Nonke enihleli la banikhulisile nani. Bathenga imithi, bathenga ukudla futhi bakhokhela ugesi kodwa nibanikeza u-R2 200? Inganekwane. Siyi-MKP, sithi, ayinyuke le mali ibe u-R5 240. Angithi, Mongameli, uthe, kuno-R40 trillion womnotho wezimbiwa, sizoyithatha lapho imali. Angithi uvivela ukulanda amasosha? Ungasitsheli ngenganekwane. Nithe nezikole niyazinakekela. Nike naya Kwamashu esikoleni sabakhubazekile? Nibonile ukuthi u-50% ...

English:

... of those children do not attend school because of the poor infrastructure.

IsiZulu:

Nisitshela ngenganekwane. Odadebethu babelethela phansi ezibhedlela eMpumalanga Koloni naseNtshonalanga Koloni. Nisitshela ngenganekwane. Siphelile isikhathi senu. Kuphelile ukuthi nisibuse. Umnotho uyabuya uza kumuntu omnyama. Akekho umuntu omnyama laphaya eNtshonalanga Koloni, bazikhulula kuphi. Nibeyamanisa nothuvi. Abantu bakithi beyamaniswa

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 227

nothuvi eNtshonalanga Koloni. Nithi nibanika intuthuko
ngothuvi? Umuntu alale nothuvi? Adle nothuvi? Yini leyo?
Ukusiphatha lokho? Yinganekwane. Ngithi kuwena, Nxamalala,
ngiyabonga, ukuthi ube yiqhawe, wasukuma walibona igebe
walivala. Ngithi, Nxamalala, Siyabonga. [Ubuwelewele.]

Ms K L N SANGONI: Hon Deputy Chairperson, Your Excellencies
President Cyril Ramaphosa and Deputy President Paul Mashatile,
hon members, and fellow South Africans, as the President said,
South Africa stands at a defining point of economic renewal.
[Interjections.] There have been four consecutive quarters of
economic growth, the lowest unemployment figure in five years,
and inflation at its lowest in the last 20 years. Our country
is demonstrating that deliberate policy action produces
tangible results.

Comrade President, it was the founding father of our
democracy, Nelson Mandela, who reminded us that, after
climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more
hills to climb. The state of the nation address presented by
the President last week was such a moment. It was a time to
pause and reflect on the road travelled since 2018 when
President Ramaphosa took office to appreciate the achievements

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 228

that have been made, which, at some point, seemed impossible, and to confront, with honesty and resolve, the hills that still lie ahead. The successes outlined in the state of the nation address were not accidents of history.

Hon Steenhuisen, you must also tell no lies and claim no easy victories. These successes reported by the President predate the Government of National Unity, GNU. They are the result of deliberate action during the latter part of the fifth and sixth administrations, and now the seventh administration, to reverse decline, restore institutions, and, once again, relay the foundations for inclusive growth. Today, South Africa stands on firmer ground than it did a few years ago. Yet, as Madiba warned us, we dare not linger. The question before us is how to sustain this economic growth to ensure it reaches every corner of our nation. Millions of our people still live with poverty, unemployment, and inequality. For them, the promise of democracy must be felt not in speeches but in daily lives. So, Comrade President, you dare not linger. The long walk has not ended.

We must position technology, the digital economy, and digital infrastructure investment as primary drivers of inclusive and

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 229

equitable economic growth. The urgency of implementation cannot be overstated. We have seen, in word and in deed, what focused reform and decisive leadership can achieve. The ANC acknowledges and welcomes real progress. The high-demand spectrum auction raised R14,4 billion. Last year, Telkom generated more than R500 million to the fiscus in dividends.

Mobile data prices have declined by over 50% between 2019 and 2023, easing costs for working families, and 4G coverage now reaches over 98% of the population, whilst 5G is expanding. Thousands of public facilities, schools, clinics, and government offices are connected through the SA Connect broadband programme. This offers real solutions to unemployment, not the MKP type of sending poor young children to be killed in the killing fields of the Ukraine and calling it job creation. More than 50 data centres have been built, and the R50 billion invested has strengthened digital infrastructure. We support the commitment to fully digitise government services.

