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JOINT SITTING

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE JOINT SITTING

Members of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces assembled at the Nieuwmeester Dome at 09:02.

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

The SPEAKER: Hon members, today we meet here in a Joint Sitting between the National Assembly and national Council of Provinces, NCOP. I'd like to welcome the Chairperson of the NCOP and all the members of the NCOP to this Dome. [Applause.]

The purpose for our joint sitting is to deal with the celebration and the commemoration of Africa Day within the context of our own Constitution. I will now ask the Secretary to read the Order of the day.

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DEBATE ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF THE
CONSTITUTION

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(Mr A C Nel): Hon Speaker, hon Chairperson, hon members, fellow South Africans, today we commemorate one of the most significant milestones in our history, the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996. We do so under the theme: *One Constitution, One Nation. Reflect, renew, recommit.*

It is both a celebration as well as a call to action. I had the privilege of serving as a member of the Constitutional Assembly that drafted and adopted our Constitution between 1994 and 1996.

Our Constitution did not emerge from nowhere, nor was it imposed upon the people of South Africa from elsewhere. It was the product of a protracted struggle against colonialism and apartheid. It carries within its provisions the aspirations of generations of South Africans who fought for freedom, equality and human dignity.

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We remember those who were imprisoned, those who were exiled, those who were tortured, those who lost their lives and all of those who refused to accept that injustice and oppression should define their being.

The Constitution is not merely a legal text, it is the product of struggle, of sacrifice and of hope. The values that ultimately found expression in the Constitution did not begin in the Constitutional Assembly.

Despite being forged in the furnace of negotiations between those forces representing a dying and decaying apartheid past and those representing a democratic and progressive future, the Constitution emerged true to its ancestry.

The Bill of Rights adopted by the ANC in 1923, the African Claims adopted by the ANC in 1943, the Freedom Charter adopted in 1955 and the Women's Charter adopted in 1954. These represent the ancestry of our Constitution.

Our Constitution is a revolutionary and transformative document. It is the supreme law of the land, the basis for the transformation of our society into a united, non-racial,

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non-sexist, democratic state founded on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, which will be truly realised through the fundamental transformation of our society, a monumental historic project requiring a democratic developmental state acting in concert with all sectors of society. Transformation is mandated by the Constitution and driven and guided by the Constitution.

The Constitution is not designed to obstruct transformation, but to advance it. We are all duty-bound, continuously and critically to assess the progress we are making in discharging this mandate.

The Constitution begins with the words: We, the people of South Africa. These words remind us that the Constitution belongs to the people. It is not the property of government, it is not the property of Parliament, it is not the property of lawyers and judges. It is the collective covenant of the people of South Africa. It is, as has often been said, the birth certificate of our democratic nation. It defines who we are and who we aspire to become.

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The Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic. Every law, every policy and every exercise of public power must be consistent with it. No person and no institution stand above it.

This principle of constitutional supremacy represented a decisive break with our past. Under apartheid, Parliament could pass unjust laws that violated fundamental human rights. We do not want to go back there.

Today, all public power is constrained by the Constitution and subject to constitutional scrutiny. The Constitution creates a democratic state consisting of three co-equal branches that have distinct but interdependent roles to play in transforming society.

The legislature exercises its legislative authority by passing laws which must progressively advance transformation of the state and society.

The executive is responsible for the implementation of laws and the development of policies geared towards the transformation of society.

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The courts exercise judicial authority by interpreting the laws passed by the legislature and action taken by the executive in accordance with the Constitution.

At the heart of our constitutional order is a simple but profound principle. All are equal before the law, regardless of race, gender, language, religion, social status, sexual orientation or political affiliation; every person enjoys equal protection and equal benefit of the law.

It reflects our determination that never again shall South Africa be a country in which some are more human than others. The preamble sets out the kind of South Africa we seek to build. It calls upon us to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

It calls upon us to improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person. It calls upon us to build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations. This constitutes a revolutionary programme of fundamental social and economic transformation.

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For 30 years the Constitution has provided the framework through which South Africa has pursued this transformation. It has anchored democratic governance, it has established independent courts and institutions, it has expanded access to housing, health care, education, water, electricity and social protection, it has helped to improve the lives of millions of South Africans.

But as we reflect honestly on these 30 years, we must acknowledge that whilst we are not where we were, neither are we where we need to be. Our democracy has achieved much but much remains to be done.

Poverty, unemployment and inequality continue to deny millions of South Africans the full enjoyment of their freedom. Crime and violence undermine safety and social cohesion. Corruption deprives us of the resources needed to implement the provisions of our Constitution. Gender-based violence, GBV, continues to violate the rights and dignity of women and children. Too many young people remain excluded from education, skills development and meaningful work.

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The Constitution provides neither excuses nor guarantees. It provides a framework for united action. It places obligations on government, institutions and citizens alike. It requires us to continue working to dismantle the legacies of colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy. It requires us to build a democratic and developmental state capable of meeting the needs of our people. It requires us to build an economy that is more inclusive, more dynamic and more capable of creating opportunities for all.

As we renew our commitment to the Constitution, we must also defend it. Across the world, democratic values are under assault. Values such as equality, inclusion, non-racialism, non-sexism and human solidarity are increasingly being challenged.

We see attempts to spread division, misinformation and intolerance. We see attacks on democratic institutions and the rule of law. We must never take our constitutional democracy for granted.

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This demands that we build the broadest united front to defend, consolidate and advance our constitutional democracy and status as a sovereign country in the family of nations.

The Constitution survives not because it is written on paper, but because citizens believe in it, defend it and give life to it through their actions. That is why active citizenship remains essential.

The Constitution establishes both representative and participatory democracy. Citizens do not participate only once every few years when elections take place. Democracy requires ongoing engagement by the people. It requires citizens who organize, participate, hold institutions accountable and contribute to the development of their communities. It requires citizens who recognize both their rights and responsibilities.

This year provides an important opportunity to put these principles into practice. On 4 November 2026 South Africans will participate in our seventh democratic local government elections. These elections matter because local government is the sphere where the Constitution is most direct, finds most

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direct expression in the lives of the people. The right to vote is amongst the most important rights secured by our Constitution.

