

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 1

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The House met at 14:01.

House Chairperson Mr W Horn took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

Announcement

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon members, before we proceed with today's business, I wish to announce that Ms Nomvula Giba has been appointed as the Serjeant-at-arms with effect from 1 March this year. [Applause.] Ms Giba has worked within the national Parliament for 20 years, both at the National Assembly Table and more recently as a unit manager at the committee section. Ms Giba will commence her duties in the Chamber after a brief orientation period.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 2

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Tebello Maleeme, the deputy Serjeant-at-arms, for the sterling work he has done while acting in this position.

Hon members, the first item on the Order Paper is a motion in the name of the Chief Whip. The Chief Whip.

**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION FOR REMUNERATION OF PUBLIC OFFICE
BEARERS' RECOMMENDATION ON SALARY INCREASE OF PRESIDENT OF
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

(Draft Resolution)

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: Chairperson, I wish to present that the House, in terms of section 2(1) of the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act 1998, Act 20 of 1998, having due regard to the criteria listed in that subsection, and notwithstanding the recommendations in the *Government Gazette* No 53875 of 18 December 2025, containing the Independent Commission for Remuneration of Public Office Bearers' annual remuneration recommendations for 2025-26, determines the salary payable to the President of the Republic of South Africa as adjusted by 3,8% with effect from 1 April

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 3

2025, and that in terms of section 2(2) of the Act, further determines that the amount of R120,000 per annum as that portion of the remuneration of the President to which section 8(1)(d) of the Income Tax Act 1962, Act 58 of 1962, shall apply.

Declaration of votes:

Mr B B NODADA: Chairperson, the recent salary increase of the President following recommendations by the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers is in line with all other public office bearers and civil servants. This happens at a time where the economy is in full recovery since the DA joined the Government of National Unity, GNU. Moreover, more needs to be done to lift millions of South Africans out of poverty into job opportunities.

The DA has always advocated for economic growth and employment opportunities. We have fought corruption and cadre deployment, fought for accountability and consequence management, and fought against the rising cost of living, because we believe that this is what South Africa desperately needs. However, we will not leave it there.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 4

It was the DA that pushed for the National Assembly to adopt rules that will establish a committee where the budget of the Presidency can be scrutinised, the Director-General in the Presidency can come and account, the President and Deputy President can account once per year on key policy matters and where any matter that gets referred to it by the Speaker or through a resolution of Parliament relating to the President or the Presidency can be investigated. That is what accountability and oversight looks like when taxpayers' money funds the Presidency. This is a major step forward in strengthening Parliament's oversight role and was a key recommendation in the Zondo Commission on state capture.

While the President will now earn more, the Secretary to this Parliament earns approximately, almost two million rand more a year than the President. Members might know that the Secretary's salary jumped by more than 70% a mere six months after his appointment in 2022 – an absolute disgrace when South Africans continue to suffer under unemployment and violent crime, where gender-based violence continues to be the order of the day, and where corruption continues to hollow out institutions, especially local government, to the detriment of

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 5

public health, social assistance, policing, and water infrastructure and provision.

The DA will continue to probe this issue to ensure that when salaries of civil servants, including the President or Secretary to Parliament, are increased, it is done in a responsible and fair manner that protects South African taxpayers and ensures that there is enough money in the fiscus to fight crime, deliver basic services like water and create jobs. I thank you. [Applause.]

Mr M MANYI: House Chair, His Excellency President Zuma and the leadership of uMkhonto weSizwe, the MK Party rises to debate the 3,8% inflation salary increase granted to the President at a time when millions of South Africans face unemployment, poverty and a collapsing Public Service.

Leadership must be measured against delivery. It cannot be detached from those outcomes. The President is the chief custodian of the National Development Plan, NDP, a blueprint that sets clear and measurable targets for 2030. That plan committed this country to reducing unemployment to 6% by 2030. Instead, unemployment remains catastrophically high, with ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 6

[Inaudible.] ... unemployment exceeding 60% by the expanded definition.

The NDP envisaged an economy growing at over 5% per annum, to create jobs and reduce inequality. Instead, South Africa has endured years of stagnant growth, with average growth rates barely scraping around 1% over the past decade.

The NDP promised to eliminate poverty and significantly reduce inequality by 2030; yet, poverty has deepened, the cost of living has surged and millions depend on social grants for survival.

The NDP envisioned reliable infrastructure, efficient state-owned enterprises and energy security. Instead, the country has suffered years of devastating load shedding, logistic bottlenecks at ports and rail, and collapsing municipal infrastructure.

These are not abstract statistics. They are missed national commitments. While the NDP was conceived by the visionary President Zuma, Mr Ramaphosa has presided over its failed implementation during a critical period when decisive

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 7

leadership was required to put South Africa on a growth trajectory. Instead of bold structural reform ... decisive governance, South Africa has experienced drift, indecision and policy inconsistency. We were promised a new dawn. What we received was prolonged stagnation.

In any performance-driven environment, failure to meet strategic targets triggers accountability, not reward. If this 3,8% increase were structured as a performance bonus linked to achieving NDP targets, reducing unemployment, accelerating growth, stabilising energy supply and cutting inequality, as it should, the MK Party would reject it out of hand. In fact, if this were truly about performance, the MK Party would not be debating salary increments today. We would instead be submitting a motion of no confidence.

South Africa deserves leadership that meets targets, restores hope and delivers measurable progress, not leadership that is insulated from the consequences of its failures. The MK Party will indeed be submitting a Promotion of Access to Information Act, PAIA, application for the mysteriously declassified Phala Phala report.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 8

In conclusion, we are confident that the section 89 panel report of former Chief Justice Ngcobo will be vindicated. A motion on section 89 for gross misconduct of the President is loading. For today, I submit that the MK Party will not object to the majority view of this House. [Applause.]

Ms P R MAILOLA: House Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the president and commander-in-chief of the EFF a happy revolutionary birthday.

Sepedi:

Re phelele Moshabi.

English:

When President Cyril Ramaphosa became President in 2018, we were told that this billionaire President will not take public money. He will not allow corruption. He will not be corrupt.

However, here we are, nearly eight years later, forever increasing his salary. We pay for his petrol. We pay for the petrol for his wife and family. We pay for his houses in Pretoria and Cape Town. We pay for his flights, his food, his data, his airtime, his hotels and his comfort.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 9

Let us be honest about what we are discussing here. We are talking about a 3,8% increase on a salary of nearly four million per year. This is not an increase on poverty wages. This is not an increase for workers who are struggling to buy bread. This is an increase on an already extremely comfortable salary.

This President should be leading by example. He should be standing here saying, I have my billions. Please do not increase my salary. In fact, take my salary and give it to the Marikana widows.

Workers are not getting a salary increase. We are told that the economy is not growing fast enough. We are told there is no fiscal space.

Why should this President get this increase? What has he done to deserve this? How do we justify this to our people? We need our conscience to guide us when we justify this 3,8% inflationary adjustment, when the likelihood is that our workers are not getting an increase, Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, workers are not getting the same, outsourced workers are not getting the same.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 10

As the EFF, we reject this recommendation. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Mr N M HADEBE: House Chairperson, this decision requires Parliament to carefully balance principle and prudence. On the one hand, the Office of the President carries immense constitutional responsibility and must be accorded to the dignity appropriate to the highest office in the Republic. On the other hand, South Africans are facing significant economic hardship. Rising living costs and high unemployment.

A 3,8% adjustment reflects a moderated approach in the current fiscal climate. Public confidence is strengthened when leadership reflects restraint and accountability. In light of these considerations, and mindful of both fiscal responsibility and constitutional propriety. The IFP supports. I thank you.

Mr R A P TROLLIP: House Chair, we all received the 3,8% salary increase already in our bank accounts, that would be supremely hypocritical to oppose this. However, we believe that the President himself might have opposed it to set an example to the South Africans to say, ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 11

IsiXhosa:

... mna ndonele ...

English:

... I've actually received enough. Nevertheless, let me make a comparison. We've got Members of Parliament, MPs and members of the executive in this country. The MPs cover all their costs, say, for a house in Acacia Park or one of the parks. We cover the upkeep of those homes, employing staff, all our travel, all our security, taking care of our families while we are here in Cape Town.

On the other hand, we have the Cabinet Ministers and the President who receive all expenses paid salary including excessive entitlement like overseas travel, which they enjoy a lot; the very important person, VIP, security and the provision of serviced upkeep homes both in Cape Town and Pretoria. This increase is essentially an increase in pocket money for the President and we're disappointed that he didn't turn it down. Thank you.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Chair, may I speak from here since it is a declaration.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 12

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): You are welcome, hon Kwankwa. May we try in future, with the new microphones placed, to then when we do speak from where we are seated to stand up.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Oh! you want me to stand, okay. Firstly, this increase is not a performance incentive or bonus. It is an inflationary adjustment to the President's salary in line with standard remuneration practices. The increase comes at a time when the economy is gradually recovering. As we move along this path we must ensure that the benefits of economic recovery are shared by all South Africans not a select few.

President Ramaphosa has led the country under exceptionally difficult circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic, SA leadership and role in the GNU and the G20, are just two examples where he was required to rise to the occasion. The reforms undertaken by his administration have contributed to stabilising the South African economy during a turbulent period.

However, while there has been progress domestically, South Africa's structure on the African continent has in some

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 13

respect diminished due to perceived indecision and lack of clarity and foreign policy approach. This area requires focused attention and improvement.

Finally, we welcome the establishment of the Portfolio Committee on the Presidency, which will strengthen oversight and accountability within the executive. The UDM supports the report and the proposal. Thank you.

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

English:

As Rise Mzansi we support the resolution as contained here. I think at times what one would have expected, especially for those that are arguing against might very well again be rejection, as the hon Trollip has said to the 31 January adjustment to ordinary Members of Parliament. However, the second thing that I think needs to be looked at, and it's a conversation that is currently happening in Parliament, it is to look at the commission itself, needs to look at how even ordinary MPs' remuneration is calculated.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 14

If you look at the 3,8% that is given to MPs and looking at the work that is being done, I think there's a scope for us to look at that. However, this motion itself is not just for the President and just to say that the President himself or herself cannot reject the increase or anything because it is up to us as Members of Parliament to make that determination. So, it is only after we have made that determination that it will be effected. But as I said, we do support the motion. Thank you.

Sesotho:

Kgaka L W MAHLATSI:

Ke kopa o ntumelle ke bue ke dutse fatshe, Modulasetulo.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Dr Mahlatsi, would you, please, also just allow us to return to the practice of standing when we declare, please?

Sesotho:

Kgaka L W MAHLATSI: Ke motelele ka seemo, ntate, ke tlo sokola, o ntshwarele.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 15

English:

Under the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa inequality has deepened, workers continue to struggle for a living wage and young people remain excluded from the meaningful economic participation, yet we are told there's fiscal space to increase the remuneration of the highest office in the land. From the materialistic perspective this proposal reflect the logic of an ill-consolidation.

The working class is instructed to tighten up its belt under the austerity while the political executive is insulated from the live reality of the masses. That is not solidarity, it's a class privilege. In a society marked with structural inequality, leadership must embody sacrifice not accumulation. Until every worker earns a dignified wage, until every child has access to quality education and until the land and wealth are equitably redistributed, no increase to the President's salary can be moral or politically justified

As the UAT, therefore, reject this proposal in defence of the poorest and the working class.

Xitsonga:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 16

Khanimambo!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: Hon House Chairperson, the President of the Republic is the head of state and head of the national executive. In the Constitutional Court's unanimous judgement in 2016, Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng emphasised the profound duties of the President.

Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng characterised the President as a constitutional being meant to guide the nation towards a just and prosperous future. He described the occupant of the Office of the President as the national pathfinder and personification of this nation's constitutional project.

In the current state of turmoil engulfing the entire globe, South Africa's head of state must be supported in leading national and international efforts to restore peace, respect for every state sovereignty and good relations among states in line with the United Nations Charter. The decision before this House on the report of the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers that carries enormous weight and consequence. It is not a matter for petty

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 17

politicking. The ANC welcomes the Independent Commission's Report. The Commission is a vital institution for building trust in our democracy as it assesses the public fiscus and inflation and makes independent recommendation at about adjustments to the salaries of public office bearers.

We note that the President salary has historically been increased by less than what was recommended by the Commission. In fact, from 2020 to 2025, the budget allocated for the President salaries increased by an average of 0,76%, less than 1%. This is much less than the inflation during this period. The President is paid far less than many chief executive officers, CEOs, of state-owned enterprises and some public agencies.

As we consider this matter, we must commend the Minister of Finance and the National Treasury team for the two consecutive budget surpluses our government has recorded. With prudence exercised without exception, we will continue to grow our economy and strengthen the resilience of our country. As the ANC, we will support the recommendations.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 18

Also, we want to emphasise that the remuneration increase of the President will also benefit former Presidents. It's not a matter of hatred or a matter of anything that we need to politic about. It is a matter of what the former Presidents and the current President are doing as per the Constitution of the Republic. Hon House Chairperson, we support this salary increase. Thank you.

Motion agreed (Economic Freedom Fighters dissenting).

ELECTION OF DR K LITCHFIELD-TSHABALALA

(Draft Resolution)

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: That the House elects Dr K Litchfield-Tshabalala to replace Ms D Zuma-Sambudla to represent Parliament as a member of the Pan-African Parliament.

Agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF MS A F MUTHAMBI

UNREVISED HANSARD
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 19

(Draft Resolution)

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: That the House appoints Ms A F Muthambi to replace Dr S M Dhlomo as National Assembly representative on the PARMED Board of Trustees.

Agreed to.

EKAPA MINE TRAGEDY

(Member's Statement)

Ms M SENNE (ANC): House Chairperson, as the ANC, we express our profound sorrow following the devastating mud rush incident at Ekapa Diamand Mine in Kimberley, Northern Cape.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of the five miners who remained unaccounted for.

We call on the Ekapa Group to urgently fast-track the draining of underground water levels and conclude and rescue operations without delay. We further urge the Department of Mineral and

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 20

Petroleum Resources to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation and present findings to the Portfolio Committee as a matter of urgency.

We affirm that investment attractiveness must never come at the cost of workers' lives. A safe, well-regulated mining sector is ultimately more productive and sustainable.

The ANC's 55th National Conference resolutions are clear. Legislation must keep mining stable and predictable, but never at the expense of worker safety.

The ANC reaffirms its commitment to protecting workers' rights, improving occupational health and safety standards, and ensuring that mining companies uphold the highest standards of responsibility.

Let this tragedy not be in vain. Let it strengthen our resolve to building a mining sector that is both productive and safe.

I thank you, Chairperson.

SOUTH AFRICA POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 21

(Member's Statement)

Mr C HATTINGH (DA): Hon House Chair, I rise today on behalf of the DA to highlight the fact that South Africa proclaims a foreign policy of non-alignment.

Yet we have had sight of documentation reflecting sustained, multi-year SA National Defence Force, SANDF, training engagements with institutions under the Russian Ministry of Defence. These are not routine reciprocal exchanges like we have seen with other countries in the past; they involve long-term exposure to national security and information-related disciplines.

Although cooperative military exercises are encouraged to share best practices between international partners, we simply cannot allow deep engagements with actors who are mired in controversy of devious subtleties. I refer to the Institute for Security Studies which documented coordinated disinformation dynamics in South Africa's 2024 election environment and referenced Kremlin-linked activity in sub-Saharan Africa.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 22

Surely, the Minister should then answer why our military is conducting deep-level training with Russian forces linked to actors who are documented as interfering in our domestic political processes? Such actions create a dangerous perception of alignment with forces actively seeking to undermine the very integrity of our democracy, a principle the DA cannot ... [Time expired.] [Applause.]

FAILURE TO PROVIDE WATER TO COMMUNITIES IN ETHEKWINI

(Member's Statement)

Mr V G REDDY (MKP): House Chair, I rise on behalf of the MK Party led by President Jacob Zuma, the people's President. Today, we want to declare that while families in eThekweni are turning their taps and nothing is coming out, while residents wake up at 4am to stand in line at water tankers, and while raw sewage runs past their homes, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa is in Durban today unveiling R22 million in statues.

This is a painful contrast to what South Africans really see daily. Statues do not bring water. Speeches do not fix broken pumps.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 23

Ceremonies do not repair wastewater plants. They have collapsed because maintenance was ignored. Let us be clear.

In the metros, the DA blames the ANC for the water crisis and pretends to be in opposition. But here in Parliament, they sit together in the so-called the Government of National Unity, GNU. They vote together. They protect each other. Why? Because they enjoy the perks of power, blue lights, big salaries, official residences, and executive positions while communities live without the basic constitutional rights, and that is water.

This crisis is man-made. It is the result of neglect, political deals, and a government that puts comfort before citizens. Do not be fooled by election-time performances.

If your tap has been dried for days, for weeks, and months, remember who is governing. Only the voters can end this ...

[Inaudible.] ... Vote for the MK Party. I thank you. [Time expired.] [Applause.]

ESCALATING TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 24

(Member's Statement)

Ms A N KUMBACA (ANC): House Chairperson, the ANC expresses deep concern at the escalating tensions in the Middle East, which threaten regional and global peace and security. The intensification of hostilities carries serious humanitarian, diplomatic and economic consequences.

We reaffirm our longstanding and principled position in defence of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in the internal affairs of states. Guided by South Africa's principled foreign policy rooted in justice, peace, and respect for international law, we call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint.

Sustainable peace will not be achieved through force, but through mutual dialogue. Any unilateral military action that undermines international law and threatens stability must be unequivocally addressed. All actions must be consistent with the International Law, International Humanitarian Law and the Charter of the United Nations law. We remain steadfast in our belief that peace is not only possible, but imperative for the shared future of the Middle East and the world.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 25

The ANC conveys its sincere condolences to the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran following reports of the passing of their Supreme Leader, extending sympathies to his family and to the Iranian nation during this period of mourning. I thank you.

SA NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE ARMED FORCES DAY AT THOHOYANDOU

(Member's Statement)

Tshivenda:

Dr L MANAGA (EFF): Mudzulatshidulo, kha vha ntendele ndi thome nga u tamela mashudu Mushavhi, Muphuresidennde Vho Sello Julius Malema duvha lavhudi la mabebo. Ri tshi ri Mushavhi nga vha lalame.

Vho Minista vha Muhasho wa Minerala Vho Gwede Mantashe vho amba u ri hoyu Muvhuso wa Mutanganelano na ANC a u ngo diimisela u sika mishumo. Vho Minista na Muphuresidennde vho bvisela khagala vhukuma u ri vhaswa vha kha lino a vha na thikhedzo. Ndi zwila zwe mutahabvu Bantu Steven Biko a ri: "Black man, you are on your own."

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 26

Zwi nga si ri mangadze arali matshelo vha tshi vuwa kha lino la Afurika Tshipembe vha pfa hu tshi pfi a hu na t̄hahelero ya mishumo.

Vhege mbili dzo fhiraho Mmbi ya Vhupileli ya Afurika Tshipembe yo vha i ngeyi Thohoyandou nga d̄uvha la 'Arm Forces Day' i tshi kho u ita misumbedzo na u galatsha vhaswa u vha maswole.

Vhaswa vha zwigidi na zwigidi ro vha vhona vho ima midubani milapfu vhukuma vha tshi kho u apulaya zwikhala zwi re ngei vhuswoleni, zwikhala zwi si zwingana, Mudzulatshidulo. Hezwi kha lihora la EFF ri zwi amba ri sa timatimi ro sedza u fhungudzwa ha Mugaganyangwama wa Muhasho wa zwa Vhupileli u ri zwikhala hezwi vhaswa a vha nga zwi wani. [Tshifhinga tsho fhela.] [U fhululedza.]

NERSA TARIFF CRISIS

(Member's Statement)

Mr V A NKOSI (ANC): Hon House Chairperson, the ANC is deeply concerned that a tariff blunder is being passed on to consumers who are already carrying the weight of an

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 27

inflationary economy. South Africans are living through an electricity affordability crisis—energy poverty is no longer a concept; it is a daily reality. Over time, tariffs have increased by more than 937%, a trajectory that is simply unsustainable.