We commend the work done by the former Minister of Home Affairs, the hon Motsoaledi, to roll out digital reforms at Home Affairs, including digital identity documents, as well as

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 230

initiatives such as proposed in Operation Vulindlela's digital transformation road map and the State Information Technology Agency's MyMzansi application. These are not mere technical upgrades. They are instruments of dignity, efficiency, and economic participation.

Parliament has also, through rigorous oversight, pushed regulatory reforms that ensure that data does not expire but rather mandates the rollover of unused data bundles. This is a victory that this Parliament fully owns, aligned with the call that #DataMustFall, and a tangible intervention in the cost of living.

The state of the nation address underscored the transformative role of artificial intelligence and data analytics in strengthening governance, improving service delivery, and combating illicit economic activity. We must move with urgency. The global artificial intelligence race is accelerating, and South Africa must be a rule-maker, not a rule-taker. Our greatest risk is not a lack of vision. It is fragmentation. We must move beyond scattered initiatives towards a single, coherent national digital strategy.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 231

South Africa has chosen the path of a developmental state. That is a state that does not retreat from the economy but actively shapes it in the public interest. No nation has ever built a successful digital economy by abandoning its strategic capabilities. Countries that lead in connectivity do so through deliberate alignment between the state and industry. So, South Africa, like China, must show the same resolve in strengthening our state-owned entities in the technology and communications space. Our state-owned entities like Telkom, Sentech, and Broadband Infraco are not relics. They are instruments of transformation. With proper governance and adequate, committed investment, they can advance broad-based black economic empowerment, affordable connectivity, and support national data sovereignty and local innovation. These companies must be at the centre of our country's digital industrial policy.

We must do this by building and owning sovereign technology, whether satellites or strengthening local cloud and hosting capacity. We must protect people and their data and deal with online harms, including cyberbullying, the invasion of deepfakes, misinformation, and disinformation. We must

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 232

introduce fair taxation of digital multinationals and regulate social and online media, including podcasts.

This is not about ideology. It is about equity. Hon Mulder, the ANC will not retreat on broad-based black economic empowerment, the National Health Insurance, or land expropriation under the law. When we speak about equity, we do not speak about sameness. We speak of justice. Equality assumes that all begin from the same starting line, whilst equity recognises the deep structural imbalances created by centuries of colonial and apartheid oppression. So, for you to call for equal treatment in a profoundly unequal society is to ignore history and deny lived reality. We neither seek benevolence from any group, nor do we seek permission to govern or succeed. The democratic mandate in this country rests with its people as a whole.

The FF Plus, by its own posture and policy positions, continues to foreground the protection of historic privilege rather than dismantling structural inequality. One cannot credibly invoke unity whilst resisting the symbolic and material steps that this government is taking to build shared

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 233

national unity. The rejection of the renaming of Graaff-Reinet ... Thank you very much, Deputy Chairperson. [Time expired.]

The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon President, hon Deputy President, and former President Jacob Zuma, the tone set by the President in the state of the nation address is an honest reflection of where we are as a country. There are real green shoots.

Amongst others, our country is being removed from the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force. We have moved beyond the era of debilitating load shedding. That progress did not happen by accident. It required focus, reform, and co-operation between government and the private sector. As the Government of National Unity, we must take collective credit for the progress we have made. Equally, we must take collective responsibility where challenges remain. That is the balance that will build trust in our country.

Whilst we are seeing an uptick in economic growth, job creation remains our most urgent task. It is the first priority of the GNU to drive inclusive growth and create jobs. That responsibility rests not only with government but with

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 234

business, labour, and every sector of our society. We therefore welcome the announcement that the social relief of distress grant will be redesigned to move effectively towards supporting livelihoods, skills development, work opportunities, and productive activity. This evolution is important. However, social protection must go hand in hand with reducing the cost of living. It is not enough to provide support if rising costs erode its value. In South Africa, we do not have a shortage of food. We have a problem of access and affordability. The cost of basic goods remains too high for too many households. When we speak of economic reform, we must also speak of ensuring that each rand stretches further and that more South Africans go to bed with food on their tables.