We encourage all eligible South Africans, especially young South Africans, to register to vote and to ensure that their registration details are up to date and to use the voter registration weekend on 20 and 21 June to do so.

The future of our constitutional democracy belongs to you. Your generation will shape the next 30 years of our constitutional journey. Your vote matters.

Let us recommit ourselves to building a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa. *One Constitution, One Nation. Reflect, renew, recommit.* Thank you. [Applause.]

Ms S NKOSI: Hon Speaker, members of the National Assembly, our traditional leaders and communities, "oNdabezitha", fellow South Africans, and a special greeting to the youth of this country at the start of Youth Month. Today, we gather to

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commemorate 30 years of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

I stand here today in respect of the blood, sweat and tears of those who fought against apartheid so that every South African could enjoy human dignity, equality and freedom, but also with the realisation that the Constitution was a compromise. We are told our Constitution stands as one of the most progressive legal frameworks in the world, yet no country in the world copies it. Today, as young people, we are forced to ask an uncomfortable question.

Has the promises of the Constitution become the lived reality for the majority of black South Africans? Thirty-years later, can a child in Sharpeville, Khayelitsha, Umlazi, Mdansane, Alexandra Botshabelo, Giyani, truly say they enjoy the same opportunities as a child born in Sandton, Constantia and uMhlanga. Constitutions must not only be judged by what they promise, but also by what people experience. The Constitution gave the African majority the right to vote, but it did not change the ownership of the economy.

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Thirty-years later, South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world with a Gini coefficient of 0,63, where more than 67% of the population is living in the upper bound of the poverty line, meaning roughly two-thirds of South Africans live below the income needed to afford basic monthly needs.

Millions of young people remain excluded from meaningful economic participation, where six in a group of ten are unemployed. Today, nearly half of South Africa's working age population is under the age of 35, yet youth unemployment remains at crisis levels. Thirty-years into democracy, the greatest predator of poverty in South Africa is still where you're born, what school you attend, and whether your family possesses economic power.

IsiZulu:

Umuntu omnyama uzalelwa enhluphekweni aphinde afele khona.

English:

Millions are forced to survive in informal settlements without proper sanitation stacked up in matchbox houses ...

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IsiZulu:

... benganawo ngisho ugesi.

English:

Thousands of graduates walk our streets carrying qualifications that cannot secure employment.

IsiZulu:

Ithemba lemindeni eminingi edele konke ithumela abantwana esikoleni ishabalele. Abaningi basezitaladini badla inyaoupe.

English:

Township and rural schools still lack libraries, laboratories, adequate infrastructure, and modern technology. The dream of free education, as pronounced by His Excellency President Jacob Zuma, is ignored in this very House. This is not a mere policy failure. It's a moral crisis.

As young people, we refuse the politics of pretending and reject a Constitution that has failed to change the lives of ordinary South Africans. We cannot speak about rights without speaking about material conditions. The struggle of our generation is different from that of 1976. The youth of 76

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fought against political exclusion. The youth of 2026 fight against economic exclusion. The enemy is confronting today's unemployment, its poverty, inequality, hopelessness, substance abuse, crime, and hunger.

Hon members, political freedom without economic freedom remains incomplete. This constitutional democracy has produced millions of economic spectators, and we cannot as true South Africans consider it the best in the world when it's failed to help us to meaningfully transform. A Constitution that protects property rights but hinders land ownership for the majority is fraud. The Constitution protects those who benefited from apartheid but struggles to guarantee meaningful economic inclusion for those who were victims.

This Constitution will inevitably face growing scrutiny from the poor and the marginalised. You know why? Because South Africans are not stupid. As a young South African who's in touch with reality, who's experienced and seen inequality, I stand here broadly today to say that the Constitution has failed to protect the rights of millions of black South Africans who remain disadvantaged by virtue of their skin colour.

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Hon members, if we are honest about gathering in this House, honest to South Africans, as we commemorate 30 years of constitutional democracy, we must have the courage to discuss the limitations of the constitutional settlement itself. The MK Party rejects the notion that the Constitution is beyond criticism. No constitutional order should be immune to scrutiny. One of the greatest weaknesses of the constitutional settlement is its treatment of the land question. The MK Party continues to advocate for constitutional reform and a framework that recognises the full history of this position.

Hon speaker, we must also confront another uncomfortable truth. Long before colonialism, African societies governed themselves.

IsiZulu:

Sasinomthetho ...

English:

... functioning legal systems, systems of justice, systems of land administration, and governance. The Constitution confines us to the Roman Dutch law and English legal traditions. African law is often treated as an exception requiring

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validation. This raises fundamental questions. Can genuine decolonisation occur when indigenous African legal systems remain subordinate to their own country? The MK Party believes that the constitutional reform must include the restoration of dignity, status, and authority of indigenous African systems of governance and customary law.

Hon members, education remains one of the most important instruments of liberation. Education is not a privilege, it's an investment. The greatest victims of these constitutional failures are the youth. We need radical youth economic empowerment. Not slogans, not revolving door employment opportunities that expire after 12 months - real economic participation. Government procurement must prioritise women and youth-owned businesses. Municipalities must become incubators for local entrepreneurship. The state must support industrialisation and manufacturing so that South Africa produces more and imports less.

Furthermore, we must rebuild township economies. Our townships cannot remain consumer zones only. They must become production zones. Spaza shops, salons, shoemakers, car washes and "shisanyamas" must be kept as businesses for locals and must

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be supported through infrastructure, finance and market access.

Hon members, if we are serious about serving the nation and living up to the so-called compromise document, we must start by declaring war on corruption and that starts by addressing the issue of Rama-dollar. Every rand stolen from a public purse is stolen from a classroom, a clinic, a bursary and a young person seeking work. Corruption is not merely a governance problem; it is a violence against the poor.

Madam Speaker, this House must revisit how socioeconomic rights are implemented. Rights cannot exist only on paper. Constitutions do not transform societies. Leadership, political courage and economic justice do. The realities experienced in township streets, rural villages, informal settlements and the working-class communities tell us so. The generation of Tambo, Sisulu, Hani, President Zuma and countless others gave us political democracy. The responsibility of our generation is to deliver economic justice. The MK Party will use Parliament as a tool to complete the work of transformation, and we will start by challenging parts of this very Constitution ...