We are further alarmed by the redetermination of Eskom's Regulatory Asset Base. Eskom identified a discrepancy of R107 billion, which was adjusted down to R54 billion to prevent excessive returns. But the bottom line remains that R54 billion must now be recovered from the public.

Administrative failures are not abstract; they land directly on the monthly bills of the poor. Working class households are forced to choose between electricity, food, and school costs, as Minister Ramokgopa has noted.

The ANC therefore calls for urgent consequence management at senior levels of the National Energy Regulator of South Africa, Nersa, and a full overhaul of its internal quality assurance systems. Beyond this, we call for a review of the national energy pricing policy moving away from a simple "cost

pass-through" model toward a developmental framework that prioritises affordability.

We must protect indigent households from disproportionate fixed charges and treat electricity as an input into human dignity, not just a luxury good. [Applause.]

**COMMISSION FOR PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF
CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES**

(Member's Statement)

Rev R K J MESHOE (ACDP): Chapter 9 of the SA Constitution calls for the establishment of six state institutions designed to strengthen constitutional democracy. One of these is the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, CRL Commission.

The ACDP notes that the objects of the CRL Commission do not include regulation of the church. Therefore, ACDP supports accountability through existing laws, but does not and will never support any state regulation of the church.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 29

We, therefore, want to raise our deep concerns about the CRL Commission Chairperson's fitness to hold office. Among other things, she has made some highly offensive and inappropriate remarks about the church. For example, she allegedly said in an interview with the BBC, I quote: "This thing called Christianity must be regulated."

The ACDP strongly objects because Christianity is not "a thing." It is a faith founded in Jesus Christ to propagate His message of salvation and forgiveness of sins.

I doubt Ms Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva would ever refer to Islam or Ancestral Worship as "this thing". However, it has become patently clear by a number her comments that she has little respect ... [Time expired.]

WATER CRISIS IN TSHWANE AND JOHANNESBURG

(Member's Statement)

Mr K H WAKELIN (DA): Hon House Chair, the City of Tshwane is in crisis, and this collapse sits at the door of the ANC-led EFF-Action SA coalition. Tshwane is fast becoming another

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 30

Joburg. The AG reported water losses of 40% - a staggering R1,7 billion. Electricity loss is standing at another R1,8 billion. Residents of Tshwane are paying for these failures. Maintenance budgets are slashed. This resulted in three major substations burned in the last few months, leaving thousands of residents in darkness.

Instead of fixing infrastructure, this coalition increased spending on water tankers from R140 million to R777 million in one year. The R300 million security tender forensic report indicates the ANC deputy mayor. To date, nothing: No accountability; no consequences; and the Action SA and EFF sit on their hand. The city only reacts when something burns, bursts or collapses. Streetlights remain broken for years. Infrastructure decays, but political connected contracts prosper.

Mr President, your coalition metros are burning. When will you act? Start with Joburg! Start with Tshwane! After the election in 2026, the DA will start restoring stability. We will reduce water and electricity issues. We will prioritise maintenance. The people of Tshwane deserve a government that works. [Time expired.] Thank you. [Applause.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 31

FRAUD CASES ON SASSA SOCIAL GRANTS

(Member's Statement)

Ms C T NONTENJA (UDM): Hon House Chair, the UDM is deeply concerned by the number of fraud cases that are happening under the Department of Social Development through the SA Social Security Agency. Recently, 35 000 grants were terminated after being identified as fraudulent. This is not an isolated incident of fraud; several fraud cases have been quite prominent under Sassa, which affect the lives of the beneficiaries.

In February 2026, four arrests were made with two Sassa current employees scamming Sassa of R4,9 million through unlawful processing and approval of social grants. Early last year, eight Sassa employees were arrested. This shows that the current upgraded biometric and income verification system still have loopholes and require serious investment to secure advanced systems.

The UDM also believes that there are no proper vetting processes during the employment process, which has cost the

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 32

agency millions of rands. These fraudulent incidents prove that there is lack of good governance and accountability within the agency. I thank you.

RETURN OF 17 SOUTH AFRICANS FROM RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

(Member's Statement)

Mr S I SUBRATHIE (ANC): The ANC expresses its heartfelt gratitude to President Cyril Ramaphosa for helping to secure the return of 17 South Africans allegedly tricked into joining the Russia-Ukraine war. This, after the South African government received distress calls last November from men who were trapped in the epicentre of the ongoing fighting.

We are pleased that the engagement between Presidents Ramaphosa and Putin has resulted in these young men from KwaZulu-Natal being reunited with their families. We are all aware of the pain, the agony and the suffering that the families had to endure during their separation and the uncertainty of their return. We call on law enforcement to speedily investigate the circumstances that led to them being taken to the war under false pretences.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 33

In our understanding South African law bans its citizens from fighting for a foreign country's army without government authorisation. South African investigators must leave no stone unturned in investigating who was involved in arranging for the men to go to Russia and following the money that was allegedly paid. Whoever is responsible must face the full might of the law. I thank you. [Applause.]

DEMAND FOR FORENSIC REPORT ON 2024 ELECTORAL SYSTEM LOCKS

(Member's Statement)

Dr K LITCHFIELD-TSHABALALA (MKP): Hon Chairperson, I rise on behalf of and I do send greetings to the town of Nkandla for giving us President Jacob Zuma. [Applause.] The integrity of our democracy depends on the public confidence in the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa, IEC. During the 2024 National Elections, while figures showed the MK Party leading in several reporting streams, an unexplained system shutdown occurred for approximately two hours.

After the system came back online, the MK Party's growth in reported results indicated stalling. To this day, no

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 34

comprehensive public forensic report has been presented explaining the interruption, no safeguards activated or the full audit trail of results captured before and after the shutdown.

Hon Chair, when an electoral system goes dark at a critical political moment, transparency is not optional but mandatory. The refusal to open the digital systems, locks and verification processes for independent scrutiny undermines public confidence.

The MK Party therefore calls for an independent forensic audit, full disclosure of system locks and strengthened parliamentary oversight over electoral and digital infrastructure. We have fought too hard as South Africans for a technical opacity to cast doubt over that right.

IsiXhosa:

Apho kukho khona okufihlwayo, ukusola kuyakhula.

English:

Where there is transparency, democracy is strengthened.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 35

IsiNdebele:

Ngiyanikelela ke mina sizukulu sakwaDlamini no-Litchfield.

[Iwahlo.]

CRIMINAL STRIKES AGAINST IRAN

(Member's Statement)

Mr C G NIEHAUS (EFF): Hon House Chair, the EFF unequivocally condemns the Israel-US attack on Iran. The US-Israel criminal strikes on Iran are not acts of self-defence; they are illegal dastardly acts of unprovoked war and crimes against humanity. These actions violate the UN Charter, which strictly prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any state.

The claimed justification of preventive war has no basis in international law. Article 51 permits self-defence only in response to an actual armed attack. None occurred here!

Moreover, the US intelligence assessments, as late as March 2025, confirmed that Iran was not pursuing nuclear weapons.

The targeted killing of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 36

Khamenei, amounts to a grave act of aggression and a war crime.

We share in the grief of the Iranian nation and mourn with him. The strikes struck precisely when mediators announced a significant diplomatic breakthrough, fatally undermining America's credibility as a reliable negotiator. These reckless actions risk repeating the disaster of the Iraqi war and threatens global financial instability. This is aggression and a supreme international crime. We demand full accountability to preserve the rules-based international order.

[Interjections.] Down with US imperialism! [Applause.] Down with the recycled apartheid ... [Time expired.]

DISRUPTIVE CHEMICALS IN SANITARY PADS

(Member's Statement)

Ms S P JAMA (ANC): Hon House Chair, the ANC has expressed serious concerns following a recent study by the University of the Free State, UFS, that detected endocrine-disrupting chemicals, EDCs, in various sanitary pads and pantyliners. This is a matter that strikes at the core of women's dignity,

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 37

public health and consumer protection in South Africa. These chemicals are widely associated in scientific literature with hormonal disruption, reproductive health complications and long-term health risks.

Sanitary pads are not cosmetic products. They are not optional. They are essential items used by millions of women and girls every single month, often from adolescence through to adulthood. In South Africa, many of these products are also distributed through government programmes aimed at combating period poverty and keeping girls in school.

If there is even a possibility that harmful substances are present in these products, then the matter becomes urgent and national in scope. We welcome the investigation initiated by the SA National Consumer Commission into suppliers whose products were reportedly tested. However, the public deserves clarity, transparency, and timelines. Women deserve to know whether the products they are using are safe.

This moment also compels us to ask deeper questions: Do we have adequate regulatory standards governing the chemical composition of menstrual products; are manufacturers required

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 38

to fully disclose ingredients; are independent laboratory tests conducted regularly; and in our public procurement processes, are we prioritising safety with the same seriousness as affordability? I thank you. [Applause.]

UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

(Member's Statement)

Mr S S ZONDO (IFP): House Chairperson, youth unemployment is a national crisis. Unemployment deepens poverty, entrenches inequality and undermine economic growth. Unemployment strips the individual of dignity and stiffens the creativity and ambitions, as young people becoming fearful of dreaming boldly and pursuing new opportunities. Attention must be given to graduate employment. Billions are spent annually through NSFAS to invest in young people, yet persistent unemployment amongst graduates means that the state is failing to realise the meaningful returns on that investment.

The IFP calls for two immediate interventions: First, enforce a set of 80-20 employment targets, wherein companies must employ a minimum of 80% of South Africans; secondly, the IFP

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 39

welcomes the President's intervention in relation to sectors, as this consistently has been our IFP position, that the funding and skill development to graduates must be aligned with the demand of job market.

Getting our people into work is not only about expanding tax bases, but it is also about restoring dignity of certificates and direct confronting the persistent challenges of unemployment and inequality. I thank you. [Applause.]

SHOOTING OUTSIDE A SCHOOL

(Member's Statement)

Ms L SCHICKERING (DA): Hon House Chair, it is with a heavy heart that I address this House on taxi-related violence that continues to claim innocent lives across our nation. This is a crisis that has escalated far beyond disputes over routes and territory and has tragically spilled into our communities, schools and the lives of our children.

We are shocked and deeply pained by the recent shooting outside Atlantis Secondary School on 25 February 2026, where a

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 40

gunman opened fire on a minibus taxi loading learners. In this cowardly act, the 42-year-old taxi operator and a 14-year-old Grade 8 learner were brutally murdered and at least two more people were left wounded.

Let us be clear, no society can prosper when children are not safe on their way to or from school. The loss of a young life - the loss of a child who had an entire future ahead of her - is a profound tragedy, and it is entirely unacceptable. We mourn with the families, school staff, learners and the community of Atlantis, and we extend our deepest condolences to all who are grieving.

We applaud the bravery of the two young boys who, in the face of personal danger, stopped to assist the mortally wounded young woman and carried her to safety, where she sadly passed away in their arms. We must collectively do more to end this. I thank you. [Applause.]

**SOUTH AFRICA RECLAIMS ITS POSITION AS AFRICA'S LARGEST
ECONOMY, A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF ANC POLICY WORKING**

(Member's Statement)

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 41

Ms D R NTULI (ANC): Hon House Chairperson, the ANC welcomes the latest update by the International Monetary Fund confirming that South Africa has officially reclaimed its position as Africa's largest economy in nominal gross domestic product, GDP, terms for 2025. This milestone affirms the resilience of our economy and the correctness of the policy direction pursued under the leadership of President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa.

This comes at a time of global economic instability, geopolitical uncertainty, inflationary pressures, and postpandemic recovery challenges that have tested economies across the world. The restoration of macroeconomic stability, improved credit outlooks, declining inflation and renewed investment commitments are all part of a broader national recovery anchored in the ANC's economic transformation framework.

The investment drive, infrastructure roll-out and industrial support programmes are beginning to translate into renewed confidence in South Africa as a premier destination for capital on the African continent. Our financial sector remains robust, our institutions remain credible, and our reform

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 42

agenda continues to gather momentum. This development demonstrates that steady leadership, policy consistency and structural reform work. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

RISING COSTS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(Member's Statement)

Mr S M GANA (Rise Mzansi): Hon House Chairperson, let us start by congratulating Orlando Pirates for the great work they did over the weekend. As we like saying, Orlando Pirates is more than a football club, it is a way of life. [Yadle'mnyama.]

IsiZulu:

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILE: Siyakuvumela lapho!

English:

Mr S M GANA: Hon House Chairperson, South Africans are hamstrung by the cost of living. No where is more evident than in the rising costs of transport including public transport.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 43

We welcome the National Treasury's decision to scale down the Public Transport Network Grant instead of cancelling it. This will prevent undue interruptions to existing bus services.

However, it is not surprising that the grant has come under fire. Many metros have failed to deliver on the simple promise of affordable and accessible public transport. In a recent oversight visit to KwaZulu-Natal, I saw firsthand how the promise has been broken. Stations, roads and bus stops have been constructed yet low buses run. Even worse where buses do run, their routes were conceived without any real regard to the needs of communities with stops and stations constructed far away from where communities live and work.

We know that safety is a major concern in South Africa, yet we expect school learners, working mothers and other community members to walk far distance early in the morning just to use the bus.

South Africa deserves a government that prioritises their needs and their lived realities and we will continue to advocate for a public transport system that does so. Up the Bucs! [Applause.] [Time expired.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 44

EKAPA MINE AND PAYMENT OF SALARIES

(Minister's Response)

The MINISTER OF MINERAL AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES: Hon House Chairperson, I will respond to one question which is the Ekapa Mine. I visited the mine twice. I am having a ... [Inaudible.] ... that is still outstanding.

I can report that water has been drained successfully in the mine. The mud and stones have been loaded out of the shaft to a distance of 74 meters. Those 74 meters is divided into 39 meters in the East and 35 meters in the West. Unfortunately, nobody has been discovered. That is why, I have insisted that let us do what is called in law presumption of death rather than promising life where there is no likelihood of life.

I hope that all geologists will appreciate that mudslide is not like rockfall where you can actually be behind the rockfall. Mudslide run over you and a day long under a mudslide you are unlikely to survive.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 45

So, we were quite disturbed by the announcement of the possibility of liquidation in the middle of a crises. We are engaging the company on that.

Lastly, that company was not talking to the union. The known union there which is in the majority is National Union of Metalworkers of SA, Numsa. If it was National Union of Mineworkers, NUM I would be saying something different. It is Numsa. They have not met until we insisted that they meet management and the union face-to-face to discuss the problem, particularly the lack of payment of salaries of workers. That is a union matter and not a government matter. We said they must meet as the union. At least they met once. I do not know if they have had a follow up, I will make my own follow up at Ekapa Mine during this week. I have done that twice if it means I must do it for the third time I will. Thank you very much, hon House Chairperson. [Applause.]

INDOCRINE DISRUPTING CHEMICALS

(Minister's Response)

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 46

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Hon House Chairperson, I want to respond to the question about Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals which were found in sanitary pads and pantyliners. After the study was released, there was a lot of fear and anxiety. Understandably so, because the study did not necessarily put the context to this area.

Hon House Chairperson, so, we had to consult scientists. While I studied medicine ...

Mr R A P TROLLIP: Hon House Chairperson, on a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): The hon Trollip, what is the point of order?

Mr R A P TROLLIP: Hon House Chairperson, I had my hand up before the hon Minister started, but nobody at the table saw it and then a put a piece of paper up and my hand up but still nobody saw it. I want to ask a question to the hon Mantashe now I am wondering whether he will take it.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 47

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): "Ja." Hon Trollip this is Minister's Responses. I do not think we have the practice of allowing engagement during those. Thank you.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu R A P TROLLIP: Niza kubashiya nabo phaya njengaba baseLily Mine nabashiya ngaphantsi?

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): I am sure he will engage you offline. Thank you.

The hon Minister of Health, please continue.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: "Ja."

House Chairperson, I was just saying, we had to consult scientists, for while I am not a scientist, but I did do some medicine. I was a bit taken by surprise because Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals, EDCs, are ubiquitous meaning they are widely spread in nature and everywhere. They are found in foodstuffs, in the food we eat, household products, personal

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 48

care and beauty products, toothpastes, shampoos, conditioners, body lotions, lipsticks, electronics and everywhere.

Yes, they are found everywhere, hon House Chairperson!

So, what we have done, we brought scientists together to tell us exactly what the meaning of this study is. Before the end of this week, we will call the press conference to understand. However, I just wanted to know that everything you have eaten today contains these products.

In fact, a study in China showed that 40% of them come from food, the other 40% come from cosmetics and pantyliners contribute only 6%. However, we will give you all the information when we meet with all the scientists. It will be sometime this week. For now, sit, relax and wait. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

INCOME OF HOUSEHOLDS A PUBLIC CRISIS POLICY

(Minister's Response)

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 49

The MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY: Hon House Chairperson, I want to start by acceding that the critique by the hon Nkosi is on point regarding the adverse impact of the exponential increase in the administered prices on the South African economy. We accept that the rapid increase in electricity tariff fee is eroding the disposable income of households and undermining the competitiveness of the South African economy.

I am happy to announce that in the next two months we will be issuing or making public the electricity pricing policy which will introduce a number of regimes.

First is to ensure that we take care of the poor. Introduce a regime on how we are going to take care of small and medium businesses and also how we take care the rest of the electricity consumers in the country.

It is true that National Energy Regulator of SA, Nersa, has been going through an exceptionally difficult period because in its design it was not meant to accommodate the mutating electricity environment and its skills sets are asymmetrical to the requirements of the Electricity Regulation Amendment Act. So, we are doing everything possible to capacitate Nersa

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 50

so that it can live to the expectation and be able to perform its regulatory function to the best of its ability.

With regards to consequence management, I have instructed the chair of the board to ensure that we institute, and I am sure at the right time I will bring the report to the portfolio committee. However, we are doing everything possible to ensure that the electricity moves from being a crisis to being a catalyst in the South African economy as we have announced the measures to restart 45 smelters which will result in additional employment of 121 000 people contribute to the National Revenue Fund and ensure that Eskom continues to be sustainable. Thanks, hon House Chairperson. [Applause.]

The SA SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY GRANTS

(Minister's Response)

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon House Chairperson and hon members, in responding to a Member's Statement about SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, I wish the hon member could have started her statement the other way around. In articulation of the challenges that we had with Sassa in

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 51

particular and grants that were given to wrong people at wrong times.

Hon House Chairperson, I wish to make a call to this House that they must work with us as Sassa as we introduce new ways to detect corruption and make sure that those that are necessarily beneficiaries of Sassa grants are avoided to do so. Hon House Chairperson, in doing this we have employed systems that already in this particular financial year we have saved the fiscus almost half a billion. We did this through the biometric enrolment for beneficiaries, electronic know your customer verification online and offline income verification.

Hon House Chairperson, we do this because this House in deferent ways at times have articulated these challenges and as such the Seventh Administration was forced to make sure that we address this. We are hard at work in making sure that towards the middle of the new financial year, we would have saved the fiscus more than a billion rand.

Hon House Chairperson, this is why I call upon hon members to please work with us in this regard to make sure that in their

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 52

different constituencies, they work with their people to make sure that when somebody's grant has stopped please make sure that those people are directed to Sassa offices and nowhere else, because this is where they will make sure the reason why the grant has stopped. Majority of time our members are called into office for purpose of verification as the House have forever articulated that we are paying wrong people. In making sure that we are paying the right people for when we are not sure that you exist or not, you will be called in Sassa offices. Please assist us to make sure that people get there so that they are verified and there would be no reason for their grant to be stopped.

However, if you do not come to the Sassa offices more than three times or more than 90 days your grant shall be stopped. For we are not sure whether you exist or not. We are cleaning our system.