Mr President, as a former mayor who led a city during a drought, we welcome the newly established task team. However, the centre of responsibility must remain with municipalities and provinces. Local government is responsible for water reticulation, and it understands the realities of infrastructure on the ground. Between 30% and 40% of our potable water is lost through pipe leaks. Within this challenge lies an opportunity to employ and train young people

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 235

to detect and repair water leaks in our communities, an opportunity to strengthen municipal systems and to build technical skills now that will serve communities long into the future.

Let me end on a positive note. To the people of South Africa, of Mzansi, I want to say thank you.

IsiXhosa:

Enkosi kakhulu.

Afrikaans:

Baie dankie.

English:

Your warmth and hospitality define how the world experiences our country. The record 10,5 million international arrivals we achieved is no coincidence either. It is the result of deliberate work by government, the private sector, and ordinary South Africans who welcome visitors to our country with pride.

That spirit ... I thank you. [Time expired.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 236

Mr M BILLY: Deputy Chair, Mr President, hon Ministers and Deputy Ministers, hon members, and fellow South Africans. Mr President, on 19 July 2024, I stood in this House to respond to your first State of the Nation Address after the formation of the Government of National Unity, GNU. For the first time in our democratic history, Cabinet was not made-up of one party alone. It included leaders from across the political spectrum, including my party, the DA. That moment represented something new. It represented maturity, accountability, and it represented hope. In that address, Mr President, you made commitments on behalf of the Government of National Unity and said, and I quote:

To tackle crime and corruption, we must have a capable, sophisticated, and independent law enforcement agencies that can fix complex and organized crime.

We will deploy modern technology to assist crime fighting. A data-driven approach will be used to identify violent crime hotspots and inform the allocation of policing resources alongside prevention measures.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 237

We will continue to tackle priority crimes like illegal mining, gang violence, cash-in-transit heists, and the construction mafia through specialised police units.

Mr President, the reality today is that these commitments have not materialized at ground level. There is no visible modern technological transformation of police stations. The body-worn cameras that were meant to be rolled out in April 2024 remain a promise on paper. Former Minister Bheki Cele promised them, but he failed to deliver. Minister Mcunu did the same, promised this Parliament that body-worn cameras were coming, but again he failed. Meanwhile, good policemen and women are being killed in the line of duty, including suspects. In KwaZulu-Natal alone, an average of eight suspects is being killed by the police every week. The situation is volatile, dangerous, and unsustainable. There is no meaningful data-driven policing that communities can see on the ground. Instead, what we are seeing, Mr President, is depletion. And this is not theory. This is oversight.

Just two weeks ago, Mr President, I encountered four members of the SA Police Service Tactical Response Team from Pinetown Police Station at an air conditioning workshop. I asked them

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 238

what they were doing there. They told me that they were collecting quotes to fix a broken air conditioner in their police vehicle. Mr President, these were tactical officers meant to be fighting organized crime. Instead of being deployed in hotspots, they were driving around collecting repair quotes to send to Pretoria. That is governance failure, Mr President. Mr President, the time is now to expand policing powers to competent local and provisional governments within constitutional bounds. This is the only long-term solution to the problem, Mr President. And this view is supported by the SA Police Service in KwaZulu-Natal. At a recent oversight meeting with the said leadership and the Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant Mkhwanazi, we were informed that the police were severely undercapacitated. He cited, amongst others, some of the things that there were insufficient police vehicles, that there were shortages of officers. He said there were about 20 000 officers in the province to keep safe about 12 million people in the province. He said that there were stations that were not operating for 24 hours. There were shortages of bulletproof vests. There were outdated ICT systems. And more importantly, there were also insufficient two-way radios. Mr President, hon members, these are not sudden problems. These are systemic failures that developed

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 239

over years because of neglect, poor management, and political protection of incompetence. These failures, Mr President, were preventable. At another oversight engagement in Simon's Town with the NCOP Select Committee on Security and Justice, we heard the Chief of the SA Navy, Admiral Monde Lubisi, speak openly about years of underfunding that have brought our Navy close to collapse. It was uncomfortable. It was embarrassing to hear that we have reached a point where we struggle to patrol our own waters. Instead of confronting that reality publicly, the meeting, Mr President, was abruptly converted into a closed session. But Lubisi was not embarrassing the country. He was crying for help. He believed Parliament was his refuge. We must not wait for good public servants to go public, Mr President, before we act. We must not respond with another commission. We must respond with action immediately when these things come up.