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IsiZulu:

... ngoba nina enibizwa nge-GNU senihlulekile. UMkhonto uzosala uzenzela. [Ihlombe.]

English:

UMkhonto weSizwe Party is here to challenge the status quo, and we will be a generation that restores the dignity of the poor, opens up opportunity to the youth and brings back hope to our beautiful nation. The MK Party has brought on the fight for constitutional amendments. Section 25 will be amended. Black people will get their land back.

IsiZulu:

Bathanda bengathandi.

English:

The black child will receive free quality education. Law and order will be restored, and illegal immigrants will leave this country. Vote MK Party on the 4th of November 2026.

IsiZulu:

Asidlali la. Gwaza Mkhonto! [Ihlombe.]

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The CHIEF WHIP OF THE 2ND LARGEST MINORITY PARTY (Adv G Breytenbach): Hon Speaker and hon members, today we commemorate one of the greatest achievements in our nation's history, the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Our Constitution is more than a legal document; it is a solemn covenant between the people and the state. It represents the embodiment of hopes and sacrifices of millions who struggled against oppression, injustice and inequality. It forms the foundation upon which our democracy rests and it is the expression of our collective commitment to human dignity, equality, freedom and the rule of law.

When we adopted this Constitution, we did so with a profound understanding of our painful past. We sought not merely to replace one system of government with another. We sought to establish a society founded upon justice, accountability and respect for the inherent worth of every human being. Our Constitution promises every person the right to life. It promises freedom and security. It promises dignity. It promises equality before the law and that government should be accountable and responsive. Yet as we commemorate our Constitution today, we must confront an uncomfortable truth.

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For millions of South Africans these Constitutional promises remain promises only. The Constitutional dream promised to South Africans 30 years ago has not been kept and is increasingly overshadowed by the scourge of crime. The greatest threat to our Constitutional democracy is not the existence of crime itself. It is the gradual erosion of public confidence in the state's capability of protecting its citizens from crime. Every day ordinary South Africans wake up behind thick security bars. They drive in fear of hijackings. They worry about whether their children will return home safely from school. Businesses have spent billions on private security because they can no longer believe that public safety is guaranteed. We are forced to build walls to keep us safe when we could be building bridges to unite this beautiful country.

Communities across our country are terrorised by violent gangs, organised criminal networks, extortion syndicates and drug traffickers. Women continue to face sickening levels of gender-based violence. Farmers and rural communities live under constant threat. Urban communities are plagued by robbery, murder and intimidation. As long as citizens live in fear Constitutional rights will remain theoretical. The right

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to dignity is diminished when victims of crime are left traumatised and unsupported. The right to property becomes hollow when criminal syndicates operate with impunity and the right to life is rendered meaningless for the thousands of South Africans murdered each year.

The Constitution imposes obligations not only upon the citizens but also upon the state. Section 205 of the Constitution makes it clear that the object of the police service is to protect, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and secure the inhabitants of the republic and their property and to uphold and enforce the law. This is a constitutional imperative. Likewise, the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, carries the constitutional responsibility of prosecuting criminals without fear, favour or prejudice. Our courts carry the responsibility of administering justice fairly and impartially.

The entire criminal justice system exists to give practical effect to constitutional rights. When these institutions fail, constitutional rights suffer. When criminal investigations collapse due to incompetence or lack of resources, constitutional rights suffer. When prosecutions are delayed

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for years, Constitutional rights suffer. When the justice system fails survivors, constitutional rights suffer. That is why the fight against crime is a Constitutional imperative. Crime is not merely a policing issue; it's not merely a justice issue; it is most definitely a constitutional issue.

Every successful criminal prosecution strengthens the rule of law. Every criminal syndicate dismantled reinforces the belief in the state's ability to protect its citizens. Every community freed from gangsters advances the Constitutional promise of freedom and dignity. Every corrupt official removed from office restores public trust in democratic institutions. We must recognise that organised crime and corruption represent a particularly dangerous threat to Constitutional governance. It weakens institutions, it undermines accountability, it creates a culture of impunity and ultimately it robs the poorest and most vulnerable South Africans of the opportunities and the protections that the Constitution seeks to guarantee.

The framers of our Constitution understood that the abuse of power poses a great danger to democracy. That is why they created a system founded upon accountability, transparency and

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the separation of powers. The rule of law remains our most powerful weapon against corruption and criminality. No individual should be above the law. The Constitution demands equal justice for all irrespective of who you are, where you live or whether or not you are politically connected.

Despite the challenges we face, there remains much reason for hope. The Constitution has demonstrated remarkable resilience over the past three decades. Our courts continue to uphold constitutional principles. Civil society continues to defend constitutional values. Our democratic institutions continue to function and will undoubtedly punish those responsible for bad governance in the next election. Sixty-eight million South Africans continue to believe in the promise of a society governed by law rather than fear.

We are a nation united by a collective hope for a better future. But hope alone is not enough and the commemoration of the Constitution must be more than a ceremonial exercise. It must serve as a call to action; to clean up the South African police service; to rebuild the capacity of the National Prosecuting Authority and to ensure that our courts are adequately resourced so that they can convict criminals.

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A call to combat corruption wherever it exists. A call to place the safety and security of South Africans at the centre of government priorities. Most importantly, it must be a call to restore public confidence that the state remains capable of protecting its citizens and enforcing the law. Because constitutional rights are only meaningful when they can be enjoyed in practice.

The ultimate measure of our constitutional democracy is not the eloquence of our legal principles, but whether ordinary South Africans can live free from fear, pursue opportunities and trust that justice will prevail. We must ensure that future generations inherit a South Africa where the rule of law prevails over criminality, where justice triumphs over impunity, and where the promises of our Constitution are experienced not merely in theory, but in the daily lives of all of our people. I thank you.