Indeed, hon House Chairperson, this corruption was done in connection with Sassa officials. This is why last week already in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, there are Sassa officials appearing in court. The Sassa officials and our system working with SA Revenue Service, Sars, and relevant institutions to

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 53

make sure that those benefitting in a wrong way to our grants are made to account. I thank you, hon House Chairperson.

[Applause.]

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

(Minister's Response)

The DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Ms N B Mhlauli): Hon House Chairperson, I am going to respond to the Member's Statement from the IFP on the issue of youth unemployment and it is indeed one of the areas of delegation. Firstly, I think it is important to acknowledge the shared concern that the hon member raises around the high numbers of youth unemployment which of course should be something that should concern all of us as Members of Parliament and society as a whole.

Just to remind the hon member that in actual fact the President during the state of the nation address gave an account of the interventions that government has made to address the problem which is youth unemployment. One of such interventions being of course the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, PYEI, which is a programme that falls

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 54

under my delegations. This is a programme really which is a multistakeholder approach in ensuring that you know as government, the private sector and all different sectors of society actually do come together to be able to accelerate efforts to take young people from learning opportunities to earning opportunities.

Also just to report to the House that since the inception of this programme, we have actually had 2,3 million young people who have been successfully transitioned in this particular programme whereby we would have taken young people through different training opportunities, work placement opportunities, as well as skills development opportunities, education opportunities and more importantly also supporting those who want to be entrepreneurs through enterprise support.

Just to give the numbers and in actual fact that we have recently released the quarter three report of the PYEI, where we actually gave an account of the work in terms of ensuring that we do accelerate our efforts in terms of dealing with dealing with the crises of youth unemployment.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 55

Just for quarter three which actually accounts for October 2025 up until December 2025, we have been able to ensure that we expand workplace experience opportunities for 11 277 young people. We were able to transition 294 530 young people through the National Path Management System in collaboration of course with my counterpart who is Deputy Minister Nemadzinga-Tshabalala at the Department of Employment and Labour.

We have been able of course working with the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, ensure that additional 34 338 young people are actually recruited for Phase 4 of the Revitalised National Youth Service and also supporting close to 7 000 young people in terms of enterprise support.

However, the most important thing is how do we upscale these programmes because when you speak about these numbers it actually is a drop in an ocean if you look at the magnitude of young people who are still not in employment or who are sitting at home. One of the things we are looking to do with this programme in this current financial year is to ensure that how do we upscale to be able to reach more young people out there. Thank you very much. [Applause.] [Time expired.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 56

LEARNER LOST HIS LIFE

(Minister's Response)

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon House Chairperson, I think before I respond to the hon member I want to first convey our deepest condolences to the 14-year-old learner who tragically lost their life outside of school.

Hon House Chairperson, I think one thing we must realise is that schools are an extension of the communities that their existing and that they are not insulated from their violence that we see in our communities. That is why as a department we entered in a Memorandum of Understanding with the SA Police Service, SAPS, so that we can make sure that particularly in high-risk areas our schools are attached to the SA Police or a police station near it. So that there are better checks and balances between in and around schools, during peak times but also where we find violence inside of schools.

Hon House Chairperson, we have agreed with the Police that where teachers are seeing that there is violence inside of schools SAPS can do spot checks inside of the schools and

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 57

outside of the schools. And so, we are doing everything that we can to make sure that we protect our learners because any loss of a young life is a loss to somebody who had a bright future ahead of them.

However also government cannot do this alone. We need our communities and we need our leaders to help us to make sure that schools are places of safety and learning. Thank you.

[Applause.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND
CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT — DRAFT NOTICE AND SCHEDULE
DETERMINING THE RATE, WITH EFFECT FROM 1 APRIL 2025, AT WHICH
SALARIES, ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS ARE PAYABLE TO
CONSTITUTIONAL COURT JUDGES AND JUDGES OF OTHER COURTS
ANNUALLY, FOR APPROVAL BY PARLIAMENT IN TERMS OF SECTION
2(1)(A) OF THE JUDGES' REMUNERATION AND CONDITIONS OF
EMPLOYMENT ACT, 2001 (ACT NO 47 OF 2001)

AND

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND
CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT — DRAFT NOTICE AND SCHEDULE
DETERMINING THE RATE, WITH EFFECT FROM 1 APRIL 2025, AT WHICH
SALARIES, ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS ARE PAYABLE TO MAGISTRATES

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 58

**ANNUALLY, FOR APPROVAL BY PARLIAMENT IN TERMS OF SECTION 12(1)
OF THE MAGISTRATES ACT, 1993 (ACT NO 90 OF 1993)**

Mr O M MATHAFA: Chair and members, good afternoon. On behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development, we present the report of the portfolio committee on the draft notice and schedule determining the rate at which salaries and allowances are payable to the public office bearers with effect from 1 April 2025. The portfolio committee considered the report of the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers, an independent commission that recommended a 4,1% increase for public office bearers for the following categories: (a) the SA Human Rights Commission; (b) the Public Protector and the Deputy Public Protector; (c) the magistrates; and (d) the Constitutional Court and the other courts.

We know that in arriving at this decision the commission considered the following factors, amongst others, the role, status, duties, functions and responsibilities of the office bearers concerned, affordability of different levels of remuneration of public office bearers, current principles and

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 59

levels of remunerations particularly in respect of organs of state, inflation and the available state resources.

The committee notes that the President has determined 4,1% salary increments for the categories of the public office bearers mentioned earlier, with effect from 1 April 2025. In this regard, the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development recommends that the House approve the draft notice and schedule. I thank you, House Chair.

There was no debate.

Declarations of vote:

Ms L SCHICKERLING: House Chair, good afternoon. This determination comes before the National Assembly not as a routine financial adjustment, but it's a matter that goes to the very heart of our constitutional democracy. Section 176 (3) of the Constitution makes it clear that the salaries, allowances and benefits of judges may not be reduced. This protection is neither incidental nor symbolic. It reflects a deep constitutional principle that judicial independence must be insulated from political or financial pressure. An

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 60

independent judiciary is not a privilege for judges. It is a safeguard for the people of South Africa.

The judiciary is the guardian of the Constitution. Judicial officers carry the responsibility of interpreting the law, resolving disputes and protecting rights in holding all organs of state accountable. They do so in circumstances that are often complex, demanding and at times contentious. They adjudicate matters of enormous public significance, constitutional challenges, questions of administrative justice, criminal trials, commercial disputes and issues affecting the lives and livelihoods of millions of South Africans. It is therefore both appropriate and necessary that the remuneration reflects the weight of these responsibilities.

The determination before this House provides for an annual adjustment of salaries, allowances and benefits with effect from 1 April 2025. In supporting this increase, we recognise several important considerations. Firstly, the realities of inflation and the rising cost of living cannot be ignored. Judicial officers, like all other South Africans, are affected by economic conditions. To fail to adjust remuneration in line

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 61

with the prevailing conditions would in effect amount to an erosion of their real income over time.

Secondly, the state must also be able to attract and retain individuals of the highest calibre. The judiciary requires men and woman of exceptional legal ability, unimpeachable integrity and sound judgement. If judicial remuneration falls too far behind comparison professional earnings, we risk narrowing the pool of candidates that are willing to serve.

Thirdly, we must guard against the more insidious risks of a poorly remunerated judiciary. History teaches us that when judicial officers are inadequately compensated, the integrity of the justice system may be compromised. Financial insecurity can create vulnerability and vulnerability will create pressure. Let us be clear. Our judiciary has over decades demonstrated courage, independence and fidelity to the Constitution. But independence is not self-sustaining. It must be actively protected by all branches of government, including this Parliament. Adequate remuneration is one of the institutional mechanisms through which it is protected.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 62

This is also true for magistrates. Magistrates serve at the front line of justice. They preside over overwhelming majority of criminal and civil matters in our courts. They are often the first and only point of contact between ordinary systems and the justice system. In communities across the country, urban and rural alike, magistrates ensure that disputes are resolved, bail applications are heard, protection orders are granted and criminal cases are adjudicated. To neglect their remuneration would be to neglect the foundation of our justice system. A demoralised or financially strained magistrates would not only affect individuals, but it would also weaken access to justice itself. The determination before us reflects a balancing of interests, the need to maintain fiscal sustainability, the recommendations of the independent commission for the remuneration of public office bearers and the constitutional obligation to safeguard judicial independence. It does not represent access. Far from it, it represents maintenance - maintenance of standards, maintenance of dignity and maintenance of institutional stability.

Public confidence in the judiciary is one of the pillars of our democracy. When citizens approach the courts, they must do so with insurance that judicial officers are independent,

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 63

impartial and free from undue influence. Their insurance is strengthened when judicial officers are secure in their tenure and appropriately remunerated.

We support the approval of the determination of the rates with effect from 1 April 2025, at which salaries, allowances and benefits are payable to judges and magistrates. I thank you.

[Applause.]

Mr M MANYI: House Chair, the MkP reaffirms that judicial independence is the foundational pillar of our constitutional democracy. Section 176(3) of the Constitution protects judicial remuneration from arbitrary reduction precisely to safeguard institutional integrity and independence from political interference. We note the proposed adjustments before this House that they are inflation related and not performance based, otherwise we would be talking a different story. Such adjustments are constitutionally grounded and must not be politicised.

We further welcome the recent reconfirmation by the Chief Justice that judges declarable interests may be viewed in a prescribed manner. The MKP will indeed utilise this

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 64

opportunity to exercise long overdue parliamentary oversight over this important area of judicial accountability. There is nothing sinister about exercising oversight in the declarable interests of human beings called judges. Members of Parliament disclose their interests under far more public circumstances. Judicial independence does not mean insulation from reasonable transparency. It must however be said that the assumed beyond reproach posture of parts of the judiciary has in certain instances been compromised. There are judges who have faced criminal proceedings, allegations of bribery, perjury and conduct unbecoming of office. There have been deeply troubling cases where individuals were incarcerated without trial, no right to appeal, no right to mitigate sentence and all that. These realities demand vigilance. Oversight therefore is not optional, it is constitutional.

Turning to the magistrates. The MKP recognises that they are the first and often the last line of defence for the poorest of the poor. Some of our people don't even go to High Court. Magistrates process the overwhelming majority of criminal and civil matters. They operate under intense pressure, heavy caseloads and resource constraints. They are the face of justice in the working class and rural communities. Yet the

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 65

proposed increase is in truth a mere pittance when measured against the structural inequality between magistrates and judges. Before applying incremental increase to the salaries of magistrates, there should have been a structural revision upwards to ensure that the remuneration scale is more equitable. If we are serious about access to justice, we must strengthen the lower courts.

Adequate remuneration reduces vulnerability to corruption and undue influence. Accordingly, the MkP unequivocally supports the inflation linked adjustments in principle, but calls for urgent structural reform of the remuneration framework particularly of magistrates to ensure fairness, equity and integrity across the judicial system. I submit. Thank you.

Sepedi:

Moh M R MOHLALA: Modulasetulo, Maloko a Palamente, a re thomeng ka go le lemoša ka letšatši le bohlokwa la matswalo a mopresidente wa EFF, Ntate Julius Malema. Re mo lakaletša mahlatse, maatla le bophelo bjo botelele bja boetapele bjo bo hlahlago setšhaba ka nnete. Modulasetulo, EFF e thekga sephetho sa go amogela pego ya Khomišene ye e Ikemetšego ya Meputso ya Bašomi ba Mmušo go koketšo ya meputso ya baahlodi

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 66

ka 4,1% go thoma ka 1 Aporele 2025. Thekgo ye e tšwa go temogo ya bohlokwa bja mošomo wa dikgorotsheko go šireletša temokrasi ya rena le Molaotheo. Dikgorotsheko di fa batho toka moo dingongorego di ahlolwago ka go lekana ntle le kgethollo.

English:

It is precisely because of this critical role judges play that we are deeply concerned about the working conditions. Across all provincial divisions, judges are overworked, courts are severely understaffed and the demands on the judiciary continue to rise, putting both judges and the integrity of our justice system under immense pressure. It is not because of the lethargy of judges that the earliest court date you can get in Gauteng is now in 2030. The real reason is our failure to properly train resource and expand the judiciary.

This discussion is not merely about a percentage increase in pay. It is about safeguarding the judicial independence and strengthening the entire justice system.

Let it be clear, the EFF support properly remunerating judges and magistrates. An underpaid and insecure judiciary is vulnerable. Fair pay protects their independence and shields

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 67

the justice system from undue influence. Judges must answer only to the Constitution and the law, and not to politician, wealth, power and political connections.

Magistrates also carry the daily burden of justice in our communities by facing heavy caseloads in underresourced courts as the first line of justice of ordinary South Africans. The magistrates' unions, the Judicial Officers Association of South Africa, Joasa, and the Association of Regional Magistrates of Southern Africa, Armsa, brought their concern directly to Parliament, highlighting workloads, working conditions and fairness. We listened carefully. This Parliament has the responsibility to act decisively so. When magistrates are properly supported, justice moves faster and communities regain confidence in the rule of law.

Sepedi:

Ge EFF e tšea mmušo ...

English:

... we will enforce strict institutional boundaries. No interference from the executive, no informal pressure, no manipulation of the judicial processes. We will strengthen

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 68

transparency in appointments. We will enforce lifestyle audits across the executive. We will close procurement loopholes that breed corruption. [Time expired.] Incorruptible government reduces the risk of bribery and political pressure on the judicial.

Sepedi:

Re thekga pego ya koketšo ya meputso ya baahlodi ... [Nako e fedile.]

Mr S L NGCOBO: House Chair, the IFP rises in support of the remuneration adjustment for judges and magistrates, including those serving in the Constitutional Court of South Africa and across all other courts. An independent judiciary is the bedrock of our constitutional democracy.

Judges and magistrates are entrusted with upholding the Constitution, defending the rule of law and ensuring that justice is administered fairly and without fear or favour. Their financial security is one of the safeguards that protects their independence. We recognise that these are only cost-living adjustments made within the constrained fiscal

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 69

environment. At a time when many South Africans are facing economic hardships, restraint is necessary and appropriate.

However, safeguarding the institutional stability of the judiciary is not optional; it is a constitutional imperative. We also stress that the independence must always be accompanied by accountability, efficiency and improved access to justice. South Africans expect a justice system that is credible, responsive and effective. The IFP supports the report. Thank you very much.

Mr E HENDRICKS: Hon Speaker, hon members, the PA rises in support of the report of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development on the draft notice and schedule determining the remuneration of magistrates and judges. We believe that the recommendation by the independent commission for the remuneration of public office bearers is both measured and responsible.

It rightfully recognised that this adjustment is not linked to individual performance but rather ensures that the remuneration of magistrates keeps pace with inflation and the

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 70

rising cost of living. It is a necessary step to protect the value of their compensation in the current economic climate.

Magistrates and judges form the backbone of our justice system. They are often the first point of contact for ordinary South Africans seeking justice in our courts. The dignity of the public and the legitimacy of their rulings are reinforced when the judicial officers themselves are treated with dignity by the state. Ensuring fair and sustainable remuneration is therefore an essential component of maintaining the integrity, stability and effectiveness of our lower courts.

The PA also notes that the commission's recommendation carefully considered affordability, inflation and the availability of state resources. It strikes a responsible balance between the needs of our judicial officers and the fiscal constraint we face, as a nation.

For these reasons, the PA supports the committee's recommendation that the House approves the draft notice and schedule in terms of the Magistrates' Act of 1993. I thank you.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 71

Mrs H DENNER: House Chair, the 4,1% salary adjustment for Constitutional Court judges, other judges and magistrates is defined as a cost-of-living adjustment and is explicitly not related to individual performance. In recommending this rate, the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers considered factors such as the role and responsibilities of the office bearers, the impact on the fiscus, available state resources and inflation.

While the commission highlights the distinction between cost of living and performance, this is entirely unnecessary to even mention, because maintaining the highest standards of performance is a basic, non-negotiable expectation of our judiciary, which is already met by many, despite the challenges they face. They have challenges brought about by a lack of resources, the poor state of court facilities and other challenges alike.

Afrikaans:

Die regbank is heel dikwels die laaste skans van beskerming wat die samelewing teen regeringsvergrype, wat veral en meestal gekoppel is aan geykte ANC-ideologie of pleinweg

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 72

magsbestuur, magsvergrype en misdadigheid, wat die regte van gewone Suid-Afrikaners vertrap en skend, moet beskerm.

Die regbank moet daarom, dienooreenkomstig hulle belangrike rol in die samwelewing en die handhawing van wet en orde vergoed word, maar die hulpbronne tot hulle beskikking moet ook uitgeskerp en uitgebrei word. Hulle moet ook ten volle verantwoordbaar gehou word. Onderhewig daaraan ondersteun die VF Plus hierdie verslae. Dankie.

Mr R A P TROLLIP: House Chairperson, a constitutional democracy is not upheld by good intentions. In fact, they say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. It survives on a justice system that is clean, fearless and strong beyond reproach. When courts are undermined, when prosecutors are compromised, when criminals believe they can outmanoeuvre the system, the rule of law collapses. And when that happens, it is not politicians who suffer, it is ordinary South Africans.

When we are stopped by a traffic officer and they tell us how hot it is and that they would like a drink, and we respond by buying them a cool drink, we are undermining ourselves. This insidious form of corruption occurs at all levels of our civil

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 73

service, and we have learned that our courts, magistrates and judges too are involved.

If we expect judges and magistrates to stand firm against intimidation and corruption pressure, then this House must ensure that the judiciary is properly resourced and structurally protected. Remuneration and support must reflect the gravity and importance of their role. We cannot preach integrity, yet penny-pinch the very institutions that uphold our Constitution.

Having said this and in supporting this report, we as Action SA wish to stress that, in supporting appropriate remuneration for judges and magistrates, we want them to know that we expect them to fulfil their constitutional role and responsibility without fear or favour, and that we are appalled at recent allegations and charges against judges accepting bribes. This is why they say that rich people evade justice and poor people get hanged. Thank you.

Mr S N SWART: House Chair, the ACDP supports the salary increases for the judiciary. In order for the judiciary to be effective and retain its independence, it is crucial that

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 74

judges and magistrates are properly remunerated. This is also necessary to draw the best legal brains to apply for judicial positions. The Justice Portfolio Committee is fully aware of the unhappiness of magistrates, who made written submissions and even threatened with industrial action, due to what they perceive to be low salary packages. These increases will go some way to address their concerns, but a full review of their salary packages is long overdue.

That having been said, the ACDP is extremely concerned about the high number of misconduct hearings against judges and magistrates and the lengthy time it takes to complete these hearings. Chief Justice Mandisa Maya, in presenting the annual judiciary report last year, raised an alarm over the sharp rise in misconduct complaints against judges, noting that there were 132 complaints filed in 2024-25 alone, bringing the three-year total to a staggering 350.

This is absolutely disgraceful. And she correctly warned that waning public confidence in the judiciary is directly linked to these complaints, which primarily concern judgment delays, general misconduct and incompetence.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 75

The ACDP agrees, the judiciary must be above reproach and disciplinary cases must be speedily finalised to ensure legitimacy in the eyes of the public, particularly when there are allegations of serious corruption. I thank you.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Chairperson, the UDM supports the proposed salary increase for judges, in particular. This adjustment, in our view, is not a privilege, but a measure that is important to make sure that their salaries are aligned with inflation, but also a measure that ensures that we preserve the dignity, independence and integrity of the judicial office.

As we are aware, the judiciary plays a critical role as the guardian and the final interpreter of our Constitution. An independent and well-remunerated bench is essential to maintain public confidence in the rule of law and to ensure that judges perform their duties without fear, favour or prejudice.

We all saw during the difficult days of state capture, how our courts demonstrated courage and resilience. They served as a strong defence against executive overreach and unlawful

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 76

conduct by the executive. In doing so, they served as a true vanguard of our democracy.

We support the proposed increase both for judges and the magistrates, but we call on the government to attend to the salary review, in particular, of magistrates, as they willy-nilly stop us on the road and ask us that we call on this matter to be brought to the attention of the government. It is a burning issue and it speaks to their plight and the challenges that they face. We support it. Thank you.