Recently at the SA Defence Force Headquarters in Bloemfontein, again, senior generals detailed the consequences of the continuous defunding of our army. They spoke about domestic operational strain. They spoke about the pressure on our troops deployed in the DRC. They spoke about the logistical shortfalls. And now we hear of deploying the same Defence

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 240

Force to support the SAPS in gang-ridden areas. Mr President, the DA supports this call. The DA has long called for decisive action against gangs, and this intervention is welcomed. But Mr President, how do we deploy a force that is limping? How do we deploy an army that has been systematically weakened? Mr President, this is not a sudden crisis. It is a result of executive failure. It is a result of years of shielding underperforming Ministers. It is a result of a culture where accountability was postponed. When launching criminal justice reform initiatives in The Presidency, before re-vetting the SAPS leadership, before recruiting additional officers, before deploying the SA Defence Force, Mr President, do you acknowledge that many of these failures are man-made? Do you acknowledge that they stem from political appointments and executive inaction? Are you prepared to say to South Africans, we failed. We failed to act sooner. We protected the wrong people. We allowed decline. Mr President, I am afraid South Africans do not want more task teams. They want consequences. They want Ministers removed when they fail. They want political accountability, not golden handshakes. They want competence rewarded and incompetence dismissed. Let me say this clearly, Mr President, the DA Ministers serving in the GNU are working. They are stabilizing portfolios, they are

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 241

restoring governance, they are correcting years of neglect, they are proving that accountability and delivery can coexist. The GNU will only succeed if accountability is applied equally, not selectively, not politically. And if you are serious about the criminal justice reform, Mr President, reform must begin at the executive level. If you are serious about fighting corruption, those implicated must not be recycled. If you are serious about restoring public trust, there must be visible consequences. South Africans are tired of promises. They are tired of commissions that lead nowhere. They are tired of being told that reform is coming. They want to feel safe. They want police that are equipped. They want soldiers who are supported. They want a justice system that convicts criminals. Mr President, they want a leadership that takes responsibility and that is decisive ... [Time expired.]

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE SECOND LARGEST MINORITY PARTY (Mr G MICHALAKIS): Deputy Chairperson, Mr President, before I start my speech, may I remark on what a smart tie you were wearing on Thursday night, and yours was properly made, unlike the leaders of some popcorn party's ties. Whether deliberately or not, Mr President, that tie reflected the highlights of your speech, from the news that the economy is growing under the

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 242

GNU as opposed to years of decline, to the best matric pass rate under Minister Gwarube, the State Property Company that we are looking forward to taking shape under Minister MacPherson, innovation in digitization of personal documents like IDs, driver's licences, matric certificates under Ministers Schreiber and Malatsi, and the declaration of a state of disaster for foot-and-mouth disease, as Minister Steenhuisen called for in January, but also the more than 10 000 extension officers to support farmers.

This year marks the year of a municipal election, where water will be a central theme. It is funny, Mr President, that you told the one Minister who lives to dress up for Sona that she should be in Gauteng to sort out the water. Despite this, for the premier there to paraphrase my colleague hon Burke, the penny must still drop. For him, the solution to the water crisis is to shower at a hotel. May he be rewarded with a golden shower at the ballot box for such a stupid comment because it is clearly only at the ballot box where solutions can be found. The premier should not apologize for not being here. He should apologize for his blatant arrogance towards the people of Gauteng. Then there is the official opposition, a party that summonses a Chief Whip from the NCOP because

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 243

there are a handful of members on the NA benches who have not yet been tried, they are clearly not trusted. It is safe to say that the Chief Whip of the Opposition will never be ready or able. Seeing as though the MK and the EFF are so keen on acknowledging the convicts in the gallery, may I send my regards? We should ask them to stand again so that the police can see them clearly. At least the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture served his full term. Mr Malema has suddenly become very passionate about water provision. How are the communities affected by the Giyani Water Project doing, hon Malema? Are their taps still dry? Did you not benefit from the looting of that project? The MK, the EFF, the BA, UDM, Al Jama-ah, RISE, GOOD, UAT, ActionSA, ACDP, BOSA and the NCC have not had a single leadership change ever. They are built around single personalities, often without personality, with sidekicks, or those that the DA did not want anymore. I am surprised the EFF ... let me finish my sentence ... I only wonder if their leader will finish his sentence. As for hon Trollip, speaking of despotic regimes, I want to remind him of his own party's culture of internal elections and democracy. When you do one day have that conference to elect someone slightly more stable, less xenophobic, we hope you will realize that votes are different from likes on X. You cannot