English:

Ms M S LETLAPE: Hon Speaker, we are having this debate exactly 148 years since the death of King Sandile kaNgqika Wa Mgolombane, in 1878. Mgolombane died during the War of Ngcayichibi, which was the ninth and last war of dispossession

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between AmaXhosa and the European settlers in this territory. This death and that war also marked the end of 100 years of continuous bloody wars against land dispossession, led by our people in what we now call the Eastern Cape. The fight was to keep their land and therefore their sovereignty. For that, thousands were condemned to death by shrapnels and bullets of the European settlers, while others like Chief Maqoma were condemned to die in the Robben Island.

Their quest, which remains our quest today, was to fight against European domination so that we as African people could retain the call to call our souls our own. The fight was never to share koeksisters and some vague notion of brotherhood with the settlers. This celebration of the Constitution must be viewed from this perspective. The 8th of May in 1996 marked a significant moment in the country's history. The Constitutional Assembly formally adopted the final version of the South African Constitution, which was then later to be ascended by the President Mandela in December that year.

The adoption of the Constitution was a high-water mark in the history of this country. It brought to an end centuries of forced and then legislated oppression and exploitation of

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African people by a marauding gang of racist invaders. It marked the end of formalised discrimination, recognised the full humanity of African people, affirmed the rights of everyone not to be discriminated on the base of race, sex, gender, or creed. It provided for the recognition of some fundamental and non-derogable rights, such as the right to life, the right to equality, the right to human dignity, and protections against slavery and forced labour.

Coming from centuries of racist dehumanisation, exploitation, and oppression, the adoption of the Constitution was a significant step in our quest for freedom, but it was not sufficient. It left that which Mgolombane died for, still in the hands of the settlers. Despite section 26 of the Constitution providing that everyone has a right to housing, the reality is that the housing backlog in 1996 was approximately 1,5 million houses, and today we sit with the housing backlog of over 2,5 million houses.

While we have made progress in the provisions of water and electricity, the reality of the matter is that most of the water taps in villages are still without water, as the provision of water would disturb the mafia groupings that have

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now firmly entrenched themselves as water tanker providers in this country. Our incapacity to maintain water infrastructure, maintain and improve roads, and ensure that provision for universal quality health care has been systematically eroded over the past 30 years. While most of these problems are not rooted in the Constitution itself, but in the lethargic nature of our government, they are tied right at the hip of our evolution as the constitutional democracy.

Perhaps the most insidious provision of the Constitution is that relating to redress of historical injustices, primarily the recognition that South Africa is an occupied territory built on the back of massive and land dispossession and the emasculation of African people. Section 25 of the Constitution creates a false separation between the rights of the settler and the rights of the natives, between the rights of the dispossessor and the rights of the dispossessed, the rights of the landed gentry and the rights of the millions of landless people in this very land. The provision of land reform in that section is merely a fuss because they are premised on the faulty Constitutional principle that the settler has as much right as the right of the native.

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The requirement to pay compensation to the settler in order to redistribute land back to the rightful owner is an insult to Mgolombane and many of those who fought for emancipation.

Today, the native still owns about 4% of all privately owned land in this country, while the settler owns over 72%. This is deeply embedded in this Constitution, and it must be done away with. The resolution of the land question is the most fundamental question this settler colony would have to deal with, and it can no longer be afforded to pussyfoot around it. At this point only the EFF is bold and daring enough to decisively bring an answer to this particular question. I thank you.

Mr N M HADEBE: Madam Speaker, South Africa is privileged to have one of the most forward-thinking, inclusive and innovative Constitutions in the world. This document represents a hard-won victory for our nation. It is the result of decades of negotiations and sacrifice and remains the cornerstone of our democracy. While we celebrate the immense progress our Constitution has brought us over the last 30 years, we must also uphold our duty of ensuring that it prioritises South African citizens. To enforce its terms effectively, we must strengthen efforts to reinforce our

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porous borders and return unlawful migrants to their home countries.

The IFP remains committed to upholding the integrity of the Constitution, given that its creation is intertwined with our party's history. It was the IFP who secured the inclusion of the Bill of Rights, which guarantees the essential freedoms of all South Africans. It preserves our rights to dignity, equality, freedom of speech, peaceful assembly and demonstrations and beyond. Given our founding role in establishing these rights, the IFP remains dedicated to ensuring that they are protected.

One of the most forward-thinking aspects of our Constitution is its commitment to preserving the rich heritage of South Africa's traditional leadership. The IFP played a fundamental role in advocating for the validity of traditional leaders and making sure that their rights were enshrined in the governing document of our nation.

Under the leadership of our founder, the late Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, our party negotiated for the recognition of customary and indigenous law. Thirty years later, we

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maintain this commitment to protecting the living cultural heritage of our country by advocating for the rights of traditional leaders.

Although the IFP played a fundamental role in shaping the Constitution, we emphasise the importance of amending it to fit the shifting complexities of our country. In doing so, we guarantee that it fulfils the ultimate purpose of serving South African citizens. We must remind ourselves that the Constitution is a living document. It is not intended to remain static but must be brought to life through debate and discussion. Being able to do so is a sign of a healthy democracy.

In light of this, we highlight the need to amend Chapter 12, which outlines the boundaries of traditional leadership. We advocate for the importance of updating this chapter in order to clearly define the powers and roles that our nation's traditional leaders are entitled to. Similarly, to ensure that power resides in the hands of the people, we must allow more federal practices to grant provinces sufficient independence.

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Ultimately, it is our duty as legislators and South Africans to protect the integrity of our Constitution. This commemoration is a valuable reminder that it cannot be treated as a theoretical set of guidelines. The IFP maintains our longstanding commitment to ensuring that the Constitution protects all South African citizens equitably. I thank you.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Speaker, hon members, South Africans, allow me also to greet our incoming President of the Republic in 2029, President McKenzie. Today, we mark a significant milestone in the history of our democracy, the 30th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Thirty years ago, South Africa made a solemn commitment to itself that never again will South Africans be divided by oppression, denied dignity or excluded from opportunities because of who they are. Our Constitution became the foundation of that promise - a promise of freedom, equality, justice and human dignity for all.

As the PA, we proudly recognise our Constitution as one of the greatest achievements of a democratic South Africa. It is more than a legal document. It is the agreement that binds us

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together as one nation, in spite of many languages, cultures, traditions and backgrounds. It tells every South African, ...