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

English:

Hon Chairperson, hon members, we do support the report. We cannot become a safe, prosperous and united country without a functioning criminal justice system. We cannot have a functional criminal justice system without a full cohort of excellent magistrates that can deliver justice from the bottom up. Yet our magistrates are under more pressure than ever before.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 77

Over one third of magistrates work for over 50 hours a week with very little support in the form of training, court infrastructure or basic security at our courtrooms. More than 40% of magistrates have experienced a threat related to their work. Being A magistrate is inevitably a difficult job, but these factors make it even harder to do justice to the communities they are appointed to serve.

And then, as the very last straw, our magistrates continue to be underpaid. Even where salary adjustments are made, they are decided months and months after the effective date. Even now, we are talking about an adjustment meant to have taken effect last year. How can we possibly justify causing such financial hardships to our magistrates? In this context, is it even surprising that we struggle to attract the best talent to become magistrates? Is it even surprising that we hear more and more reports of magistrates becoming involved in corruption and bribery?

We need to invest in our magistrates now. We need to provide them with fair remuneration, attractive benefits and the necessary support to be the best they can be. This is the only

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 78

way that we can safeguard and repair our broken criminal justice system from the ground up.

Xitsonga:

Ndza khensa swinene, Mutshamaxitulu.

English:

Up the Bucs!

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: Once and always! Hon Chairperson, this debate, as many of the hon members have stated, is not about an annual increase. It is not about a question of 4%. It concerns how serious we are about attracting and retaining the calibre of people we trust with our Constitution. I wish to be deliberate in the example I use.

Justice Madlanga is currently chairing one of the most consequential commissions in our recent history, and he is doing so with intellectual rigour, discipline, and balance. We are witnessing a commission that should rightly erode public trust in state institutions, yet he is leading it with the steady leadership that rebuilds public trust. Such leadership is crucial at a time like this.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 79

But we also must admit that by his own admission, Justice Malanga left the judiciary in 2001 to return to private practice because judicial remuneration relative to senior counsel earnings is not sustainable over the long term. We are grateful that he returned, but he is not an exception. Across the country, many senior legal practitioners accept acting appointments to the bench, they take the pay cuts temporarily, they serve, they contribute, they do country duty. But when permanent appointments arise, they then decline. And this is because they are not only accepting a lower salary, but they are also accepting a retirement structure that does not compete with what they can responsibly secure for their families.

Right now, just next door in Zimbabwe, we are seeing a president staging a constitutional coup. We must have confidence in South Africa that that would never happen, that that would never fly, based on the strength of our judicial institutions. And to do that, we must have people of the highest calibre on the bench to protect our nation. Thank you.

Ms N E MOTAUNG: House Chair, the ANC supports the report of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 80

Development on the Consideration of the Rates of Increase of the Remunerations of Public Office Bearers as undertaken by the Independent Commission for the Remunerations.

The commission recommended for 4,1% increase for the Institutions of Human Rights Commission, the Public Protector and the Deputy Public Protector, the Constitutional Court judges and other judges as well as the magistrates.

Consequently, the President has decided that the rate of increase should be at 4,1% as recommended by the Commission.

We support this determination by the President as it will ensure that, amongst other things, the rate of increase will cover the impact of the inflation rate.

These institutions that we referred to earlier are critical for the advancement of our constitutional democratic system, including the access of justice. Some of the public office bearers occupy positions of responsibility in the Chapter 9 institutions which are critical in strengthening our democracy. We support the recommendations of the Commission because it took into consideration the role, status, duties and functions and responsibilities of the office bearers concerned.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 81

Also, that consideration was made regarding the affordability of different levels of remuneration for public office bearers. In other words, the fiscal were considered by the commission in arriving at its recommendations, as reflected by the consideration of the available state resources.

The public office bearers of these institutions play an important role in ensuring that these institutions advance their mandate as outlined in the Constitution. As Parliament, we will play our oversight role to ensure that these institutions are operating in line with their mandate and that the financial and non-financial performance of these institutions are scrutinised very closely. The ANC supports the report of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development on the rates of increase of public office bearers. Thank you, House Chair.

Question put.

Agreed to.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND
CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON DRAFT NOTICE AND SCHEDULE,**

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 82

DETERMINING THE RATE WITH EFFECT FROM 1 APRIL 2025 AT WHICH SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES ARE PAYABLE TO PUBLIC PROTECTOR AND DEPUTY PUBLIC PROTECTOR FOR APPROVAL BY PARLIAMENT IN TERMS OF SECTION 2.2A AND 2A IN BRACKET 5, BRACKET A OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTOR ACT, 1994

AND

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON DRAFT NOTICE AND SCHEDULE, DETERMINING THE RATE WITH EFFECT FROM 1 APRIL 2025 AT WHICH SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES ARE PAYABLE TO COMMISSIONERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION FOR APPROVAL BY PARLIAMENT IN TERMS OF SECTION 9.1 OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ACT, 2013

Mr O M MATHAFA: Once again, I rise on behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development. We present the report of the Portfolio Committee on the draft Notice and Schedule, determining the rate at which salaries and allowances are payable to the public office bearers, with effect from 01 April 2025. The portfolio committee considered the report of the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers. They recommended a 4,1% increase for public office bearers in the following categories. The South

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 83

African Human Rights Commission, the Public Protector, and the Deputy Public Protector.

We know that in arriving at this decision, the commission correctly considered factors including the roles, status, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the office bearers concerned, current principles and levels of remuneration, particularly in respect of organs of state, inflation, and available state resources.

The President has determined a 4,1% salary increment for the categories of public office bearers mentioned above, with effect from 1 April 2025. In this regard, the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development recommends that the House approve the draft Notice and Schedule. Thank you, House Chair.

Declaration of vote:

Mr J ENGELBRECHT: House Chair, Today we consider the determination of the rate, with effect from 1 April 2025, at which salaries, allowances, and benefits are payable to the Public Protector and the Deputy Public Protector. We are also called upon to approve the draft Notice and Schedule to

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 84

determine the rate, with effect from 1 April 2025, at which salaries and allowances are payable to commissioners of the South African Human Rights Commission.

These matters come before the National Assembly as part of our constitutional duty and political oversight to safeguard and strengthen the institutions that underpin our democracy.

Hon members, the Public Protector and the Human Rights Commission are established under Chapter 9 of the Constitution. They are therefore not organs of the executive. They are not extensions of Parliament. They are independent institutions subject only to the Constitution and the law, and they must perform their functions without fear, favour, or prejudice, often under difficult circumstances attracting much criticism. The Office of the Public Protector carries the profound responsibility of investigation, alleged improper conduct in state affairs and public administration, to report on that conduct and to take appropriate remedial action.

This office is often called upon to make findings in matters that are politically sensitive, legally complex, and socially consequential. Similarly, the commissioners of the South

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 85

African Human Rights Commission bear the mandate of promoting, protecting, and monitoring observance of human rights in our Republic.

They engage with systemic inequality, service delivery failures, socio-economic rights discrimination, and the lived realities of communities across our country. This is often a very unglamorous but vital function.

Hon members, remuneration is not a peripheral matter, it is a structural safeguard. Adequate salaries and allowances are essential to maintaining the independence and integrity of constitutional office bearers. If remuneration is allowed to erode in real terms over time, institutions risk facing greater challenges in attracting suitably qualified candidates and perceptions, however unfounded, of vulnerability to undue influence.

The determination before the House provides for an adjustment with effect from 1 April 2025. In supporting this determination, we recognise that these office bearers operate in an environment shaped by economic realities, inflationary pressures, and fiscal constraints. Like all public servants

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 86

and office bearers, they are not insulated from the broader economic context of the country. However, the cost of weakening institutions designed to hold power accountable would be immeasurably greater than the cost of maintaining fair and appropriate remuneration. A poorly resourced or inadequately supported oversight institution cannot effectively discharge its mandate. Independence must be tangible, not merely aspirational.

In approving this determination, we affirm several important principles. First, that remuneration for Chapter 9 office bearers must reflect the stature and gravity of their constitutional responsibilities.

Second, that judgments must be made transparently. And thirdly, that Parliament's role in approving these determinations is not ceremonial. It is an expression of accountability and constitutional oversight.

Public confidence in democratic institutions depends not only on the conduct of those who occupy the office, but also on the institution's framework that supports them. When the Public Protector investigates maladministration, or when the Human

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 87

Rights Commission releases findings on systemic rights violations, the legitimacy of those processes' rests on institutional independence. But approving the rates of remuneration, we contribute to preserving that independence.

We ensure that those entrusted with safeguarding rights and investigating abuses of power can do so without financial insecurity or institutional fragility. In fulfilling our obligations, we affirm our commitment to strengthening constitutional democracy, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring that institutions created to protect the people of South Africa are themselves protected. For these reasons, we support the approval of the determinations before this House. Thank you.

Mr B M MKONGI: Chairperson, the MKP confirms the constitutional importance of Chapter 9 institutions in strengthening democracy and accountability. Adequate and stable remuneration is essential to safeguard institutional independence and prevent undue influence.

We note that the proposed increases for the Public Protector, Deputy Public Protector and Commissioners of the SA Human

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 88

Rights Commission, SAHRC, are inflation-based adjustments, not performance incentives. If these were performance bonuses, particularly for the Public Protector, we would reject them outrightly.

The MKP remains deeply troubled by what we regard as the whitewashing of the Phala Phala matter. Eminent legal minds, including a former Chief Justice, a senior judge and a senior counsel, concluded that there was a constitutional case to answer. Yet the Public Protector's Office found nothing actionable. This has weakened public confidence.

Equally concerning are recent matters in the public domain involving the alleged misuse of a credit card by a senior DA political figure and dinosaurs who bought Uber Eats using the state money. Yet the findings of the Public Protector appear to have minimised the conduct that would ordinarily warrant serious ethical scrutiny.

With regards to the SAHRC, we recognise its constitutional mandate to promote and protect human rights. However, we must question the visible absence of sustained national programmes addressing systemic violations. Millions continue to live in

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 89

informal settlements and under squalor without dignity. Young boys die in illegal initiation practices across the country. Public hospitals operate under conditions that undermine the right to health care. Communities face avoidable water crises caused by corruption and incompetence. Human rights institutions cannot become reactive complainant desks; they must be proactive constitutional guardians.

Accordingly, the MKP records its position as follows. We grudgingly support remuneration stability to preserve institutional independence. However, independence must never be mistaken for performance endorsement. Parliament must ensure fiscal prudence while demanding visible, assertive and programmatic impact from Chapter 9 institutions. Independence must be merged by accountability. I, therefore, submit. Thank you very much.

Ms M R MOHLALA: Chairperson, notwithstanding our grievances with the incumbent at the Office of the Public Protector, we acknowledge the enormous responsibilities our constitution bestows in that office.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 90

The office was created to make justice easily available to ordinary people who are grieved by the action of state institutions. They exist to protect the public from abuse of power. That office must always demonstrate legal precision, fairness and courage. Certainly, the incumbent has allowed herself to be used as a pawn by the dominant political elite currently in power. Her reign follows an equally disastrous reign of Mkhwebane, whose appetite for politics far outweighed her legal competence. The lesson is that public protectors must always operate above political suspicion and within the highest legal standards.

The same applies to the SAHRC. When rights are violated, whether by the state or private interest, it must act decisively. It must defend dignity, equality and freedom without fear or favour.

Remuneration, therefore, must reinforce independence, but independence must produce results. Payment does not replace accountability. Independence does not remove oversight. South Africans want institutions that work - a public protector that fearlessly investigates wrongdoings; a human rights commission that stands firmly with the vulnerable.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 91

The EFF stands for strong institution. We stand for judicial independence. We stand for ethical leadership. We stand for a state free from corruption. This debate, therefore, must strengthen, not weaken our constitutional order. Proper remuneration for the Public Protector and Commissioners of the SAHRC must be aligned to these values.

We support the decision of the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers to increase the remuneration of the Public Protector and Deputy Public Protector, as well as Commissioners of SAHRC by 4,1%, but integrity, discipline and performance must always accompany it. We say happy birthday, Moshadi, happy birthday. Amandla.

Ms B E MACHI: Hon Deputy Speaker, the IFP supports the remuneration adjustments for the Public Protector and Deputy Public Protector of South Africa, as well as the Commissioners of the SAHRC.

These Chapter 9 institutions play a critical role in strengthening accountability and protecting fundamental rights. They act as safeguards against maladministration and abuses of power, and they give voice to vulnerable

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 92

communities. Their independence must be protected, not only in law, but in practice. Appropriate and secure remuneration contributes to institutional stability and reinforces that independence.

At the same time, these institutions must continue to uphold the highest standards of integrity, impartiality and transparency in order to maintain public trust. Mindful of the broad economic pressures facing the country, we nonetheless believe that constitutional oversight institutions must remain strong and credible. Accordingly, the IFP supports the adoption of the reports. I thank you.

Mr M V DANIELS: Hon House Chair, hon members and fellow South Africans, the recommendations of the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers are not only justified, but they are also essential.

These adjustments are prudent, fiscally responsible and grounded in objective considerations. They ensure the remuneration for these critical constitutional office bearers remains aligned with inflation and the rising cost of living,

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 93

while maintaining strict sensitivity to the fiscal realities confronting our nation.

Hon members, let us be clear. The Offices of the Public Protector, Deputy Public Protector and the SAHRC constitute vital pillars of accountability, transparency and constitutional oversight. Their independence and effectiveness rely on conditions of service that reinforce institutional stability and integrity. They are entrusted with safeguarding human dignity, equality and freedom. These values sit in the core of our democratic order, ensuring that there are indispensable requirements for the protection of the independence, impartiality and ability to act without fear, favour or prejudice.

The PA notes with approval that the independent commission has applied a rigorous assessment of affordability, inflationary pressures and the resource constraints of the state in arriving at these recommendations.

Hon members, strengthening our Chapter 9 institutions is not optional, it's a constitutional imperative. When we reinforce the independence or functional capacity of the institutions

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 94

that uphold rights, justice and accountability, we strengthen the very foundations of South Africa's constitutional democracy.

It's for these reasons that the PA supports the committee's recommendations and requests that the House approve the draft notices and schedules. Salute.

Mrs H DENNER: Deputy Speaker, the 4,1% salary increment for the Public Protector, the Deputy Public Protector and the Commissioners of the SAHRC, effective 1 April 2025, cannot be approved without several critical observations being made first.

It is noted that this recommendation is strictly a cost-of-living adjustment and it is explicitly not related to individual performance. However, in the eyes of the public, both the Public Protector and the SAHRC are increasingly perceived as toothless institutions. There is a growing sense that these institutions are failing to provide tangible protection for the South African society against administrative malfeasance in the case of the Public Protector

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 95

and the disregard for basic human rights in the case of the commission.

There may be many reasons for this, which include but are not limited to the sheer number of cases being referred to them, mostly because of poor local government, a shortage of resources, institutional instability and the like. While it is necessary to remunerate the incumbents of these high offices according to their roles and responsibilities, the tangible results of their work must be seen and felt by the citizens they serve. These offices must send a clear message that the rights of South Africans will be protected at any cost.

Currently, there remains much room for improvement in fulfilling that mandate and this should be addressed urgently. Thank you.

Mr R A P TROLLIP: Deputy Speaker, the Public Protector of South Africa exists to hold the powerful to account and to protect the public. That office must never become timid, compromised or politically expedient.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 96

Its funding and support must entrench its independence, but with that support must come performance, not the lacklustre showing that we've seen with the Phala Phala saga. The date of the theft was on 9 February 2020, yet it was only publicly declared in 2022. The Public Protector appeared reluctant to robustly pursue the President, the matter dragged on over several years and the report was, until recently, declared confidential and only unclassified after great duress. This position is one that every South African with any integrity should respect and revere.

We, therefore, support the incumbent being appropriately remunerated and in return, we expect them to earn our reverence and respect.

The SAHRC was created to defend the rights of all South Africans. Yet, too often, it has been mute when it should have been outspoken, selective when it should have been consistent. It cannot be allowed to continue drifting into irrelevance while South African citizens' rights are trampled. This must change.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 97

If we approve financial increases today, they must reflect the constitutional responsibility of the posts being remunerated and not entitlement. With public money comes public expectation, and performance must be measured against outcomes, not outputs.

We need the abusers of our human rights in court, prosecuted and sent to jail. We have recently seen the buying and selling of citizenship by Home Affairs officials to the likes of Shepherd Bushiri and others. Acts like these are treasonous and deserve to face the full might of the law. They undermine the human rights of the bona fide South Africans, and the SAHRC needs to be seen to be acting in this regard. Thank you.

Mr S N SWART: Deputy Speaker, the ACDP supports these reports.

The Public Protector plays a crucial role in the fight against corruption and maladministration. The Constitutional Court in the Nkandla judgment affirmed this, with former Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng stating that constitutionalism, accountability and the rule of law together make, quote,

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 98

the sharp and mighty sword that stands ready to chop the ugly head of impunity off its stiffened neck.

The Public Protector, he said, is the embodiment of the biblical David. That is who the public is, who fights the most powerful and very well-resourced Goliath, that impunity and corruption by government officials are. Now, the ACDP agrees with this sentiment and for this reason, supports these reports.

Whilst we're talking about the biblical David, a Jewish king, may we join the Jewish people worldwide who celebrate the Festival of Purim today. Those of us who are believers, who are Christians, will know from the Book of Esther and from the Jewish faith that Queen Esther saved the Jewish people in Persia, modern-day Iran, from the planned destruction by Haman on this day. May a similar fate befall all those modern-day Hamans who seek the destruction of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Hebrew:

Chag Shema Hurim, Haymeshel Chai.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 99

English:

Thank you.

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: Deputy Speaker, as Build One South Africa, Bosa, we want to focus this consideration on the salary increase for the Public Protector and the Deputy Public Protector, because in reality, this debate right now, while we speak about the salaries of the Public Protector and the Deputy Public Protector, is actually about the people of Ekurhuleni. It's about over R3,7 million that may have been lost through a questionable tender process to suspicious criminals who have access to political power. This is a matter that's now been referred to the Public Protector of South Africa.

We have to be clear about what that means, which is that there are business owners who may have been unfairly shut out of a training tender. They are honest entrepreneurs who lost an opportunity because that contract was awarded elsewhere. It means there were intended beneficiaries of that training programme, people who are supposed to gain skills, opportunity, dignity, who may have instead received compromised services, if any. It means ratepayers of

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 100

Ekurhuleni whose hard-earned money funds municipal budgets may have been directly robbed through procurement manipulation, where a tender which should have cost R66,500 ended up costing R3,7 million.

We stand here and debate remuneration, but we must understand what we're really debating and voting for. It is whether the institution tasked with investigating that R3,7 million, which belongs to the people of Ekurhuleni, has the strength, capacity and credibility to do so thoroughly. It's not about enriching two office bearers, it should never be.

It's about protecting small business owners who lose a fair opportunity. It's about protecting an unemployed young person who is denied quality training. It's about protecting the taxpayer whose money disappears through tender fraud. It's about whether the people of Ekurhuleni and other communities across South Africa can trust that when their money is stolen, someone independent has both the authority and the capacity to act. That is what this House must support. Thank you.

Ms N E MOTAUNG: Deputy Speaker, the ANC supports the report.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 101

Mr G J SKOSANA: Hon Deputy Speaker, I see hon Shikwambana from the EFF has a cap on with the EFF brand in the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, please note that it is against the Rules to wear any party regalia. I can see that he has removed it, hon Skosana.

Question put: That the reports be adopted.

Report adopted and Draft Notice and Schedule determining the rate, with effect from 1 April 2025, at which salaries and allowances are payable to Public Protector and Deputy Public Protector, for approval by Parliament in terms of section 2(2) (a) and 2A(5) (a) of the Public Protector Act, 1994 (Act No 23 of 1994) accordingly adopted.