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 244

buy them. But Mr President, our focus should not be on the opposition. They are a waste of time and offer no alternative. Our focus should be to deliver better lives for South Africans than they had for the last 30 years of democracy. Therefore, it was fitting that you started your speech with the economic winds of these past two years since the co-election replaced ANC majority rule. A decline in inflation, a stronger Rand, stabilizing government debt, a stronger JSE, the prospects of a growing economy. But Mr President, an economy shackled by black economic empowerment, BEE and cadre deployment is not going to reach the 3% growth that you dream of, sir. Thirty-five comma eight percent of black South Africans are unemployed. Almost 30 million black South Africans are living in poverty. Yet R1 trillion was shifted to fewer than 100 people since 1994 through BEE. These are the facts. One thing I hope we can agree on is that this is not acceptable, and that if there is an alternative on the table that will offer the 30 million black South Africans an opportunity into work without having to label people according to their race, like the apartheid government did, why would we not ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon member, can you take your seat. A see a hand. Hon Nzimande!

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 245

Mr E NZIMANDE: Thanks, hon Chair ...

IsiZulu:

... ngicela umkhuze lo owakhafulwa ulwandle ukuthi ngokoMthetho 63 akayeke ukungahloniphi. Akayeke ukuthi ex-convict iyaqaphelwa noma iyabonwa. Uyachwensa ngicela umkhuze.

English:

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Sorry, hon Nzimande, that is not a Rule that you can stand on.

IsiZulu:

Mnu E NZIMANDE: Yebo uyawephula lo Mthetho. Uyachwensa.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you. Hon Michalakis, you may continue.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE SECOND LARGEST MINORITY PARTY (Mr G Michalakis): Thank you, House Chairperson, the Rules also say that you need to raise the point of order when it occurs. No wonder they must import Chief Whips. ... because without truly relieving the economy of what holds us back, Mr President, your Sona speech will be like a water tap in Johannesburg. One

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 246

looks at it and one has hopes only to be met by dololo [nothing] actual delivery. Mr President, I do hope that this year will be a continuation of the growth path that the country has now taken. But I also hope that it will be the beginning of us taking unemployment seriously and getting rid of bad policies that are holding the economy back so that we can truly address the injustices of the past and create an open society with opportunities for everyone who live in it. I thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Hon President, it has been a minute. The last time I was here there were 19 young people who were stuck in Ukraine, and because of your leadership they are coming back home.

Whilst we are at it, President, I want to congratulate the hon Des van Rooyen whom I once played tennis with. The last time the former President Zuma gave him a task as Minister of Finance, it was merely a weekend special, then followed by a brief one-night stand as MKP Chief Whip. Although your opposition ... [Interjections.] [Inaudible.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 247

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon member, let's not drown the speaker.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: ... is about as unreliable as your backhand in tennis ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Minister, can you take your seat? I see a hand. Hon Minister, take your seat please. I see a hand. Yes, hon member?

IsiZulu:

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILE: Ngiyabonga Sekela Sihlalo, bengicela ukubuza ukuthi uNgqongqoshe angakwazi yini ukuthatha umbuzo? Abafundi ababhalisiwe, izingane azidlile, uNSFAS unezinkinga akakhulume ngeMfundi ePhakeme. Ngiyacela.

English:

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Alright, I did hear you. Thank you. Hon Minister, would you take a question?

Would you take a question?

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 248

IsiZulu:

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILE: Akakamile nezinwele.

English:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Although your opposition politics, hon van Rooyen, is about as unreliable as your backhand in tennis, they are still better than those of hon Judge Hlophe, and long may your opening for the debate of the MKP last long.

Also, the last time I spoke here, Minister Steenhuisen was ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Minister, can you take your seat? I see another hand.

Mr V G REDDY: Hon Deputy Chairperson, I am not sure what language this Minister is using. He is speaking with a twang ... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): No, let's hear the comment ... [Interjections.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 249

Mr V G REDDY: ... he needs to be clear so that we can understand ... [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You are speaking with a twang!