Afrikaans:

... jy behoort hier, ma se kind. Ons is saam.

English:

However, I cannot just come here and celebrate the Constitution. I must also state facts. The Khoi and San, the First Nation, are still not in this Constitution. Thirty years, and section 6 does not name our languages. Thirty years, and Chapter 12 does not name our people. Thirty years and we must be recognised by an Act but erase by a supreme law. Thirty years, and the fishermen don't have proper waters. Thirty years, and gang violence in our communities are normal. Thirty years, and the Suid-Afrikaanse Kaapse Korps, SAKK, [SACC] is not integrated into the SANDF. Thirty years, and Afrikaans hip-hop is not being played on national radio stations. And 36 years ago, F W De Klerk, under the apartheid government repealed the Race Classification Act of 1950, but this Constitution classified us as part of the minority. No.

Afrikaans:

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Die feit van die saak is, ons as kleurling mense in die land het nie hier met skepe aangekom nie. Almal het ons in Suider-Afrika kom kry. Dit is ons land. Ons is die afstammeling van die Khoi en San, maar vandag en nogsteeds, klassifiseer die Constitution [Grondwet] ons as deel van die minority [minderheid]. Ons is nie die minority [minderheid] nie. Ons is deel van die majority [meerderheid]. Ons is Africans [Afrikaners], in particular [in die besonder], net soos die res van u.

So, vandag, celebrate [vier] ek die Constitution [Grondwet], maar equally [terselfdertyd] is ek nie happy [gelukkig] met die Constitution [Grondwet] as dit by die sogenaamde kleurling in die land kom nie. Ons baiza [huiwer] nie. Dankie.

Dr C P MULDER: Speaker, the hon Deputy Minister of Justice spoke this morning about the origins of the Constitution and he almost created the impression that the ANC did it all by themselves. He knows that is not true. It was a process. I was privileged to be a member of the Constituent Assembly between 1994 and 1996. I also served on the Negotiations Council and I had the privilege to announce the agreement that was reached at the time with regard to section 185, the Commission for the

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Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. I think that was a very important commission and the failure of that commission is part of the problem, I think, we have at the moment.

The Constitution, this document is supposed to enhance nation-building, is supposed to enhance social cohesion and the question that arises immediately is: If we continuously have one document on nation-building and social cohesion after the other, have we succeeded in doing so? Has the Constitution succeeded in bringing nation-building and social cohesion?

What is nation-building? Nation-building is the deliberate process of constructing a unified national identity, establishing institutions that reflect common values to bridge divides and foster loyalty to the Constitution and the state. Have we succeeded in this? I listened this morning to some of the parties and most of them clearly indicated that although they support the Constitution, there are things in the Constitution that they are not happy with, and that there are things in the Constitution that they would like to see changed. The question basically remains: Is the Constitution homegrown? Is the current Constitution the product of what is

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in the hearts and the minds of the people it wants to serve?
That is the test. That is the real challenge.

And it is correct. The Constitution is a living document and the living document can be amended from time to time, although I get the impression that some of the parties in the House want to get rid of the Constitution altogether.

I listened to what the Conference of the Left had to say over the weekend. I listened to what the hon member of the EFF -and I see they have left now - has said about property rights, and they are very unhappy with the fact that we guarantee private property rights. Well, the last time I had a look, I saw the commander in chief of the EFF has property of more than R35 million. So, I don't understand because sometimes, it suits them and sometimes it does not suit them. The EFF has also indicated that it is time for a second republic. They are wrong. We have already now ... At the moment, we are in the third republic and if you want a new republic, it will be the fourth republic.

The question remains: Is the Constitution the product of what is in the hearts and the minds of all South Africans? And I

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think the fact that we are struggling with social cohesion and nation-building is because we do not necessarily accommodate the aspirations of all South Africans.

What does that mean? It does not mean that we have to get rid of the Constitution. Definitely not. But I honestly believe there are certain possibilities within the current Constitution that we have not really developed to the full extent, that we have not given contents to. And I think once we do that, it will definitely assist in bringing social cohesion and make it stronger and get us to stronger nation-building. We can do that. It is possible to achieve that in practice.

At the moment, I am concerned about the fact that there are allegedly certain court cases going on against some perpetrators of the past, but it is one-handed. You remember what the interim Constitution said: There is a need for understanding and not vengeance, there is a need for reparation and not retaliation, there is a need for ubuntu and not victimisation. Is that what is happening at the moment, or are we experiencing the opposite of that? And I think that will be a problem. Thank you.

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Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: Madam Speaker, hon members ...

IsiXhosa:

... molweni [greetings.]

English:

... I rise to participate in this important debate for and on behalf of the ANC that was founded by our forebears on 8 January 1912 and mandated by them to take over the national democratic revolution, which they initiated as far back as the 16th century. As we gather to commemorate one of the most significant milestones in the history of our democratic Republic, the adoption of the Constitution. The Constitution was not handed to us ... it was through sacrifice. It emerged from the centuries of colonial dispossession and decades of apartheid oppression. It was forged through struggle, resistance, negotiation, and reconciliation. It bears the fingerprints of those who sacrificed their freedom, livelihoods, and in many instances, lives so that future generations could enjoy dignity, equality, and freedom.

As we celebrate 30 years of constitutional democracy, we honour the generations of freedom fighters, constitutional

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architects, and ordinary South Africans who made this democratic breakthrough possible. We pay tribute to President Nelson Mandela, Olivia Reginald Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Chris Hani, Albertina Sisulu, Joe Slovo, and countless others whose sacrifices paved the way for a South Africa we all know, and a South Africa we want. We also remember Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, whose moral leadership reminded us that nation-building requires both justice and reconciliation through his stewardship. Through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he helped our nation confront painful truths whilst choosing healing over hatred and unity over division.