Report adopted and Draft Notice and Schedule determining the rate, with effect from 1 April 2025, at which salaries and allowances are payable to Commissioners of the South African Human Rights Commission, for approval by Parliament in terms of section 9(1) of the South African Human Rights Commission Act, 2013 (Act No 40 of 2013) accordingly adopted.

UNREVISED HANSARD
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 102

Agreed to.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE AUDITOR-
GENERAL ON DRAFT 2026-29 STRATEGIC PLAN AND BUDGET OF AUDITOR-
GENERAL OF SOUTH AFRICA.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE AUDITOR-
GENERAL ON INTEGRATED ANNUAL REPORT OF AUDITOR-GENERAL OF
SOUTH AFRICA FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-25.

Mr W W WESSELS: Hon Deputy Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Standing Committee on the Auditor-General to introduce the committee's reports on the Integrated Annual Report of the AGSA for 2024-2025 and the report on the Draft Strategic Plan and Budget. The Auditor-General of South Africa's performance is of utmost importance to ensure accountability of organs of government. As a critical institute supporting our constitutional democracy, the AGSA plays a vital role in strengthening public sector accountability, transparency and good governance, as these attributes are crucial to improve service delivery and bettering the fiscal position of the country.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 103

Whilst the AGSA has historically functioned well and does provide crucial audit reports which enhances transparency and oversight, much more is needed due to the normalised and persistent levels of corruption, the lack of service delivery and severe fiscal constraints. The Integrated Annual Report of the AGSA for the 2024-25 financial year shows that the AGSA for its powers led to the recovery of R2,163 billion in financial losses, whilst R1,229 billion was in the process of being recovered and R1,325 billion was prevented from being lost. There is, however, still a lack of consequences for officials responsible for these losses, especially on the municipal level.

The committee thus recommends that the AGSA provides detailed feedback on investigations into irregular expenditure and write-offs and that legislative amendments should be considered. The committee, however, does note and welcomes the first certificate of debt issued by the AG holding an accounting officer personally liable for financial losses. The many challenges and the extent of harm done by government departments and the state necessitate a higher utilisation of technology during audits, such as automation, which broadens the sample of transactions audited.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 104

In this regard, we recommend that cybersecurity is prioritised and that measures are accelerated to digital transformation. The realisation of these projects will, however, cost R1,1 billion and thus the committee recommends the retention of the R331 million surplus for the year. The committee also recommends the approval of Crowe as the external auditors auditing the AGSA.

The second report for consideration is the Draft Strategic Plan and Budget, and we are satisfied that these speak to the important Culture Shift 2030 strategy and the digitisation and effective utilisation of powers concerning material irregularity. We thus recommend that the Strat Plan and Budget be tabled without amendments and that the National Treasury supports the budget for 2026-27. Having considered the factors driving audit fees, the committee supports the proposed increase in these audit fees, and we also recommend the approval of the audit directive for the 2026-27 financial year. I thank you.

Declarations of vote:

Mr S G VILAKAZI: Hon Deputy Speaker and to all the happy people, let me start with something simple. If you run a

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 105

household, you need to know three things. How much money is coming in, how much is going out and whether any is wasted or stolen. The Auditor-General plays that role for South Africa. She is the country's chief referee when it comes to public money. She checks the books of national departments, provinces, municipalities and tells us whether the money is spent properly and where it is wasted.

Today, we are considering two reports. The Auditor-General's latest annual results for 2024-25, and the plan and budget for the next three years. Let me explain why this is important for ordinary South Africans. Firstly, the good news is that the Auditor-General is getting stronger. The latest report shows real improvement.

Last year, for the first time in several years, the Auditor-General's office did not miss any of its own performance targets. It completed 93% of audits on time and the quality of audits improved significantly, jumping from 69% to 82%.

Secondly, for years, South Africans have heard the same story. Irregular expenditure, wasteful contracts, projects that collapse and money disappearing. And then, nothing happens.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 106

That is why the changes to the Public Audit Act were so important. They gave the Auditor-General real teeth.

This year, for the first time, a certificate of debt of R4,6 million was issued to a municipality for contract mismanagement. This means a specific official can be held personally responsible and it is a major shift. It is like moving from writing a letter of warning to actually deducting money from someone's salary. But one certificate is not enough.

South Africans want to see this become the norm, not the exception. If you lose public money, you must repay it. If you break the rules, there must be consequences. Otherwise, audits become like a movie where we all know who did it. But the expected ending never comes.

Thirdly, here's something many people don't know. The Auditor-General does not get a large budget from the national government, but it largely funds its work by charging audit fees. Right now, municipalities alone owe the Auditor-General R518 million. In total, outstanding debt owed to the Auditor-General stands at over R1,3 billion. Imagine hiring an

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 107

accountant to check your books and then refusing to pay them. This is what is happening and it creates a risk of weakening the AG and its independence.

Fourthly, looking ahead, the Auditor-General's new strategy focuses on shifting the culture of government from one of excuses to one of performance, accountability and integrity. That sounds abstract, but here's what it really means.

When a clinic is built, it must actually open. When water pipes are installed, water must flow. When money is allocated, services must actually reach people. Because behind every audit finding is a real community. Behind every irregular contract is a road not fixed. Behind every failed project is a child without textbooks, and behind every lost rand is a South African who deserves better.

Let me be honest. The Auditor-General can expose problems and even enforce consequences, but Parliament must close the loop. The Auditor-General is improving. Enforcement has begun and financial stability is being strengthened. But the real test is this. Will audit findings lead to cleaner governance? Will

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 108

consequence management become normal? Will public money finally be treated as sacred? We wait to see.

The Democratic Alliance supports strengthening the Auditor-General because a strong watchdog is essential to fighting corruption and restoring trust. And trust is what the country needs most right now. I thank you. [Applause.]

Mr S G MWALI: Hon Deputy Speaker, and members of this House, today we stand before this august House to address a damning report on the Integrated Annual Report of the Auditor-General of South Africa for the financial year 2024-25. We will look at it together with the Draft Strategic Report and the Budget for the Office of the AG. This report paints the picture of abject failure, negligence and decay in our municipalities.

The Auditor-General's report highlights that the majority of municipalities are underperforming and many municipalities are struggling to deliver basic services with infrastructure projects often delayed and over budgets and poor quality. Municipalities are experiencing financial difficulties with 44% operating with underfunded budgets and R31,7 billion in unauthorised expenditure.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 109

Hon Deputy Speaker, we note with content the incapacity of Municipal Public Accounts Committee members to investigate matters and hold those who are responsible accountable. There is a culture of no accountability with 53% of municipalities not complying with legislation on consequence management. This is a dereliction of duty.

This report also exposes corruption, maladministration, failures to collect revenue in municipalities and this is a betrayal of public trust. Material irregularities and noncompliance with procurement legislation is widespread, with 87% of municipalities having findings in this area. Excessive use of consultants without skills transfer. A lack of accountability is just a few of the maladies that are plaguing our system. Hon Deputy Speaker, this is not a new story. The Auditor-General has been sounding the alarm annually with little to no improvement.

We, as the official proposition of uMkhonto weSizwe question the effectiveness of oversight committees in this Parliament. We just had joint oversight exercises with Cogta, SCOPA and SCOAG, and what do we have to show for it? Nothing. Municipalities continue on a downward spiral.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 110

Political instability and undue influence and cadre deployment continue to cripple good governance. Key positions are held by incompetent individuals, and our people suffer as a result. The people of South Africa deserve better.

We demand accountability, transparency and action. We call on this government to take concrete steps to address these issues and restore the integrity of our municipalities.

We need to hold this government accountable and work towards a South Africa where municipalities serve our people, not the interests of the few. Maybe as I close, hon Deputy Speaker, ...

IsiZulu:

... le nto eyenziwa u-ANC laphaya komasipala izoyikhokha evotini. Ngiyabonga kakhulu. [Ihlombe.]

Siswati:

Mk N M MHLONGO: Lisekela laSomlomo, lelingaphambili angitsatse lelitfuba ngicale ngekubingelela ngiphindze ngihalalisele Mongameli we-EFF, esukwini lakhe lekutalwa lanamuhla.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 111

English:

We say this with confidence and we are in no doubt that many in this House will agree that the foundation laid by the former Auditor-General, AG, Terrence Nombembe and the late Kimi Makwetu is what allows this Chapter 9 institution, established by the Constitution to support our democracy, to remain a shining example of the much-needed excellence in the public sector, black excellence.

It is this history and the foundation that allows the Auditor-General SA, AGSA to adopt and implement the Culture shift 2030 strategy with significant execution improvement moving from 49% to 90% within a short period of two years.

Today, this very institution, led by a woman with clear vision, character and excellence, continues to grow. They have now recorded full implementation of the material irregularity process across all spheres of government.

Ninety three percent, of audits are completed within legislated timelines. Audit quality has improved from 69% to 82%. They are now issuing certificate of debt, a formal legal instrument issued by the AGSA in terms of the Amendment Public

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 112

Audit Act, which makes a specific accounting officer personally liable for a financial loss suffered by the state due to a material irregularity.

The 4,6 million certified, marks a watershed moment that is now up to the council of Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, particularly opposition party councillors such as the EFF to take up the fight and ensure that we recover taxpayers' money.

We say all these things well aware that we are dealing...

Siswati:

...nemiguludvu yetigebengu, bantfu labajatjuliswa kugcwalisa tikhwama tabo, masofa abo nemakhukhu abo ngemali lentjontjiwe. Bantfu labafuna kutibona bashayela ma-Lamborghini bashiya tibhedlela tetfu letifana nabo Tembisa tingenamitsi.

English:

While men and women in blue, in the SA Police Service go around without tools of trade because a tenderpreneur wants to pay for people, ppls, of the generals in the SAPS. So, the AGSA must move in and ensure that we go beyond the partial culture

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 113

shift and that there is actually long-term deterrence against corruption, irregularities, and the wastefulness of state resources.

We are concerned that every year we must talk about AGSA debt book, which is now sitting at 1,3 billion. We maintain as the EFF that Parliament must take a decisive step and pass a special appropriation to recover this money from these institutions that owe the AGSA deducting it directly from their equitable share allocations, including municipalities. Otherwise, the AGSA will continue to tell us about information technology, IT, security risk ongoing capital funding requirements while we are sitting with state institutions and departments that owe the money.

This must be one of the amendments we make in this fiscal framework, and the Parliamentary Project Office must intervene urgently and provide us with a report as soon as possible.

In conclusion, we want to send a very strong warning to the AGSA. Metropolitan municipalities such as Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg and Cape Town are addressing. Audits are not being finalized on time, and if we fail to finalize metro

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 114

audits, we'll have a serious credibility program and do not want that for all of us. Thank you. The EFF supports the report. [Applause.]

Mr T M LANGA: Deputy Speaker, the Office of the Auditor-General remains a cornerstone of our constitutional democracy. At a time of fragile public trust, its work is essential to rebuilding confidence in the state. The IFP welcomes the support of strengthening audit impact, enforcing material irregularity processes, and leveraging technology in the 2026-29 strategic plan and budget.

These priorities are necessary, but their success depends on adequate resources, institutional independence, and the political will to implement corrective action. We remain concerned about the persistent culture of consequence-free governance. Despite strengthened powers under the amended Public Audit Act, irregular and wasteful expenditure continues with limited accountability.

Audit findings must lead to disciplinary steps, recovery of funds and criminal prosecution where warranted. We support the adoption of these reports, while urging Parliament and the

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 115

executive to intensify oversight and strengthen preventative controls. The Auditor-General can report, but it is for the government to act.

The IFP remains committed to accountability, fiscal discipline, and protecting public resources for all South Africans. The IFP accepts the report. Ngiyathokoza kakhulu [Thank you very much] Deputy Speaker. [Applause.]

Ms S M PETERS: Hon Deputy Speaker, hon members, the PA rises in firm support of the Report of the Standing Committee on the Auditor-General, regarding the strategic plan and budget of the Auditor-General of South Africa.

The Auditor-General plays a critical role in safeguarding accountability, transparency and sound financial management across public sector. Its work ensures that public funds are used to serve the people of South Africa and not lost to waste or mismanagement.

We welcome the strengthened powers introduced through amendments to the Public Act of 2004, including the issuing of

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 116

certificates of debt, which sends a clear message that financial misconduct will have consequences.

We also commend the progress made in recovering, preventing financial losses to the state, demonstrating the tangible value of a strong and independent audit institution.

At the same time, persistent weaknesses in consequence management, particularly at municipal level, remain a serious concern. Strengthening internal controls, professionalising the public sector, and ensuring that accounting officers fulfil their responsibilities must remain a priority.

The PA supports the continued digital transformation, improved efficiency, and responsible financial planning that avoids placing additional pressure on struggling municipalities. The PA supports the tabling of the 2026-29 Strategic Plan and the 2026-27 Budget of the AGSA. Thank you. [Applause.]

Ms M P KOBE: Madam Deputy Speaker, Action SA supports the Reports on the Standing Committee of the Auditor-General of SA on both its 2024-2025 Integrated Annual Report and its 2026-2029 Strategic Plan and Budget.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 117

The Auditor-General remains one of the strongest and most credible constitutional institutions in our democracy. Through its Culture shift 2030 strategy, the Auditor-General has correctly identified the core problem in our public sector.

We do not merely face compliance failures. We face a failure of culture. The vision of shifting the public sector towards performance, accountability, transparency and integrity is precisely what South Africa needs at this very moment.

But, while the AG is doing its work, the broader public sector is not yet experiencing a culture shift. There is still no consistent consequence management. Accounting officers preside over adverse and disclaimed audit outcomes and yet remain in their posts. In some cases, they even receive performance bonuses. That is not a culture of accountability. It is a culture of impunity.

The ongoing governance failures at the Road Accident Fund are a case in point. For years, the entity has received damaging audit outcomes, yet no meaningful consequences have been instituted.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 118

Equally concerning is the failure to decisively act against suppliers implicated in the Special Investigating Unit. Individuals and companies that are identified in the SIU investigations are not blacklisted, yet they simply just re-enter the procurement system and continue to do business with the state as usual.

That is why Action SA has laid a complaint to the public protector regarding the failure to blacklist corrupt suppliers. We are encouraged that the matter is progressing well. Action SA does support the AG. Now the executive must match the integrity with some action. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr S N SWART: Madam Deputy Speaker. The ACDP supports the reports. Thank you

Ms C T NONTENJA: Deputy Speaker, the strength of a democratic state rests not only on the authority of elected representatives, but also on the credibility of institutions entrusted with safeguarding public accountability. Among the most critical of these, is the Auditor-General of SA, whose constitutional mandate is to audit the management of public

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 119

resources and report independently to Parliament and to the people.

The recent audit outcomes presented by the AGSA, paint a troubling picture of governance in our local government. South Africa has 257 municipalities, yet only a small number achieve clean audits. In many municipalities, weak internal controls, inadequate record-keeping and irregular expenditure, amounting to billions of rands, remain prevalent.

These failures are not merely technical issues. They directly affect the citizens through unreliable water supply, failing sanitation systems, and deteriorating infrastructure.

The UDM commends the AGSA for taking decisive action in applying their extended powers in the recent issuance of a 4,6 million certificate of debt against the municipal manager of the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. This is a landmark step in holding officials personally accountable for financial mismanagement.

We further call for this action to open the floodgates for more certificates of debt to be issued, as there are so many

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 120

more municipal officials across the country. The UDM supports the report. [Time expired.]

Mr I ISMAIL-MOOSA: Al Jama-ah supports the report. Thank you.

Mr S I SUBRATHIE: Hon House Chairperson, hon members and fellow South Africans, it gives me great honour to stand before you on behalf of the ANC, to express our critical support for the adoption of the two reports before this House. The Auditor General SA, AGSA, continues to play a pivotal role in ensuring accountability, transparency and good governance in the management of public resources. This afternoon, the report under consideration reflects the AGSA's unwavering commitment to its constitutional mandate and its dedication to strengthen the accountability ecosystem in our country. The Draft 2026-29 Strategic Plan and Budget demonstrate a forward-looking approach to address challenges that are facing our public institutions. The plan outlines a clear road map for announcing audit operations, improving financial sustainability and advancing digital transformation.

Notably, the AGSA has committed to launch flagship projects such as audit process management, audit portfolio management,

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 121

and the AGSA Kopano, which will modernise audit processes and improve efficiency. These initiatives are critical in ensuring that the AGSA remains a world class audit institution capable of driving accountability and transparency in the public sector. The integrated annual report for the financial year 2024-25, highlights the AGSA's remarkable achievements in fulfilling its mandate. The AGSA demonstrated exceptional performance across its strategic goals, achieving 93% audit completion rate within the legislated timelines and improving its audit quality from 69% to 82%. These accomplishments underscore the AGSA's commitment to set the standards for excellence in public sector auditing.

Now, we further acknowledge that the AGSA has made significant strides in addressing material irregularities. As we've heard from hon colleagues before me, it has both recovered or prevented over R4,4 billion in financial losses through strengthened governance and consequence management. The issuance of the first ever certificate of debt to the Ngaka-Modiri Molema District Municipality for contract mismanagement, is a testament to the AGSA's resolve in holding public officials accountable. Now, it would be remiss of me not to highlight the issue of the elephant in the room, and

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 122

that is the challenge the AGSA faces with just over R1 billion in outstanding audit fees. This House must be clear; we cannot expect a watchdog to bark if we starve it, and we cannot have our supreme audit authority reduced to a national debt-collecting agency. It is imperative that this House prioritises finding a solution to this anomaly.

Conversely, and on a positive note, it is worth mentioning that the AGSA's financial performance has also been commendable, with the institution achieving a net surplus percentage above its target, maintaining a clean audit, and over-achieving on key financial indicators such as debt collection and cost optimisation. The report before us further highlights the AGSA's dedication to fostering a culture of excellence within its workforce. The organisation has achieved a high retention rate of top-performing employees; it has improved professional competency pass rates, and it has attained AAA ethics ratings, which is the highest accomplishment possible. These achievements are indicative of the AGSA focusing on building a skilled, motivated and ethical workforce to deliver on its mandate effectively.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 123

The AGSA's efforts to modernise its operations through digital transformation are particularly noteworthy. The successful execution of phase one of the audit software project and the implementation of a private cloud infrastructure, are significant milestones, and they will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the AGSA's work. As I conclude, the reports before us today reflect the AGSA's steadfast commitment to its constitutional mandate, its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and its dedication to driving accountability and transparency in the public sector. As the ANC, we commend the AGSA for its outstanding performance and we urge this House to adopt the reports before us. We support and we move for the adoption of these reports. I thank you, hon House Chairperson.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE TARGETS MINORITY PARTY: Hon House Chairperson, I move that the reports be adopted.

Motion agreed to.

Report on Draft 2026-29 Strategic Plan and Budget of Auditor-General SA, AGSA, accordingly adopted.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 124

Report on Integrated Annual Report of Auditor-General SA, AGSA, for financial year 2024-25 accordingly adopted.

DEBATE ON INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

Setswana:

MOTLATSATONA WA TSA METSHAMEKO, BOTAKI LE SETSO: Modulasetilo, ke lebogela go fiwa tshono ya go tla go buisana ka botlhokwa jwa puo e re e anyileng mo letseleng la bomme.

English:

Hon Deputy Speaker, this debate takes place as we mark the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and the International Day of the World Indigenous People, highlighted in the United Nations' dedication to multilingualism. This milestone underscores the importance of respecting and celebrating every language to preserve cultural heritage and foster inclusive development. There is no greater time to acknowledge indigenous languages than at our 30-year democracy anniversary. This debate on International Mother Language Day affirms that language is not a secondary issue in our democracy; it lies at the centre of our national and personal identities. It determines how we think and how we greet and

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 125

how we recognise each other, how we work and build this country together. The centrality of languages in the conquest and the capitalist structure of colonial and apartheid government is proven by how language served as a symbol of identity and belonging for colonisers.