Mr V G REDDY: I can't pick up his twanging. Please stop the twanging ... [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You are speaking with a twang!

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Sorry, hon Minister, please continue.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Well, you can't pick up anything politics or intelligent anyway. So, you are serving yourself.

I was saying that hon Minister Steenhuisen was simply hon John Steenhuisen, cooking for himself delicious healthy meals and minding his own business ... [Inaudible.] ... mouth disease ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 250

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Minister, can you take your seat? I see another hand. Yes, hon member?

IsiNdebele:

Nom D M SKOSANA: Sihlalo, angicabangi bonyana umthetho wePalamende uyavuma bonyana uNgqongqotjhe eze angakakami lapha. Akayokukama ngombana into ayikhuluma njenganje ayikalungi. Ngiyathokoza.

English:

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you, hon member. Hon Minister, please continue.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING: It looks like it's going to be a long night. As I said, and I agree with Minister Steenhuisen that with all the things that have been happening in our country we cannot afford complacency, and through the leadership of the ANC in the Government of National Unity, GNU, to quote an old friend of mine - I can see, hon John Steenhuisen, that you are "cruising very nicely." You may claim the easy victories, which hon Hill Billy here came to reject, but we will allow that as long as

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 251

you do not season them or pepper them with lies. For us, the GNU is not about Ministers competing, but about submitting to the collective responsibility of government.

This is your government too. Unlike the FF Plus and some from your bench, hon Steenhuisen, who keep one foot in the GNU and another ready to skip when things get difficult, you are within your rights to claim its victories. This is the nature of politics in South Africa - it's fluid, dramatic but it is also occasionally, if you listen to the hon leader of the EFF who seem uncertain whether he wants to kiss the President or to kill the President, politics can be very confusing.

What must not be confusing, however, is the difference between noise and work, between performance and governance, between slogan and solutions, and between sophistry and action. It is from that standpoint that I rise to support the state of the nation that you delivered, President, grounded not in sophistry but in action, co-ordination and delivery.

Let me begin where the pain is real and immediate. On the evening of the state of the nation address, I left the Chamber, not to rush to television studios or to issue press

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 252

statements, but to meet students from Cape Peninsula University of Technology, CPUT, who were protesting outside Parliament about the quality of their accommodation. They were anxious, angry, exhausted but also very uncertain.

Working together with the police, student leaders and university management we were informed that the last of those students will walk into better beds tomorrow. We have also been in contact this morning with vice-chancellors of UCT and DUT who have committed that the protests that are happening on their campuses, which are very peaceful I must say, will be concluded as soon as possible.

Our department together with student organisations, vice-chancellors and college principals are working around the clock to ensure that no student is left behind. So, when some ask, where is government? The answer is simple - sometimes government is not on social media, hon Lonzi. Sometimes government is in the corridor at midnight fixing problems.

Student accommodation remains one of the most urgent challenges in the post-school system. We face a shortfall of 200 000 beds. We will not resolve this challenge only with

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 253

bricks and mortar. That is why we are expanding access through a combination of fiscal infrastructure and digital expansion.

Many universities are already rolling out digital and blended programmes. This work must accelerate. Similarly, plans are afoot to digitise Community Education and Training, CET, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, curricular through the national online system so that we can meet the demand of our success in the Grade 12 cohort.

At the same time, we must significantly improve the quality of distance education, particularly at the University of SA, Unisa, whose more than 350 000 students are the backbone of our post-school education and training system. Our universities are under pressure, but we are working hard to ensure that we resolve this crisis.

Your instruction, President, that we must build specialised universities including of course the much spoken about University of Ekurhuleni, whom we will ensure that we accelerate. Your instruction also around the transformation that needs to happen as to regards to sector education and training authorities will be taken forward and we will work

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 254

with National Economic Development and Labour Council, Nedlac, to ensure that your instruction that 40% of mandatory grant to employers will be fast tracked. Similarly, your instruction on TVET colleges remains unambiguous. Occupational trades leading to employment, modern workshops in partnerships with industry, quality lecturers and effective workplace integrated learning must define the future of TVETs. We will mobilise all resources, partnerships and energy towards full implementation of the dual system, President, that you instructed about.