Thirty years ago, South Africa adopted a Constitution founded on human dignity, equality, freedom, accountability, responsiveness, and openness. Our Constitution became more than a legal document. It became a national covenant. It became the legal expression of the aspirations contained in the Freedom Charter and the democratic ideals that emerged from the negotiations that shaped our motherland. It declared to the world that South Africa belonged to all who live in it, united in our diversity. Today, 30 years later, our Constitution remains one of the most progressive constitutional frameworks in the world. It continues to guide

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our democracy, protect our rights, and provide a framework for building a united, non-racial, non-sexist, and prosperous South Africa. Yet, as we reflect on this important milestone, we must honestly acknowledge that whilst we are not where we were in 1996, we are also not yet where we want to be. The task of nation-building remains unfinished. The challenge before us is to ensure that every South African experiences the dignity, equality, and opportunity promised by our constitutional order.

Nation-building cannot succeed without strong democratic institutions. The framers of our Constitution understood that democracy requires more than elections. It requires institutions capable of protecting rights, holding power accountable, and safeguarding constitutional governance. For this reason, Chapter 9 institutions were established to strengthen constitutional democracy. The Public Protector serves as an independent constitutional watchdog mandated to investigate improper conduct, maladministration, and abuse of power in state affairs. It exists to ensure that public officials and organs of state remain accountable to the people of South Africa. The SA Human Rights Commission, SAHRC, is entrusted with promoting, protecting, and monitoring the

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observance of human rights. It plays a critical role in advancing the culture of human rights, etc. These institutions remain pillars of our democratic architecture. They protect citizens against abuse of power, defend constitutional rights, and strengthen public confidence in democratic institutions. As Parliament, we have a constitutional responsibility to exercise effective oversight while simultaneously protecting the independence, impartiality, and integrity of these institutions. We acknowledge the contribution made by former Public Protector Thuli Madonsela, whose tenure demonstrated the importance of independent constitutional institutions in advancing accountability, combating maladministration, and reinforcing the rule of law.

Our diversity must never become a source of division. It remains one of our creative national strengths. The pursuit of reconciliation remains one of the most important responsibilities of our democracy. A coercive nation is one in which every citizen enjoys equal dignity and equal protection under law. Women must participate fully and equally in every sphere of society and must be free from violence and discrimination. Young people must have access to education, employment opportunities, and pathways to economic

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participation. Persons with disabilities must enjoy meaningful inclusion in all aspects of social, economic, and political life. Members of LGBTQI communities must continue to enjoy the protections and freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution ...

[Applause.] ... A nation cannot achieve genuine cohesion whilst any society remains excluded.

Before I leave, the Constitution clearly indicates and underscores that the ANC has always understood that constitutional democracy and traditional leadership are not contradictory. The Constitution itself recognizes the institutional status and role of the traditional leadership because it recognizes that democracy is strengthened when it embraces both constitutional values and our rich African heritage. The history of the ANC is deeply intertwined with the institution of traditional leadership. When the ANC was founded, traditional leaders were amongst those gathered to form this organization and support its vision. Leaders such as King Dinizulu KaCetshwayo of the Zulu nation, together with traditional leaders from abaThembu, amaMpondo, amaXhosa, Bapedi, and all the nations in South Africa, were there. The founding conference, together with traditional leaders, intellectuals, churches, and community representatives, under

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the leadership of pioneers such as John Langalibalele Dube, was part of the establishment of the ANC.

Before I leave this podium, Madam Speaker, voting is not merely a constitutional right; it is a civic responsibility. We honour that sacrifice by participating. We honour that sacrifice by defending our democracy. Thirty years ago, South Africans chose hope over fear, dialogue over conflict, unity over division, and constitutional democracy over oppression. Today, our responsibility is to ensure the promise of the Constitution continues. Let us strengthen our democratic institutions, deepen our social conversion, advance reconciliation and transformation, strengthen both constitutional democracy and traditional leadership, build an inclusive society for all of us, and continue to work as envisioned in the preamble of our Constitution. Thirty years later, the Constitution remains our guide. Thirty years later, the Constitution remains our collective achievement. Thirty years later, the responsibility to build the nation envisioned by our Constitution rests with all of us. Let us continue this journey ... [Time expired.] ... A luta continua!

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Dr T K S LETLAPE: Madam Speaker, the Constitution is a living document. It has been amended at least 16 times. We have been told that it is the best constitution in the world, but for ordinary citizens, it has not delivered on the promise. That does not mean that there is something wrong with the Constitution; it means that those that have been given the responsibility to deliver to the people have failed.

We, from Action SA, would like certain things to be clarified. The preamble says that South Africa belongs to all who live in it. We would like that to be clarified as referring to citizens. If South Africa belongs to the world, it will make South Africa ungovernable as we have seen. If South Africa belongs to the world, there is no need to police your borders, as we have seen. So, we would want it clarified that it belongs to citizens.

If you read the preamble further, it mentions citizens twice: "Every citizen is equally protected by the law" and "equality of life for all citizens." So, there is an emphasis on citizens even in the preamble. You need clarification so that it is not subject to interpretation.

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The second part of the Constitution that we would like amended refers to section 26. We want to remove the universal nature of the right to housing by clarifying that the obligation to provide temporary emergency accommodation in instances of illegal land or property occupation is limited to South Africans and persons lawfully in the Republic. Any illegal foreigner that occupies land is a form of aggression and should be treated as an act of war.

We have a defence force that has to ensure sovereignty, and we need to ensure that people understand that we are a nation. We are not a stopover for criminals. In the last few seconds, I would like people to know that this Constitution does not promote unlawful conduct, but the way we have governed and resourced the police and justice, we have ensured that instead of a criminal justice system we have a criminal reward system. We need to ensure that the police are properly resourced. The Border Management Authority, BMA, must have its own people; no police should be decanted to BMA. The BMA must be properly resourced so that the rule of law can be upheld. I thank you, Speaker.

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Rev K R J MESHOE: Hon Speaker, today we mark 30 years since the adoption of our Constitution that promises dignity, equality and security for every South African, and extends its Bill of Rights to everyone within our Republic, and this includes foreign nationals. Sadly, today's commemoration takes place in the wake of deadly antimigrant protests that have caused concerned African countries such as Ghana and Malawi to arrange for the repatriation of their citizens.