The impact of colonialism on language is profound and multifaceted, affecting not only a linguistic landscape, but also the social and cultural identities of the populations affected. The legacy on colonial languages continues to shape the identities and languages of the people who were once colonised. For South Africa, this day carries a particular significance. Our painful history saw indigenous languages systematically undermined and relegated to inferior status. The democratic dispensation fundamentally changed that reality. The South African Constitution recognises 12 official languages and obliges the state to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages. As we mark 30th of the Constitution, we celebrate the dismantling apartheid-era linguistic hierarchies, and we recognise the 12 official languages as being imperative to multilingualism and nonracialism of transformation and nation-building.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 126

Hon members, we have made progress in elevating indigenous African languages in courts and government communication. For decades, many South Africans have faced these silent barriers. A courtroom or government office where the language of record was not the language of the people. The democratic government progressively reaffirmed our commitment to ensuring that indigenous African languages are not just preserved but actively used in the spaces where rights are exercised and decisions are made. One of the decisive interventions is the establishment of critical institutions to preserve and promote indigenous languages such as the Pan-South African Language Board, PanSALB. The South African government has taken significant steps to promote and preserve indigenous languages.

The Constitution recognises the need to elevate the status of these languages and mandates practical measures to advance their use. Nine indigenous languages have been given official status, alongside English and Afrikaans, ensuring their presence in government, education and in public life. The historic recognition of SA Sign Language, SASL, as the 12th official language, represents a decisive step towards inclusion and accessibility. It affirms the rights and the

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 127

dignity of the deaf community and strengthens our commitment to social cohesion and ensuring that public services are accessible to all. The SASL Charter was launched by the PanSALB and the deaf community in 2020, and it has become a foundational text, a guide to government departments, organs of states and the private sector to ensure provision of interpreting services.

Now, let us ensure that all government departments, entities, and enterprises employ sign language interpreters and offer frontline staff advanced level training in SASL. Some have made a good start, but more needs to be done in this regard. As I conclude, we reaffirm our commitment to promote linguistic diversity, ensuring equality of access, and enabling people to communicate in their language of choice, while also stressing the importance of strengthening partnerships for language research and implementation of language policies. We must concede the intersectionality of our linguistic diversity and promote the rise of indigenous communities as part of the sustainable development agenda to leave no one behind.

Setswana:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 128

Modulasetilo, ke go tlhomphile. Ke a leboga.

Sepedi:

Moh C MAFAGANE: Modulasetulo ...

English:

A few months ago, I listened to a conversation between two young African women, one was expressing utter shock that someone could speak in Sepedi as if she could not speak English, and speak in English as if she could not speak in Sepedi.

Sepedi:

Go tlile bjang gore re itlwaetše gore ke selo sa go makatša ge ngwana wa MoAfrika a bolela ka leleme la gabo? Re ka phatlalatša bjang kgopolo ya gore go na le kamano magareng ga maleme a go tšwa ditlhabologong tša Bodikela le go tlhaloganyo ya boikgogomošo? Se se bohlokwa kudu ke gore re be re swanetše go kitima ka lebelo kudukudu bjalo ka setšhaba go bofolla diketwane tša bokgoba bja monagano tšeo mengwaga ya kgatelelo e di bofeletšego go batho ba gaborena. Polelo e amana kudu le setšo.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 129

Le ge go le bjalo, ka lebaka la khuetšo ya go ikopanya ga dinaga tša lefase le boimperialiseme, bontši bja dinaga tše di fapanego tše di kgonne go re buša.

English:

How did colonial psychology become so deeply embedded that fluency in our own language feels like rebellion? Hon members in this august House, this is not accidental. It is a result of a deliberate colonial engineering. Language was the first weapon of conquest. Before land was stolen; before minerals were looted; before borders were drawn, languages were targeted. Because when you erase a person's language, you fracture their identity, you distort their memory, and you weaken their resistance.

Language is not merely communication. Language is power. Language is consciousness. Language is sovereignty. A mother tongue is not just a tool of speech. It is a fundamental of identity. It shapes how we see the world, how we understand ourselves, how we connect with our ancestors, and how we locate ourselves within communities. It must be celebrated, not only commemorated in days like this. Yes, today we are proudly witnessing our beautiful home language being

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 130

displayed, and we commend it. But our languages must not live only in ceremonial moments. They must live in policy. They must live in classrooms. They must live in boardrooms. They must live in classrooms. They must live in boardrooms. They must live in courts of law. They must live in science laboratories. They must live in daily governance. The use of the mother tongue must be a universally accepted norm, not an exception. In African civilization, language is a moral archive. It carries direkoto [praise poems], clan's history, cosmology, philosophy, governance system, and ancestral memory.

Sepedi:

Maleme a rena a swanetše a hlathollwe.

English:

They are a complete system of knowledge. Yet, under the current dispensation, indigenous language remained marginalised in higher education, in science, in law, in medicine, and in economic participation. Poor academic performance among rural learners, low self-esteem in township schools, and cognitive barriers in early childhood development are not an accident. They are a consequence of forcing African

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 131

children to learn complex concept in foreign linguistic framework. It's not English that produces intelligence. It is a comprehension that produces excellence. The MK party stands firm: True liberation requires epistemic freedom. The MK party under the leadership of President Zuma supports full installation of mother tongue education, acceleration of indigenous knowledge system implementation, development of scientific and legal terminology in African language, protection of oral heritage as living knowledge. We reject linguistic dependency. We reject cultural inferiority. We reject mental colonialism.

As I conclude, allow me to pose this question to the House. Tell me, hon members, how many times in this House have we heard complaints that there is no interpretation service available, and that members cannot fully express themselves in their language because the service is not provided? What does that say to South Africans when even in highest office in the country, our mother tongues are not fully considered and adequately catered for? In Parliament, the supreme lawmaking institute struggles to institutionalise linguistic equality. What message are we sending to the rural schools in Limpopo, to the township in KwaMashu, and to the children in

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 132

Lusikisiki? The South African child cannot realise her full potential while thinking in translation. Mzwakhe Mbuli says, and I quote:

IsiZulu:

“Ukulimala kwengqondo ukulimala komuntu. Ukulimala komuntu ukulimala komndeni. Ukulimala komndeni ukulimala komphakathi. Ukulimala komphakathi ukulimala kwesizwe.”

English:

Reclaiming our mother's tongue is reclaiming our dignity. Reclaiming our language; is reclaiming our future. I thank you. [Applause.]

Afrikaans:

Dr D C CHRISTIANS: Voorsitter, as 'n kind vir die eerste keer sê, “Ma”, hoor 'n mens nie net 'n woord nie. 'n Mens hoor 'n wêreld wat oopgaan. Moedertaal is dus nie 'n luukse bykomstigheid in die klaskamer nie. Dit is die sleutel wat die deur na begrip oopsluit. Daarom is Internasionale Moedertaaldag nie net 'n simboliese datum op 'n kalender nie. Dit is 'n toets vir die wêreld se gewete. Wie kry regtig toegang tot leer, tot waardigheid, en tot deelname.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 133

Internasionaal val die kollig in 2026 baie doelbewus op jongmense. UNESCO, die Verenigde Nasies se Opvoedkundige, Wetenskaplike en Kulturele Organisasie, sê die liggaam se tema vir vanjaar is, "Youth voices on multilingual education" – dit wil sê jong stemme oor meertalige onderwys. Dit is belangrik, want die realiteit is hard. Wêreldwyd het ongeveer 40% van mense nie toegang tot onderwys in 'n taal wat hulle vlot praat en verstaan nie. In sommige lae- en middel-inkomste lande kan dit selfs tot 90% wees. Met ander woorde, miljoene kinders sit fisies in 'n klaskamer, maar bly taalkundig buite die les.

Dan is daar nog 'n wêreldkrisis wat stilweg voortstap: taalverlies. UNESCO waarsku ook dat 'n taal gemiddeld elke twee weke verdwyn en dat 'n groot deel van die wêreld se tale in gevaar is. Wanneer 'n taal sterf, verdwyn nie net woordeskat nie. Kennis, geheue, stories, humorsin, gebede, plantname, plaaslike wysheid, en identiteit verdwyn saam.

Suid-Afrika hoef nie eens buite ons grense te kyk om te verstaan hoe taal onderwys maak of breek nie. Ons sien dit elke jaar in die data en in die trane. Kom ons sê dit reguit: 'n Leeskrisis is 'n taal krisis. Die studie oor die Vordering in Internasionale Leesgeletterdheid, bekend as PIRLS, 2021 het

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 134

bevind dat 81% van Graad 4 leerders nie vir betekenis kan lees nie in enige van ons 11 amptelike tale. Dit is nie net 'n statistiek nie. Dit is 'n noodsein. Dit beteken miljoene kinders kan klanke uitspreek, maar kan nie die wêreld verstaan wat die sin vir hulle probeer oopmaak nie.

Dit bring ons by een van die grootste "stil oorgange" in ons stelsel: die skuif na Engels as onderrigtaal, dikwels rondom Graad 4. Suid-Afrika se eie beleidspoging om dit te verander is nou op die tafel in praktiese vorm. Die Departement van Basiese Onderwys se Moedertaalgebaseerde Tweektalige Onderwys program, die MTbTO, beoog om moedertaal-onderrig verder as Graad 3 uit te brei, met 'n "laat-uit" model wat in Graad 4 vanaf 2025 begin het en jaarliks uitbrei. Daar was reeds 'n groot mylpaal. Die Minister het in November 2025 die eerste historiese Graad 4 MTbTO-assesserings verwelkom. Dit is goeie nuus, maar daar moet ook voorsorg getref word vir beskikbare boeke, terminologie, onderwysers se taal- en vakkennis, assesserings wat regverdig is, en ouers wat ingesluit word.

Nou, as hierdie debat oor moedertaal net oor Afrikaans sou gaan, sou dit 'n tragiese misverstand wees. Afrikaans is belangrik, ja, maar moedertaalregte beteken alle tale:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 135

Afrikaans, isiXhosa, Setswana, Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda. Elke kind se taal is 'n sleutel. En dit is presies waarom die Suid-Afrikaanse gesprek so delikaat en so noodsaaklik is. Taal kan óf 'n brug wees, óf 'n grenslyn.

Dan is daar die dimensie van taalregte in ons howe en instellings, veral rondom Afrikaans as taal van onderrig in hoër ondewys. Die Grondwethof het byvoorbeeld in die verlede beslis oor taalbeleid by universiteite soos in die Stellenbosch saak. Hierdie regsuitspraak wys iets belangrik. Taalregte moet altyd saamgelees word met billikheid, toegang, en praktiese uitvoerbaarheid, maar dit beteken nie taal verdwyn sommer omdat dit moeilik is nie. Dit beteken die staat en instellings moet doelgerig beplan, kapasiteit bou, en meertaligheid as 'n bate bestuur.

Voorsitter, waarom dan Afrikaans vandag? Omdat Afrikaans 'n lewende bewys is van 'n eenvoudige waarheid: As 'n taal ruimte kry, skep dit toegang. As dit onderdruk word, verloor mense hul stem. Afrikaans is in skole, in universiteite, in gemeenskappe, en in die ekonomie. Maar Afrikaans se voortbestaan kan nie gebou word op uitsluiting van ander nie, en net so kan die bevordering van Afrikatale nie gebou word op

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 136

die afbreek van Afrikaans nie. Suid-Afrika se oplossing is nie 'n taaloorlog nie. Dit is 'n taal-ooreenkoms: dit wil sê meertaligheid met standarde.

So, wat behoort hierdie Huis vandag te sê nie? Dit moet nie net mooi woorde wees nie, maar rigting gee. Moedertaal moet funksioneel wees, nie simbolies nie. Lees moet die kern wees. Sonder lees vir betekenis is elke vak 'n berg. Publieke deelname moet taal-toeganklik wees. Wanneer regulasies oor taal en toelating gemaak word, moet gemeenskappe dit kan lees, bespreek, en verstaan. Anders word deelname net vir die reeds bevoorregtes. Jeugstemme moet ernstig opgeneem word. UNESCO fokus op die jeug en sê dat jongmense vandag meertalig leef in die straat, op sosiale media, en in musiek. Hulle kan die land leer hoe taal 'n brug kan word. Elke taal is 'n belegging in nasiebou. Wanneer 'n kind se taal gerespekteer word, word daardie kind se menswaardigheid gerespekteer. Dit is die grondslag van enige demokrasie.

Internasionale Moedertaaldag vra 'n eenvoudige vraag: Word kinders geleer in 'n taal wat hulle verstaan, en kan hulle daardeur groei? Die wêreld sê 40% kry dit nie reg nie. Suid-

Afrika se data wys te veel kinders sukkel om betekenis te haal uit teks, selfs in hul eie tale.

Afrikaans, saam met elke ander amptelike taal, behoort nie net in toesprake te leef nie, maar in klaskamers, handboeke, biblioteke, assesserings, en in die respek waarmee die staat sy mense hanteer. Mag hierdie debat eindig met 'n duidelike oproep tot aksie vir almal – dat die staat, provinsies, en alle rolspelers die uitbreiding van moedertaalgebaseerde onderrig met kwaliteit, hulpbronne, en meetbare uitkomste sal ondersteun sodat elke kind in elke taal werklik kan leer. Dankie.

English:

Ms N N CHIRWA-MPUNGOSE: Thank you, ...

IsiZulu:

... Mabandla kaMjokwane kaNdaba, sizwe sikaMthaniya ...

Setswana:

Gompieno ke letsatsi la matsalo la moporesidente wa rona, mookamedi wa EFF, Julius Sello Malema. Mothusi wa batho le moemedi wa tokologo.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 138

Sepedi:

Re golele mookamedi, Julius Sello sa rena Malema, re golele! O naledi ya rena, o phadima bjalo ka seetša sa phethogo.

Setswana:

Wa nna mmutlwa mo ga ba ba sa kgoneng go kgotlhelela tokologo ya setšhaba sa rona.

English:

The United Nations declared the 21 February as the International Mother Language Day to celebrate the diversity of languages across the world.

IsiXhosa:

Zingaphezu kwama7 000 iilwimi ezithethwayo ehlabathini. Ezininzi kuzo zijongene nokuphela ngoku ngenxa yempembelelo yobukoloniwali nobuimpriyasi. Nangona sineelwimi ezili12 ezisemthethweni eMzantsi Afrika, uninzi lweelwimi zamaKhoi namaSan zitshatyalalisiwe kwaye kuncinci kakhulu okwenziwayo ukuzigcina ezi lwimi. AmaBhaca, amaHlubi ...

Setswana:

... Balobedu, Sepitori, ...

English:

... and numerous other dialects and tribes in South Africa are oppressively grouped amongst other languages and tribes perpetuating erasure and the vicious cycle of the violence of the apartheid regime that didn't possess the tolerance, the depth, and breadth for African lingual diversity and evolution.

IsiZulu:

Kwakuyini ngempela ukuthi uMongameli wethu avumele amaBhaca abhobhe ezikoleni zethu.

Setswana:

Kgotso re bone ...

English:

... the cultural development of new school lingo ...

Setswana:

... sa bana ba kasi ka mo Pheli, Soshanguve le Mamelodi. O re utlwa ka puo le sefo gore ...

Afrikaans:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 140

Die is 'n kind van ... [This is a child of ...]

Setswana:

Ke ngwanyana wa gompieno [today]. Tse nnyane tsao fetsa ...

[Go se utlwagale.]

English:

I can go anywhere in the world, but ...

Setswana:

... motho yoo tswang Pitori ke a mo utlwa. Ebile ga o mpotse selo.

English:

We run the media. We run music and pop culture, but government of today ...

Setswana:

... ga ere bone. [Doesn't see us.] Re nale setswerere se se tumileng lefatshe ka bophara [international superstar] se ba reng ke Tyla.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 141

She blew up with Bacardi and Amapiano evolution.

Setswana:

Bo Tonakgolo Gayton ba tlhalefetse mebila e e fosagetseng
[wrong streets].

English:

A very massive moment is passing us by while we wait for VAR because the Minister of today don't have ideological direction, and they are the same, all of them. Our leaders have no idea the responsibility we carry to mend our soil and its people following the massacre of ...

IsiZulu:

... abantu, ubuntu nesintu. IsiZulu sikhulunywa abantu abangamaphesenti ayi-24 eNingizimu Afrika.

IsiXhosa:

IsiXhosa sithethwa ngabantu abayi16%.

Afrikaans:

... Afrikaans met 10% en Engels met 8%. [... Afrikaans with 10% and English with 8%.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 142

IsiZulu:

Kodwa uhulumeni nezindlu zakhe, izikole zethu namaNyuvesi isiNgisi siqhayiswa ngaphambili kulandelele isiBhunu.

English:

Our personhood as Africans is so far depleted that my generation and those after me, when we go to bed, we dream in English. When we lose language, we lose oral tradition. We lose our relationship to nature, and we lose our identity and sense of belonging. Before colonial dominance, we migrated as a means of responding to the needs of the environment. We went up north for agricultural reasons and seasonal changes and we came down south to escape the heat of the summer. The freedom to move has been stripped away from us. We are now a commercialized collective of Africans who see land and nature and the environment through the eyes of the colonizers and capitalist greed. At school level, ...

IsiZulu:

... othisha banesibindi ukusitshela ukuthi sikhulume isiNgisi nezingane zethu emakhaya. Emahhovisi kahulumeni ama-intercom akhuluma isiNgisi. Ezinkantolo zethu ...

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 143

English:

... practitioners who use vernacular are even taken to task by presiding officers. This is an indication of the durability of colonial and apartheid legacies. The impact of this on the African population of this country is catastrophically humongous.

IsiZulu:

Izikole ezixhume izilimi zase-Europe nobumhlophe zihlonywa njengeziphakeme kanti izilimi zabomdabu zicatshangwa nokungaxubani ngokungahleleki. Umphumela wobukoloni namandla ayo aqhubekayo. Njengamanje iNingizimu Afrika iqinisa izikhundla zezilimi namasiko okuyingxenye nomongo wamandla wobukoloni.

English:

The question, therefore, is simply not that of language alone, but that of maintaining hierarchies of power and superiority. It's that of economics, of geographic justice, and that of identity and belonging.

IsiZulu:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 144

Umpfumela walokhu ukuthi izilimi zethu zizoshabalala futhi namasiko ethu, ubunikazi bethu kanye nomuzi wokuzenzela indawo yakho kuzophela. Uhlelo lobukoloni oluzobe seluphelele. Futhi izindlela zethu zokucabanga zizobe seziphikisana nathi uqobo.

English:

It is therefore important that we do what we can today.

Afrikaans:

Staatsinstansies moet taaldiversiteit in ons land versterk.

[State institutions must strengthen language diversity in our country.]

Setswana:

Re batla di ID [ditokomane ya boitshupo] tsa go kwadiwa ka Sepedi kwa Lefapheng la Merero ya Selegae [Home Affairs.

Tshivenda:

Dzikhadi dza kiliniki dzi tea u nwaliwa nga Tshivenda.

Setswana:

A bana ba rona ba kwale diteko tsa bona ka Setswana.

IsiZulu:

Akuphume "iDie Stem" kungene umthandazo wabantu owabhalwa u-
Enoch Sontonga.

English:

When the EFF takes over power, we will do away with all these
colonial tentacles maintained through language and ensure that
those who come after us have a high command of language that
is rooted in their identity.

Setswana:

Pele pele ka maleme a rona a Aforika le toka ya leruo! Pele
pele! [Legofi.]

IsiZulu:

Inkosi B N LUTHULI: Sekela Somlomo, namuhla sivuka
ukuzoqinisekisa isimiso esiyisisekelo ezinhliziyweni ze-IFP
nasezinhliziyweni zobuntu bethu kanye nesithunzi somuntu
ngamunye esivezwa ngolimi lakhe.

English:

Our late founder uMntwana kaPhindangene reminded this nation
many times that language is not merely a tool for

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 146

communication. It is a vessel of identity, culture, memory, and belonging. His life's work was rooted in the conviction that when you strip a person of their language, you weaken their sense of self. However, when you protect it, you empower generations.