As Clement of Alexandria observed, hon Des van Rooyen, sophistry is a powerful art that makes false opinion appear true only in words. When rhetoric is not guided by philosophy or action it becomes dangerous to all. Yours, hon van Rooyen, is dangerous sophistry.

Discrediting the President's intent while opposing the practical step taken to realise it without solution is sophistry. Sophistry is declaring that your party has readiness to govern, while failing to govern itself. How does a party without a constitution propose to govern a constitutional democracy? Sophistry. With Members of Parliament, MPs, coming in and going out weekly and with

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 255

Parliament constantly introducing itself to new MKP members, how is stability assured? A party where relatives substitute for one another like royalty and where Nkandla ensures the batteries to the remote control are always fully charged. I can see there was a shaky connection between Nkandla and here. The former President decided to come here ...

IsiZulu:

... ayigade ngokwakhe iMK ...

English:

... whether they are pushing the line that he wants or not.

How do you govern a country when you cannot even be a credible opposition?

President, co-ordination is not incompetence. You have been accused that you are planning. You have been accused ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Minister, can you take your seat? I see a hand.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 256

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: ... of all of these things, but the important thing is that ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Minister, take your seat. Yes, hon member?

IsiNdebele:

Nom D M SKOSANA: Sihlalo, bengibuza bonyana uNgqongqotjhe angawuthatha umbuzo ngombana usakhuluma inolwana?

English:

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Minister, would you take a question?

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: No, they can give the question to hon Manyi before he moves over to the EFF or to ATM ... [Inaudible.] ... travelling quite a lot recently ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon Minister, I see another hand. Could you take your seat, please?

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 257

Mr V G REDDY: Ho Deputy Chairperson, the Minister is so busy reading that speech that he is making ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): No, ask what you want to ask please.

Mr V G REDDY: No, I am not asking a question. His point about Nkandla has nothing to do ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): No, you can raise that in your debate. That is a debatable point, hon Reddy. You can raise that when your member gets a chance tomorrow to speak. Thank you. Hon Minister?

Sorry, hon Minister, there is another hand. Could you take your seat, please?

IsiZulu:

Mnu Z K A CELE: Ngibingele ngokukhulu okuhlonipha uNgqongqoshe ome ngaphambili. Ngicabanga ukuthi sonke eNingizimu Afrika siyazi ukuthi iGNU yakheke kanjani. Ngenxa yokuthi yakhipha amavoti woMkhonto weSizwe ... [Ubuwelewele.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 258

English:

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): No, no, that's not a point of order ... [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: No, but this is frivolous. This is a frivolous point of order.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you. Thank you, hon member. You are out of order, hon member. Hon Minister, please continue.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION: I think they are still hungover and preparing for the loss they are going to suffer at local government elections. They are filling in a protest at the next election.

As I said, President, co-ordination is not incompetence, planning is not paralysis, and shouting is not governance. Some believe that if they shout their sophistry loud enough, reality will surrender. They blame you for believing in boring things; plans, budgets, engineering, timelines and work being done. President, they say you presented dreams and promises.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 259

You may be constrained by resources, but we should never allow a situation wherein our ambition is constrained.

Yes, you may be on the eighth year of your two years and have committed to do certain things within that period, but we should not fall into the trap of believing that because at some point there was a lack of resources, therefore those things will not happen. Even if we fail in building new cities and connecting people through speed trains, or the vision that you hold dearly of making the life of every South African better, we will never be blamed for being ambitious. As some are interested in noise, we are interested in progress.

Let me tell you before I leave this podium that some ears in this House are too small for complexity, for patience and for hard work. However, governing a country, unlike playing tennis, requires all three; complexity, patience and work, which is the work that we have shown over the time. Thank you very much, President.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you, hon members. Could you please take your seats? Take your seats, hon members.

UNREVISED HANSARD

JOINT SITTING

TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Page: 260

Hon Speaker, that brings us to the close of the debate for today. I want to thank the hon President, the hon Deputy President, all the hon members that participated from the podium as well as those who participated from their seats for maintaining the dignity of the House and for making this a lively debate.

Hon members, that brings us to the close of the debate, and this concludes the business of the day.

The Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces adjourned the Joint Sitting at 20:21.