On Friday, 29 May three people, two Mozambiquans and a South African teenager by the name of Nhlamulo Sambo were killed in Mossel Bay after the xenophobic violence erupted in KwaNonqaba, leaving 45 shacks torched and hundreds of people displaced. We are grateful that police, assisted by fire services and disaster management teams, were able to contain the mayhem.

The tragedy of the murder of 18-year-old Nhlamulo is that he was suspected of being a foreigner when in fact he is a South African. This young man belongs to the Tsonga tribe from Limpopo whose people generally have a darker skin colour than mine. It was this that made his attackers think that he was a foreigner and targeted him.

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When people see me standing next to hon Gana Makashule, who has a darker skin colour than mine, they might think and conclude that he is a foreign national, but to attack or harm hon Gana just because of his skin's darker tone would be unthinkable ...

The SPEAKER: Hon Moshoe, can you take a seat? Hon Douglas, what's your point of order?

Mr W M DOUGLAS: Hon Speaker, I rise on Rule 85, members may not deliberately mislead the House. There was just a press conference by the police saying that it was not related to xenophobia and that the person is a local person from South Africa. We need to rectify the record live before the people so that it doesn't come out wrong. The police have clarified this matter, and we need to get the right results out. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon member. Allow me to reflect on that matter and then give a ruling to the House. Hon Reddy, what's the point of order?

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Mr V G REDDY: Hon Speaker, the member on the podium is body shaming hon Gana.

The SPEAKER: No, hon member, that is not a point of order ...
[Interjections.]

Rev K R J MESHOG: Hon Gana is comfortable with that. he is not saying anything ...

The SPEAKER: Order, hon Meshog. Hon Meshog, allow the Speaker to rule. Don't make a ruling on your own. Hon Letsike?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Hon Speaker, I would like to check if the hon member can take a question because this issue of darker colours cannot be offending this House ...

The SPEAKER: Order, hon Letsike! Hon Meshog, can you take a question?

Rev K R J MESHOG: No.

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The SPEAKER: Hon members, when you want to ask a member to take a question, please allow the Speaker to rule; don't continue to ask your question. Thank you. Hon Meshoe, continue.

Rev K R J MESHOE: Discrimination on the basis of one's skin colour is wrong and has no place in our new democracy. The ACDP strongly condemns these illegal hateful attacks. We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Mr Sambo and to all those who have lost their loved ones as a result of this uprising. For those who were injured, we also pray for their speedy recovery and healing. The ACDP calls on all peace-loving South Africans to love, respect and protect innocent foreign nationals who live among us, particularly those who are legally in the country.

As we commemorate the freedoms we enjoy as a result of our Constitution let us not lose the spirit of ubuntu and moral fortitude that carried us through many unsettling years of transition towards the constitutional democracy we enjoy, a miracle that garnered South Africa the awe and respect of countries across the globe. When so many ... [Time expired.] ... Thank you.

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Ms O D MEDUPE: Speaker of the National Assembly, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, hon members of the National Assembly, distinguished guests, fellow South Africans, today, as we gather in this Joint Sitting of the two Houses of Parliament to commemorate 30 years since the adoption of the Constitution of South Africa, we celebrate not merely a legal text, but a social contract and a promise of renewal. The preamble of the Constitution states that, and I quote:

We, the people of South Africa, adopt this Constitution so as to heal the division of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice, and fundamental human rights, improve the quality of lives of all citizens, and free the potential of each person.

These words were written by the nation emerging from colonialism and apartheid. A nation that chose reconciliation over retribution and justice over division. As former President Nelson Mandela stated, and I quote:

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For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

Thirty years ago, we were not one nation, we were two South Africans separated by law, by skin, by fences, and by fear. Some of us grew up in passbooks in our pockets. Some grew up not knowing what it meant to be called "free." Some grew up in homes without electricity, without water, without hope that tomorrow would be different.

On 08 May 1996, our Constitution was adopted as the supreme law of the Republic. The Constitution was not only a product of negotiations process, but a product of blood and tears of those who came before us. Written by a generation that chose to sit at the same table instead of holding guns to each other. That the children born in rural villages in the North West, the gogo [grandmother] in KwaZulu-Natal, the students in Khayelitsha, and the workers on the mines of Rustenberg could all say, this is our country too.

The preamble begins with three simple words. "We the people." Not we the powerful. Not we the few. "We the people." The one

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who were told we did not belong. The one whose grandfathers were not allowed to own land. The ones whose mothers' clean houses were not allowed to live in.

Thirty years later, that Constitution still speaks to us. It says your dignity cannot be taken away. It says your voice matters. It says no one is disposable. It says that even when we fall short, even when unemployment strikes, even when the lights go out, we still have a promise to uphold to each other.

We are here today not because the journey was easy, but because it was necessary. From pass laws to the right to vote, from Bantustan to nine provinces, from a country that divided us to a Constitution that calls us one.

As we mark 30-years, let us not only celebrate what is written on paper, let us remember where we come from. Let us honour the mothers who waited at the prison gates, the fathers who never came home, the students of 1976, the workers who strike for a living wage, and the sacrifices through which we have this Constitution. We come from a broken place, but we chose

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to build. For 30-years that Constitution has been our blueprint.

Thirty years on, the question before this House is how far we have come in putting into practice the realisation of the principles and vision of our nation outlined in the Constitution?

When we consider the transformation of our economy, we can say with confidence that South Africa's economy looks very different from what it did before 1994. While we acknowledge that we have not yet reached our desired destination, we are certainly no longer where we were before 1994 and the adoption of our Constitution.

Our Constitution integrates political and economic rights. Section 1 of the Constitution entrenches women's dignity and equality. Section 9 permits' measures to redress past discrimination. Section 23 protects labour rights. Section 27 guarantees access to social security, housing, health care, food, and water.

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This reflects the vision for the South Africa of our future outlined in the seminal document, the Freedom Charter, which was adopted at the Congress of the People in 1955. The Freedom Charter further provides the principle that the people shall share the country's wealth. The Constitution has laid the foundation for the democratic government since 1994 to develop legislation intended to ensure that people shall share the country's wealth.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has noted that transformation is not about replacing one group of allies with another. It is about expanding opportunities so that every South African can participate fully in our economy. Economic transformation and inclusion therefore mean restructuring the ownership, control, and benefits of the economy to serve all South Africans.