International Mother Language Day invites us to reflect on exactly that – the power of this linguistic heritage. In a country as diverse as ours, language is one of the most profound ways we preserve who we are. In carrying our history, our worldview, our values, beliefs, and our stories, it is through our mother tongues that we learn Ubuntu or Botho, that deep understanding that I am because we are.

The IFP has long urged that language justice is central to nation-building. We cannot claim to celebrate diversity whilst our indigenous languages are overlooked in education, undersupported in technology, and marginalised in the Public Service. Equally so, English is a global bridge, the language of science, trade, diplomacy, and opportunity.

International Mother Language Day should not be a ceremonial moment. It must be a reminder that our languages need

investment, not only sentiment – investment in teachers, in translating technology, in publishing, in research, and in ensuring that every South African can access public services in the language that shaped their earliest understanding of the world.

Protecting language is protecting culture. Protecting culture is protecting identity. Protecting identity is protecting dignity. Let us honour the legacy of those who fought for our linguistic freedom by ensuring that every South African's mother tongue remains alive. Let us respect it and carry it forward for the next generation.

IsiZulu:

Asiziqhenye ngolimi lwethu.

IsiZulu:

Ms J S PETERSEN: Ngiyabonga, Sihlalo.

Afrikaans:

Dankie, Adjunkspeaker.

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 148

Hon members, today we mark International Mother Language Day, a day that reminds us that language is not merely a tool for communication but the very heartbeat of culture, identity, and belonging. In a diverse nation like South Africa, language carries the stories of our communities, the wisdom of our elders, and the hopes of future generations.

It is through language that traditions are preserved, histories are told, and identities are shaped. When we protect a language, we protect the dignity and heritage of the people who speak it. Our Constitution recognises 12 official languages, an important acknowledgement of the richness that defines our nation.

Yet we must also confront a deeper historical reality. Long before the formation of the modern South African state, the First Nations of this land, the Khoi and San people, spoke languages that represent some of the oldest linguistic traditions in the world. These languages are not simply dialects of the past; they are living carriers of knowledge, identity, and history. For centuries, the languages of the Khoi and San were marginalised, suppressed, and pushed to the brink of disappearance. Today, if we truly believe in justice,

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 149

restoration, and dignity, then the preservation and revitalisation of these First Nation languages must become a national priority.

Recognising linguistic diversity cannot end with symbolic acknowledgement. It must mean actively supporting the revival of the First Nation languages through education, cultural programmes, research, and recognition within public institutions. The languages of the Khoi and San deserve visibility, protection, and investment for the future that lies ahead so that we can speak them with pride.

At the same time, the promotion of all mother languages must be strengthened across our society. It must reflect in our classrooms, in public services, in the justice system, and in the everyday functioning of the state. Children should be empowered to learn in the language they best understand, especially in the early years of education because language should never be a barrier to knowledge or opportunity.

The PA believes that linguistic diversity is not a challenge to overcome. It is a national asset to be protected and celebrated. Every language spoken in this country, whether

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 150

widely used or spoken by smaller communities, contributes to the cultural richness that defines who we are as South Africans. When people are able to express themselves in the language of their homes and communities, they participate more confidently in society and in democracy itself.

Let this day remind us that unity does not mean uniformity. Our strength lies precisely in our diversity. Let us recommit ourselves to rebuilding a nation where every language is respected, every culture is valued, and where the languages of the First Nations are not forgotten but restored to their rightful place in the story of our nation because, when we preserve our mother languages, we preserve the very soul of our nation.

Afrikaans:

En so sê ons dankie.

Afrikaans:

Mnr P A VAN STADEN: Agb Adjunkspeaker, Internasionale Moedertaaldag word jaarliks gevier om die bewustheid van taalkundige en kulturele verskeidenheid en veeltaligheid te bevorder. Op 17 November 1999 het UNESCO, die Verenigde Nasies

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 151

se Opvoedkundige, Wetenskaplike en Kulturele Organisasie, hierdie dag aangekondig. Die betrokke dag word ook amptelik erken deur die Verenigde Nasies weens 'n besluit wat geneem is deur die Algemene Vergadering van die Verenigde Nasies.

Hierdie dag is erken nadat die Taalbewegingsdag in 1952 in Oos-Pakistan herdenk is toe 'n groep studente doodgemaak is deur die Pakistanse polisie gedurende protes van die Bengaalse Taalbeweging. Bengaals is 'n taal wat deur 250 miljoen mense in Bangladesj, Indië, en Nepal gepraat word.

Afrikaans word tans gepraat in meer as 12 lande en is ook tans een van Suid-Afrika se amptelike landstale. Afrikaans is op 8 Mei 1925 as 'n amptelike taal van Suid-Afrika erken. Die taal is vanjaar 101 jaar oud. Meer as 6,9 miljoen mense, 14% van ons totale bevolking, beskou Afrikaans as hul moedertaal. Artikel 6 van die Grondwet bepaal dat Afrikaans een van ons amptelike tale is, en gedurende Mei 2022 is Afrikaans as 'n inheemse taal erken.

Die VF Plus se standpunt is dat die afskeep van moedertaalonderrig bydra tot swak prestasies onder leerlinge en ook bydra tot 'n hoë uitvalsyfer. Die feit dat Afrikaans-

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 152

en Engelssprekende leerders in hul moedertaal onderwys ontvang, verklaar waarskynlik waarom 'n groter persentasie van hul Graad 1 leerders op skool aanbly tot in Graad 12. Selfs op tersiêre vlak hou moedertaalonderrig voordele in. Die basis van die VF Plus se onderwysbeleid is daarom dat moedertaalonderrig vir almal beskikbaar moet wees. Ons is van mening dat daar wel tersiêre instellings in die noorde en in die suide van die land moet wees wat oorwegend Afrikaans as medium van onderrig gebruik.

Die Wysigingswet op Wette op Basiese Onderwys, algemeen bekend as BELA, beweeg in die teenoorgestelde rigting met betrekking tot onderwys as dit wat die VF Plus voorstaan. Dit verskuif die drie deurslaggewende bevoegdhede, naamlik die samestelling van 'n taal-, godsdiens- en toelatingsbeleid, se finale seggenskap van skoolbeheerliggame na die provinsiale onderwysdepartemente. Gehalte-onderwys in enige iemand se moedertaal moet vir almal toeganklik wees.

Deur die jare heen het verskeie regimes probeer om die Afrikaanse taal te vernietig, maar hierdie taal het elke keer net sterker en sterker gegroei tot waar dit vandag in 12 lande oor die wêreld heen gepraat, geskryf, gedig, en gesing word.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 153

Afrikaans – die soetste taal, die mooiste taal – se stryd om oorlewing in ons skole, universiteite, en die openbare lewe is nog lank nie verby nie.

Dit is in die belang van Suid-Afrika se tale dat Afrikaans se stryd om gelyke behandeling voortgesit word, en daarom sal ons nie ophou om in die taal te praat, te lees, te kommunikeer, te leer, te dig, te skryf, en te sing nie. Sodoende sal ons hierdie taal lewend hou. Ek dank u, Adjunkspeaker.

Dr T K S LETLAPE: Hon Deputy Speaker, I would just like to remind everyone that two and a half score years ago, which means 50 years ago, on June 16, the youth of this country died for English. Today, 15% of grade 3 learners cannot read a single word in any language. And I want you to think about that. Why did the youth die for English? My maternal grandmother is speaking isiNdebele. My maternal grandfather is speaking Siswati. Both my paternal grandparents are Batswana. What am I? What is my first language? Despite that, the first language I learned was isiZulu. My foundational education was in is Setswana.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 154

By the time I was in Standard 4, which would be the equivalent of Grade 6, I was a member of the debate team. The language used was English, which enabled us to compete against other tribal schools. I attended Setswana schools from grade 1 to matric and as the Chair of the South African Medical Association, Sama, I was encouraged by my colleagues who spoke Afrikaans to speak in my indigenous language in meetings. I politely refused because I wanted a functional association where the doctors could be united, where we could create a successful organisation that was financially viable.

We have in our Constitution statements that say, "heal the divisions of the past". One of the key drivers of divisions in the past and presently and into the future is language. And this House is a prime example of language-based divisions leading to hostility and a non-productive Parliament. We have embedded in our Constitution that we should build a united and democratic South Africa. One of the key instruments for division was language. I would like you to know that there is a small island called Singapore, which is 85% Chinese. Its official language is English. It is one of the most successful economies because they understand that the primary function,

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 155

as has been alluded to by some of the fellow members, is communication.

When you want to use language as what identifies you, given the history that we come from, you sow divisions. I have no issue with my identity. Language is for communication. But what we need is to unite this country to heal her and to ensure that the blood of those young men and women that were my age was not spilled in vain. Languages will always persist. But the business language of this country that all of us here endorse is English, so that we can unite and we can be prosperous and all of us can survive into the future and be internationally competitive. I thank you.

Mr W M THRING: Hon Deputy Speaker, International Mother Language Day reminds us that language is more than just a tool of communication. The ACDP asserts that it is the heartbeat of one's identity, the carrier of memory and the foundations of dignity. For South Africans, this day should carry profound meaning because our democracy is rooted in the recognition of diversity. Our constitution recognises 11 official languages, affirming that each language spoken in our land is worthy of respect, worthy of development and worthy of protection. The

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 156

ACDP understands that from IsiZulu to Afrikaans, from English to Tshivenda, each language tells the story of a people. Each holds wisdom passed from generation to generation. When a child speaks in their mother tongue, they are not simply forming words, they are forming confidence, identity and connection.

International Mother Language Day compels us to confront difficult truths. For too long in our history, language was used as a tool of exclusion and division. During the 1976 Soweto Uprisings, language became a battlefield for dignity and freedom. Today, however, in our democratic era, language must be used as a bridge and not a barrier. Research consistently shows that children learn best when taught in their mother tongue in the early years. Yet many of our learners still transition too quickly into languages that are not their own, often at a great cost to comprehension and confidence. As policy makers, we in this House must strengthen mother tongue based on multilingual education, invest in teacher training and ensure that indigenous languages flourish not only in our homes and in our communities, but also in the classrooms and in the courts and in universities and digital spaces.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 157

Language development is not a cultural imperative; it is an economic one. When we develop terminology in science, law, technology and commerce in our indigenous languages, we expand access to deepen participation in our economy. The ACDP believes that in celebrating our mother language, we strengthen our democracy. In protecting them, we protect our heritage. And in promoting them, we secure a more inclusive culture and future for all. I thank you.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu. N L S KWANKWA: Abantu abantsundu ngamanyoronyoro, angananyaniso kuba beza apha kule Ndlu bafike bakhumshe besithi makuphuculwe iilwimi zethu. Xa usiya phaya emakhayeni abo, abakhumshi abantwana babo banencilikithi, abafuni nokuba uthethe ulwimi lwenkobe. Uya kufumanisa ukuba abazazi neziduko ezi zabo. Ewe, siyavuma ukuba ngoomama abaninzi abanoxanduva lokukhulisa abantwana. Abanye bethu bathwele abantwana babo ngengobozi, bayabakhulisa. Iza kuba yintoni ke leyo?

English:

Is it a father tongue?

IsiXhosa:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 158

Kufuneka sizibuze ukuba xa umntu ongutata ezikhulisela umntwana wakhe, siyithini na loo nto.

Sekela Mbhexeshi oyiNtloko, siyaguga ngoku sisithi lePalamente mayibe ngumzekelo. Ayisincedisi into yokuba sibengoonkala sikhombe abantu ngapha sibe thina sikekelela kwelinye icala. Sasithe kwimiba ephathelene neelwimi, masikhokele. Safika apha ningakhumshi kumdaka iisali ngowama2013. Safika sanifakela iilwimi ezi zethu kwaye sizithetha nanini na. Abantu abanobudlelwane nesiNgesi, yingxaki yabo leyo. Thina sirhabule, siyile esikolweni kwaye siyakwazi ukukhumsha xa sithanda kodwa siyazazi ukuba singobani na. Ingaxaki yenu navumela ukugululwa ubuthumbu benu nokukhuculwa ingqondo ngabelungu abanenza nacinga ukuba xa nithetha isiNgesi nenza into engcono nephucukileyo. Ukanti ke thina asikhonjalo.

Abanye ootitshala bakhe bacebisa ukuba ndikhumshe xa ndithetha nabantwana bam phaya ekhayeni. Ndaphendula ngelithi apha ekhaya kusemaTshaweni kwaKwankwa, kuza kuthethwa ulwimi lwasemaTshaweni. Utitshala unomsebenzi omhlawulayo wokwenza ukuba umntwana wam akhumshe xa esiya kucela umsebenzi. Uxanduva lwakhe maze lungenzi ukuba andixelele ngento emandiyenze ngomntwana wam apha ekhaya. Izithukuthuku zenja

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 159

ziphelela eboyeni kuba kaloku siza apha imihla nezolo, sidomboza ngelicebisayo, suke urhulumente angazinanzi nezo ziphakamiso sizenzileyo. Loo nto ibangela ukuba iilwimi zethu zingahoyeki. Akukho kwanto engcono xa sikhumsha.

Kukho nala Mphathiswa wezeMidlalo, ubuGcisa neNkcubeko ofana nevivingane. Uyakuthanda ukubhabhela esibaneni angasaziyo ukuba sintunyekwe ngubani. [Kwahlekwa.] Uya kufika enanzela yonke indawo kweli cala lezemidlalo kodwa kubugcisa nenkcubeko akabonakali, uzilibele ukuba nezi ziphantsi kwesebe lakhe. Ingaba ndiyaphazama? Nakhe nambona okanye namva esiza apha ezokuthetha ngeenkqubo eziza kuncedisa lamacandelo? Hayi. Uwalibele amanye la. Uya kumfumana phaya kumbhoxo xa kudlala amaBhokobhoko kuba kukho iikhamera ezininzi phaya.

Kufuneka siyiqonde nento yokuba kula makhasi omoya xa sithetha sisebenzisa iilwimi zethu, sikhulisa amathuba engqesho. Kukho abantwana bethu abasebenza kooFacebook, Google, Tik Tok nooTwitter kumazwe aphelela kolwandle, abahlalutya beguqula izinto ezibhalwe zathethwa ngeelwimi zethu. Yimisebenzi leyo kubo kodwa thina sikhetha ukubalambisa ngobe sikhumsha.

[Kwaphela ixesha.]

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 160

IsiXhosa:

Mnu S S ZIBI: Ivakele. Sekela Somlomo, mandinxibe iindondo zam. Xa ndiza kuthetha ngolwakuthi ulwimi ndifuna ukuphakamisa inkosi yam eMagebeni UDilizintaba. Aah! Dilizintaba! Ndiphinde ndiphakamise amaHlubi, ooBhungane, ooMthimkhulu, ooNdlebentle zombini, ooMashwabadel'inkomo neempondo zayo.

Ukubaluleka kolwimi kuhamba nenkcubeko, iingoma, izibongo namabali aneemfundiso. Iilwimi zibalulekile kuba kufuneka sizazi ukuba siphuma phi, singoobani, sisiya phi na. Le ngxoxo yanamhlanje mayisenze sizikise ukucinga ngoko sithe salehlekelwa kuko. Ubuntu bethu busilahkekile. Emandulo bekungekho mapolisa nazijele, kodwa umthetho ubukhona kwaye uthotyelwa kuba abantu naba bonileyo bebeneentloni beloyika ihlazo.

Ihlazo sisithuko kubazali, abantakwenu nasesizweni sonke. Namhlanje umntu uthi xa bengekafiki abakwantsasana ukuza kumbamba, mandiqhubeke nenyala nokuba isizwe siyafa. Yiyo loo nto abo barhaphiliza imali yesizwe bengenazo iintloni, suke bayikhumshe bathi ...

English:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 161

... innocent until proven guilty.

IsiXhosa:

Ukuzalwa ngokutsha kwesizwe soMzantsi Afrika akunakuze kwenzeke ukuba iingcambu zethu azikho kwinkcubeko nezithethe zethu. Isicelo sam kule Ndlu kukuba sibe ngumzekelo ngezenzo ezibonakalisayo nezibonisa ukuba, laa nto ithethwa ngabacinezeli yokuba abantu abamnyama abakwazi ukuphatha bubuxoki. Asisokuze sikwazi ukuyiphumelelisa loo nto ukuba asinazo iintloni.

Le yiNdlu yoWiso-mthetho yeSizwe. Ubunkokheli bulindeleke apha, ukuze sibonise abo bakwizigaba ngezigaba zasekuhlaleni, kwezemidlalo, ezoshishino njalonjalo. Le mini mayisenze sicinge kakuhle ngalo Mzantsi Afrika siwufunayo ukuba uza kuqala ndawoni na apha ezintliziyweni zethu. Masithi sithetha ngeelwimi zethu kube oko kuthetha kwethu kunentsingiselo engaphakathi kuthi ezintliziyweni, ukuze sibe khona esi sifundo siza kuhambisa isizwe ingakumbi isizwe esimnyama ukuze siye phambili. Ndiyabulela Sekela Somlomo.

IsiZulu:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 162

Nk N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: Somlomo ohloniphekile, ngifisa ukuqala ngalokhu, ulimi luyisithunzi, ulimi luyinqubeko, futhi ulimi liwumgogodla lobuwena. Uma sikhuluma ngolimi, sikhuluma ngokuthi, ubani othola amathuba? Uma sikhuluma ngolimi eNingizimu Afrika sikhuluma ngokuthi, ubani oshiyiwa ngaphandle?

English:

And in our education system, the numbers tell a troubling story. Only 7% of South African learners speak English as a home language, yet almost 99% are taught in English from Grade 4 onwards. More than 80% of children learn in a language different from the one spoken at home.

IsiZulu:

Lokho kusho ukuthi izingane zethu ziqala ngokutolika amagama ngaphambi kokuthi zilufunde ulwazi ezilufundiswayo.

English:

And the outcomes reflect this imbalance. According to the latest data, only three out of 10 learners in the foundation phase can read for meaning at the level expected for their age. That is 30%. And before the Government of National Unity,

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 163

GNU, gets triggered, I am not talking about that 30%. I hope this is the 30% we agreed needs to change.

IsiZulu:

Lena akuyona inkinga yolimi kuphela. Yinkinga yokungalingani, eyasusa leya ngxabano ye-Basic Education Laws Amendment Act. Ingxabano eyavela ngesikhathi kudluliswa lo Mthetho we-Basic Education Laws Amendment, yaveza ukuthi abantu bakhuluma sengathi bavikela ulimi labo ...

English:

... but beneath that debate was a deeper question. The question was, would language policy continue in a certain context to maintain exclusion?

IsiZulu:

Kwezinye izindawo, izikole zikaHulumeni zazisebenzisa izinqubomgomo zolimi ngendlela eyayingqanda ukufinyelela kwabafundi beningi bendawo nakuba beyingxenye yomphakathi ozungeze lezo zikole.

English:

And that is not transformation. That is structural inequality.

IsiZulu:

Lokho akusho ukuthi kukhona ulimi olungabalulekile. Zonke izilimi zethu eNingizimu Afrika zibalulekile futhi kumele zivikelwe.

English:

But mother tongue education must never become a shield for segregation.

IsiZulu:

Uhlelo lwethu lwezemfundo kumele lukhulise ukufundisa ngolimi lwasekhaya, ikakhulukazi ezilimini ezikhulunywa yiningi labantu ezweni lethu.

English:

And that means investing in teacher training. It means developing quality education material. It means building multilingual capacity.

IsiZulu:

Ulimi kumele libe ibhuloho. Akumele libe umnyango ovaliwe futhi ovalela abanye abantwana ngaphandle novalela abanye abantu amathuba.

English:

If we are serious about building one South Africa, language must open opportunities. It must never protect privilege.

IsiZulu:

Ngiyabonga.

IsiZulu:

Nk T E MAGAGULA: Ngiyabonga, Sihlalo, ...

English:

... hon Chairperson and hon members, this year, as we reflect on the 30th year of our democratic Constitution, we must confront a fundamental question. Has language policy in education truly advanced social justice, or has it merely reproduced old hierarchies under new forms? Language in South Africa has never been neutral. It has always been political. It has always been about power.

In 1976, the youth of Soweto rose against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. The Soweto Uprising was not simply about language preference. It was about dignity, access, and the right to learn in a language that affirmed

one's humanity. Language became a liberating instrument. Decades later, the struggles continue. The #FeesMustFall movement, particularly at institutions such as the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University, reignited the call for decolonised education. The Open Stellenbosch campaign challenged institutional cultures where language operated as a gatekeeper, often privileging English and Afrikaans while marginalising indigenous African languages. These movements remind us that linguistic exclusion is a structural barrier to social justice. The dominance of English and Afrikaans in higher education and formal economic spaces continues to reproduce inequality. While English is often defended as a global lingua franca, we must ask, at what cost? Research consistently demonstrates that learners perform better academically when taught in their mother tongue, particularly in early ages.

Cognisance development, comprehension, and self-confidence are significantly enhanced when learners engage with knowledge in a familiar linguistic framework.

IsiZulu:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 167

Kumele sizibuze ukuthi njengoba thina singamalungu aleli Phalamende sikhona sonke uma sihleli, abanye bethu uma sisukuma, sikhuluma isiLungu size sisikhiphe ngamakhala, kodwa uma sifika la, sikhuluma ukuthi, kunegembu elilodwa elikhuthaza lolo limi. Kodwa thina sithini sisonke ngoba uma singabheka nje singathola ukuthi iNdlu noma uhafu wale Ndlu le sikhuluma nje izingane zethu zifunda ezikoleni ezisesilungwini.

English:

We must also acknowledge the strides made in higher education over the past 30 years. Universities are increasingly incorporating indigenous languages into official slogans, ceremonies, and institutional identities. Specialised language development programmes have emerged to advance IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Sesotho and other African languages within academic spaces. Terminology development units are working to produce academic vocabulary in fields previously dominated by English and Afrikaans. These developments matter. They signal institutional recognition that African languages belong in lecture halls, laboratories, and research journals.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 168

We must confront a critical frontier of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, STEM, education. Advancing indigenous languages in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is not a cultural luxury. It is an economic necessity. If learners cannot conceptualise mathematics or science in a language they deeply understand, we undermine their potential. Language should not be the invisible barrier that filters out talent from rural and township schools. The development of scientific terminology in African languages, translation of textbooks, and investment in digital platforms that support multilingual STEM education must become national priorities.

Innovation must speak the languages of our people. Policy without a budget is rhetoric. Legislation without oversight is symbolic. Our education institutions have an institutional duty not only to pass progressive language policies but to ensure their implementation. We must strengthen budget allocations for the language development units. Teacher training in multilingual curriculum, translation and terminology development. Oversight visits to schools and universities must include explicit assessment of language policy implementation. We must ask institutions whether

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 169

indigenous languages are supported beyond symbolic use.

Whether our resources are allocated equitably.

Thirty years into democracy, the promise of our Constitution in recognising official languages must move from paper to practice. Language is not simply about communication. It is about identity. It is about epistemology. It is about who has the right to produce knowledge and who is confined to consuming it. The ANC has always understood that liberation is incomplete if it does not transform the cultural and linguistic foundations of society. As we commemorate three decades of democratic governance, let us commit ourselves to a vision of education that affirms every child's mother tongue as a site of knowledge, power and possibility.

Mother tongue education is not a retreat from global engagement. It is the foundation for confident global participation. Let us ensure that in the next 30 years, no learner is silenced by language. No intellect is diminished by linguistic exclusion. And no institution remains unchanged by the call of justice.

IsiZulu:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 170

Ngiyabonga, Sihlalo.

Mr I ISMAIL-MOOSA: Malibongwe!

Arabic:

As-salaamu-alai-kum wa-rahmatullahi wa-barakatuh. Audhu billahi minash shaitanir rajim. Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim.

English:

In the name of the Almighty, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, hon Chairperson, hon members, on this International Mother Language Day, Al Jama-ah extends its heartfelt condolences to all the fallen heroes who, despite grave human rights violations, stood firmly for justice and ultimately sacrificed their lives. We mourn the victims of ongoing conflicts across the globe, including the recent bombardments in Iran, where innocent leaders, civilians and children continue to suffer. The loss of 153 primary school girls in recent attacks is a tragedy that wounds the conscience of humanity. Today reminds us that the only true language of humanity must be the language of peace, love, justice and the preservation of life. The global community must urgently recommit itself to meaningful dialogue, accountability and

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 171

sustainable peace, rather than perpetuating the relentless carnage of our human race. As we reflect on language, we honour the legacy of Neville Alexander, the revolutionary intellectual who endured 10 years of imprisonment in Robben Island. After his release, he became a tireless advocate for multilingualism and was awarded the prestigious Linguapax Prize in 2008 for his outstanding contribution to linguistic diversity and multilingual education. We also pay tribute to Achmat Davids of Bo-Kaap, whose scholarship deepened our understanding of Arabic Afrikaans and its profound sociolinguistic and cultural significance in South Africa's history.

Language is not merely a tool of communication; it is a foundation of dignity, identity and empowerment. Research confirms that children taught in their mother tongue during their formative years performed better academically and developed stronger cognitive and linguistic skills. Whilst the Constitution of South Africa guarantees the right to education in the language of one's choice, implementation challenges remain. African languages must be strengthened as full mediums of instruction and not treated as secondary options. We must accelerate clear policy guidelines, teacher training, and

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 172

inclusive support mechanisms, especially for immigrant children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. A nation that respects its languages respects its people. A world that values peace, protects its children. I thank you. Malibongwe!

Sesotho:

Ngaka L W MAHLATSI: Modulasetulo, kgotso Maafrika. Ho ditoloki tsohle tsa mona Palamenteng, ditoloki tsa dikantorong, le ditoloki tsa dikerekeng, UAT e re ho lona, ha ho netjwe, molemong wa setjhaba sohle. Maafrika ...

English:

... today we debate a topic that is close to my heart. Our mother language is a treasure trove of cultural wisdom. It carries stories, values, and traditions passed down through generations. When children learn, read, and communicate in their mother tongue, they do more than just to acquire knowledge. They connect deeply with their roots, developing a sense of pride and belonging. This connection fosters self-confidence and a strong sense of identity, both vital for personal growth and societal harmony.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 173

Moreover, the use of mother tongue in education is a powerful instrument in the decolonisation of thought and the curriculum. For too long, colonial languages have dominated our classrooms, often at the expense of local knowledge systems and perspectives.

By embracing our mother tongue, we challenge this legacy, broaden our intellectual horizons, and enrich our collective knowledge base. History is full of examples that highlight the importance and the power of African language and culture.

Consider Mansa Musa from Mali, the richest man in Africa, whose empire thrived using native languages, fostering trade, scholarships, and culture across West Africa.

Similar, Egyptian philosophy, which laid the foundation for much of Western philosophical thoughts, was developed in African tongue long before the Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, who themselves, through their well-Egyptian wisdom, many of scholars argue that what is celebrated as Greek philosophy is in fact a legacy inherited from the ancient Egypt and African civilisation.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 174

Even the origin of Bible studies and spiritual traditions, such as the worship and the sun, diagnostic teachings, has deep roots in African heritage and languages. All these illustrate how mother tongue is not only a means of communication, but also the source of wisdom, creativity, and culture.

Research has shown that literacy and skill development are more effective when learners use their mother language. [Time expired.]

Sesotho:

Ha ho netjwe, molemong wa setjhaba sohle.

IsiZulu:

Nk B S MASANGO: Sihlalo ohloniphekile namalungu ale Ndlu ahloniphekile, ngiyanibingelela. Ukugujwa koSuku loLimi lwaseKhaya umhlaba wonke jikelele kusho ukuthi lesi sisekelo sempilo sawowonke umuntu ophilayo sake saba engcupheni yokuba sinyamalale.

Yindaba ebuhlungu kakhulu lena ngoba emuva kwemibhikisho yentsha yase-Bangladesh ngo-1952, lapho izindimbane zentsha

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 175

zadela izimpilo zazo zilwela ulimi lwazo olubizwa ngesi-Bengali emuva kokuba umongameli wangaleso sikhathi esenqume ukuthi isi-Urdu isona kuphela esiyoba ulimi olusemthethweni waleliya lizwe.

Kulapho kwathi ngonyaka u-1999 lolu suku lwashicilelwa i-UNESCO njengosuku oluseluyogujwa umhlaba wonke ngomhlaka-21 kuNhlolanja. Lesi sinqumo semukelwa yiNhlango yeZizwe ngokuhamba kwesikhathi. Iningizimu Afrika nayo ibazi kahle ubuhlungu bokusetshenziswa kolimi olulodwa njengesikhali sokucindezela nokubandlululwa kwengxenywe yabahlazi baseNingizimu Afrika. Njengomfundi webanga likamatikuletsheni, ngangiphokelekile ukuphumelela isifundo solimi lwesiBhunu ukuze ngiphase umatikuletsheni. Lo mqamula juqu wangenza ngifundele ukuphasa, ngingafundeli ukwazi. Kufanele siqinisekise njengemaLungu alesi siShayamthetho ukuthi kungaphinde kubekhona ulimi oluyovunyelwa ukuthi lusihlukanise. Ulimi luyisiseko sobumbano lwabantu. Uhulumeni kumele uqinisekise ukuthi abantu balana eNingizimu Afrika bathakasele futhi bazigqaje ukukhuluma izilimi zabo bangasatshiswa ngokuthi bahlukunyezwe ngoba nje bekhuluma ulimi lwabo.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 176

Yingakho uhlelo loMnyango Wezemfundo Eyisisekelo olugxile olimini lwasekhaya lubaluleke kakhulu. Ngo-2028, ulimi lokufunda nokufundisa lwabafundi bamaBanga asukela kweleSine ukuya kweleSikhombisa kufanele lwandiswe ukuze bafunde izibalo nolwazi lwezinto zemvelo ngolimi lwasekhaya. Lokhu ngeke kugcine ngokuthuthukisa imiphumela yokufunda nje kuphela kubafundi, kodwa kuyobenza bahlale beziqhenya ngamasiko nolimi lwabo. Isiqubulo salo nyaka, esithi, ...

English:

... Youth Voices on Multinational Education, ...

IsiZulu:

... siyisiqubulo somhlaba wonke jikelele. Intsha iyazilwela izilimi zayo. Baqopha lokhu abathi ...

English:

... digital content ...

IsiZulu:

... ngezilimi zayo zokuzalwa, basebenzise ubuchwepheshe ukuze kuvele ukwehluka kwezilimi futhi kwamukelwe. Baqonda okufanele. Nathi singakulibali ukwehluka kwezilimi okungeyona

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 177

inkinga edinga ukuxazululwa kodwa insiza esemqoka okufanele siyamukele.

Eningizimu Afrika, uMthethosisekelo wethu uqhakambisa izilimi eziyishumi nambili emuva kokushicilelwa kwe-SA Sign Language ngo-2023. Lokhu akukhona ukuchitha isikhathi, kodwa ukuqinisekisa ukuthi zonke izilimi zakuleli zisemqoka ngokufana nokwelapha izilonda ezadalwa uhulumeni wobandlululo.

Ngokwe-UNESCO, kunezilimi eziyizinkulungwane eziyisishiyaga lombili amakhulu amathathu namashumi amabili nane ezikhulunywayo noma ezilinaniswayo emhlabeni jikelele. Kulezi, cishe eziyizinkulungwane eziyisikhombisa zisakhulunywa, bese ukuthi ezingamakhulu ambalwa kuphela zifundiswa ezinhlelweni zezemfundo. Bese ukuthi ezingaphansi kwekhulu sivele ngokuqavile kwezobuchwepheshe.

Lolu phenyo luyaqhubeka luthi, njalo emuva kwamasonto amabili, kuba nolimi olunyamalalayo. Uma ulimi lushabalala, asilahlekelwa amazwi kuphela, kunyamalala umlando. Kunyamalala amasiko kanye nezindlela ezikhathekile zokugcina amafa, Ezemvelo kanye nolwazi lomlando lomdabu obelugasisiza ukwakha ikusasa elingcono futhi eliqhakazile. Kunophenyo oluthi,

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 178

amapheshenti angamashumi amane abafundi abafundi ngolimi lwasekhaya ezikhungweni zezemfundo. Lena yintsha, ikakhulukazi, engeyona eyokuzalwa kumazwe ehlala kuyona. Lapaha sikhuluma ngomfundi osegunjini lokufundela lapho ulimi afundiswa ngalo kungelona ulimi lwamaphupho akhe, noma izinganekwane zikagogo wakhe, noma ubuhlakani bomphakathi akhulele kuwona.

Kungekudala, leyo ngane izoba sesimweni sokukhinyabezeka, hhayi ngoba ingahlakaniphile kodwa ngoba uhlelo lwezemfundo alivumi ukuyemukela njengomhlali ogcwele. Lena akuyona inkinga yezemfundo kuphela, kuyinkinga yamalungelo abantu apethwe budedengu yilabo abasezikhundleni eziphezulu. Lombungazwe uyikhwela kithi njengesishayamthetho nambamele umphakathi ukuthi siqhakambise ukulondolozwa nokuvikelwa kwazo zonke izilimi ezisetshenziswayo ngabantu umhlabo wonke jikelele. Okuphinde kubaluleke kakhulu ukuthi silalele intsha. Uma ulimi kuyisiqu somuntu, kusobala ukuthi ukuvikela ulimi kuwukuvikela abantu abakhulumayo. Umongameli wokuqala weNingizimu Afrika ekhululekile uMnu u-Nelson Mandela wayenamazwi ahlaba umxhwele ngokubaluleka kolimi ezimpilweni zethu uma ethi:

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 179

Uma ukhuluma nomuntu ngolimi aluqondayo, lokho kuya ekhanda. Kodwa uma ukhuluma naye ngolimi lwakhe, lokho kuya ngqo enhliziyweni yakhe.

Lokho kusho ukuthi ulimi lwasekhaya luqukethe ubumqoka bomuntu futhi wonke umbono wentsha kuzo zonke izilimi zokuzalwa, kufanele ukulalelwa nokuqhakambisa ngoba intsha ayibona nje abaholi bakusasa, ingabaholi bamanje. Ngiyabonga.

Ms M L MMOLOTSANE: Hon Chairperson, hon members ...

Sesotho:

... Afrika Borwa ka bophara.

English:

As we mark three decades of our democratic Constitution, we are reminded that the recognition of the 11 official languages was not symbolic. It was a revolutionary act of restoration. It affirms that indigenous languages are not dialects of marginalisation, they are repositories of knowledge, identity and civilisation.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 180

Today we gather to reflect on the cultural, creative and soft power of indigenous languages, on our responsibility to harness that power for national development. Language is soft power. It shapes how nations are perceived and how they project influence beyond their borders.

Through institutions such as Brand South Africa, our country has sought to position itself globally as a diverse, innovative and culturally rich society. Yet we must ask ourselves, are we fully leveraging our indigenous language as strategic assets in that global branding?

Let us consider the example of China. Through the global promotion of Mandarin via Confucius Institutes and state backed cultural diplomacy, China has embedded its language into global commerce, technology and education.

Language has become an extension of its economic reach and geopolitical presence. The lesson for us is clear. Language is not merely cultural matter. It is an instrument of social economic power. When indigenous languages are developed and used in education, governance and commerce, they enhance dignity. They enable children to learn in their mother tongue,

unlocking cognitive development and self-confidence. They empower entrepreneurs who trade in familiar linguistic environments. They preserve indigenous knowledge systems from medicinal practice to environmental stewardship that have sustained communities for generations.

Sesotho:

Maloko a Ntlo e kgethehileng, ...

English:

... the Fourth Industrial Revolution presents both a threat and opportunity. If our indigenous languages are absent from artificial intelligence systems, digital platforms and coding environments, they risk digital expeditions. But, if we act decisively, technology can become greatest ally of linguistic preservation.

We must invest in language digitisation, corporal development, speech recognition system, machine translation tools and inclusive data sets. We must ensure that artificial intelligence, AI assist educational software and public service platform operates in IsiXhosa, Isizulu, Sesotho, Setswana and all our official languages. Partnership between

government, universities and private sector are essential to develop open-source linguistic resources that empower innovators.

In this regard, localisation of content is key. When young people engage with social media, gaming and e-learning in their mother tongue, language remains alive and dynamic. Therefore, Fourth Industrial Revolution, 4IR must not reproduce colonial hierarchies of language dominance. It must be harnessed to democratise knowledge.

Sesotho:

Modulasetulo, ...

English:

... the creative industry is among the most powerful vehicle for linguistic influence. Film, television, music, podcasts, literature and digital storytelling have the capacity to normalise and globalise indigenous languages.

We have witnessed the global rise of *amapiano* genre born in our township, driven by indigenous expression and urban vernacular. Artists such as Master KG have taken songs rooted

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 183

in local language to international charts. Jerusalema was sung across continents, not translated but embraced in its original form. This soft power in action demonstrates that authenticity, not assimilation, is what resonates globally.

Our responsibility as policymakers is to ensure that artists and platforms receive structured support through funding mechanisms, export promotion strategies and fair digital distribution framework. Indigenous language content must be visible on streaming services; radio quotas must promote linguistic diversity and community media must be strengthened.

Moreover, we must cultivate global competitiveness, just as k-pop has become a strategic export for South Korea. Amapiano and other indigenous genres can be structured as cultural export that enhance tourism, trade and international partnership. Language becomes not a barrier but a brand.

Hon members, publishing and literature remains fundamental pillar of linguistic sustainability. A language that is not written, read and studied across generation risks erosion. We must invest deliberately in publishing in indigenous languages

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 184

across all genres, fiction, nonfiction, science, poetry, children, literature and digital books.

Emphasis must be placed on early childhood development.

Research consistently shows that mother tongue instruction in early years enhances comprehension and long-term academic performance. If our children encounter books in their language from infancy, literacy becomes a joy rather than struggle.

We must support authors, illustrators and small publishers producing indigenous language material and ensure procurement policies favour such content in schools and libraries. We must also modernise distribution digital libraries, audio books and mobile reading platforms can expand access in rural and urban communities alike. Language must travel wherever technology travels.

Sesotho:

Modulasetulo, ...

English:

... language is not only verbal. Non-verbal expressions are equally powerful conveyors of identity. Our indigenous

aesthetic system patterns, colours, symbolism are language in themselves.

The globally acclaimed artist Dr Esther Masangu has demonstrated how traditional Ndebele art can transcend borders while remaining authentically rooted. Her geometric designs are instantly recognisable worldwide. Yet they communicate cultural narratives that predate colonial contact. Through her work, visual language becomes cultural diplomacy.

We must recognise art, painting, dance and craft as extensions of linguistic heritage. They communicate values, cosmology and history. Supporting community arts centres, heritage education and international exhibitions strengthen our cultural soft power.

Hon members, the advancement of indigenous language is not a nostalgic project. It is strategic imperative for economic transformation, social cohesion and global positioning. A nation confident in its language is confident.

As ANC, we recognise that our struggle for freedom was not confined to political emancipation alone. It was also about

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 186

reclaiming our knowledge system, our ways of thinking and our rights to define ourselves. It was about ways of knowing, speaking and being.

The next phase of transformation must embed indigenous language into the energies of growth, technology, trade, education, creative enterprise. In doing so, we affirm that indigenous language are instruments of the future. They are vehicles of dignity, development and diplomatic influence. Let us speak to them, let us digitise them, let us export them and above all, let us honour them as living pillars of our democracy.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon members, this brings us to the end of the debate. I request members to stand and wait for the presiding officer and the Mace to leave the Chamber. That concludes the business of the day and the House is adjourned.

Debate concluded.

UNREVISED HANSARD

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

Page: 187

The House adjourned at 18:20

UNREVISED HANSARD