Under the apartheid labour law, black workers were denied basic protection. The Constitution laid the foundation for legislation that changed that historical injustice. The Labour Relations Act, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, and the Employment Equity Act created a new labour dispensation.

Workers gained the right to organise, to bargain collectively and strike. Unfair discrimination in workplace was prohibited

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and abolished through a broad-based black economic empowerment police movement beyond narrow enrichment.

The objective is to develop black industrialists, professionals, farmers, and workers ownership schemes, and to direct public procurements towards township enterprise, women-owned business, and youth companies. The impact is visible. A more representative management and professional class. Yet, we must acknowledge candidly that the pattern of ownership remains concentrated. The policy imperative, therefore, is to deepen and broaden Triple B-BBEE, Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, Triple not to retreat from it.

Economic growth and inclusion require infrastructure. Economic transformation cannot occur without energy, water, transport, and digital connectivity.

Over 30-years, the democratic state has delivered over 4,8 million housing units, electrified nine out of ten households, and expanded access to water, sanitation, clinics, and schools. Current programmes, such as Operation Vulindlela and the Infrastructure Fund, are designed to unblock bottlenecks and attract private investment in energy, water, and logistics

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infrastructure. This is essential for industrialisation and manufacturing.

Section 27 obliges the state to take reasonable measures to realise socioeconomic rights. That obligation is met through special economic zones, support for local manufacturers, a local procurement approach, and other initiatives by the democratic government to realise socioeconomic rights.

The Constitution commits us to confront the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. In this regard, the democratic government has developed multi-pronged policies intended to address the triple challenge of unemployment, inequality, and poverty. Among such policy interventions, firstly, is social protection, which ensures that over twenty-eight million citizens receive social grants monthly. These are not grants for charity, but entitlement under section 27.

Secondly, the provision of free basic service. In this regard, approximately ten million households receive free basic water and electricity.

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On health and education, our government provides free primary health care and no-fee schools. The National Health Insurance rollout seeks to universalise access to quality health care. On special inclusion, these are the targets supporting the township economy. [Time expired.]

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Speaker, when we analyse our Constitution, we have to look at it through a specific lens that considers both the normative values and the aspirational values of the Constitution. The normative values are the standard by which we judge ourselves in terms of the progress we have made, which are contained in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, which is the Bill of Rights. On the other hand, it is the aspirational values we talk about, that is, the kind of South Africa we seek to become. So, one is a stock concept, and the other one is a flow concept because it measures progress.

One cannot deny the fact that much has been achieved since 1994 when it comes to access to basic education, basic services and basic health care. What we are grappling with as a country really is a matter of access versus quality. Definitely, there is access and progress has been made. But

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what is the quality of that access? And that becomes work in progress.

The second issue which is important is that it would not be great for a party that has sat in opposition for this entire time to come here and recite statistics about how many houses have been built and how many hospitals have been built. Yes, we acknowledge that is progress, but doing so from the perspective of the UDM would be equivalent to us enjoying the sunshine of a dawn we didn't create. What we have to do is to acknowledge that there is progress and say that it is great.

What the Constitution also does for us is that it serves more importantly as a mirror for us with the stock and the flow concept I was talking about to say: What progress have we achieved? What kind of society do we seek to become? The aspirational values of the South African Constitution are contained in our preamble, and they are clear - issues of social justice. Some were taken from Ntate (Mr) Mantashe's Freedom Charter and the ANC which are great values and are values that determine the kind of South Africa we seek to become. That journey has been made since 1994 to date. In 1996 we first adopted the Constitution. To date we must acknowledge

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that progress has been made. We must put all hands on deck to ensure that even more work is done to try and improve the plight of the poor, to try and take people out of the malice of poverty and underdevelopment, to make sure that we become not just the Africa we want, but the kind of South Africa we seek to become and set the example as we've always done. We must continue to do for the rest of the continent and continue to punch above the weight as a country and make sure that we are the kind of South Africa that the forebears - the people who sacrificed for our country and the people who wanted South Africa to be where it is today - can be proud of so that they don't turn in their graves because of corruption, state capture and all the other problems that we've experienced in the past. I thank you.

RULING

The SPEAKER: Hon members, I just want to make a ruling on the matter that was raised by the hon Douglas when the hon Meshoe was presenting his intervention. Indeed, it is true that the SA Police Service did say from their own information that the matter of Nhlamulo was a criminal matter. It is alleged that the young man may have been involved in a house robbery.

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However, his family denied that and maintained it was an act of xenophobia.

As it stands, there are two versions of the story. And I think what the hon Meshoe was raising in the context of his speech was not body shaming the hon Gana. But it was a caution to say as we deal with these matters. The reality is that, as with others who may not be coming from our shores, we can end up making a mistake that those that don't seem to look like us might actually be fallen off the other acts of violence. That was the context and I thought it is important to clarify that.

Xitsonga:

Mr S M GANA: Mutshamaxitulu ...

English:

... there is a lot to celebrate that has been achieved under our Constitution. But we can all agree that more still needs to be done. Thirty years ago, I was 12 years in the village of Lefara. The first half of 1996 was a celebratory time for our country. Bafana Bafana had just become the African champions. And for those ones who are young at heart like me, will remember the Bafana Bafana game that we played against Brazil

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at the FNB Stadium in 1996. And then the Constitution was passed.

I want to, on behalf of Rise Mzansi, first wish Bafana Bafana well for the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the USA, Mexico and Canada.

Like many others, our Constitution shaped the trajectory of my life. It provided for rights, freedoms and principles which formed the foundation of the South Africa we want to live in, one that is based on equality, dignity and freedom for all. For me, it has opened doors that would otherwise have been sealed shut for the generations that came before me.

Yet, it is not the Constitution alone that gave me the opportunity to go from my village in Tzaneen to be standing here in front of you today. It was the people who dedicated their lives to upholding and giving effect to the provisions of our supreme law. We stand on the shoulders of these giants in the work that we do, and I continue to take my inspiration from them.

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Still, we must be honest. We do not yet live in that safe, prosperous, equal and united South Africa that our Constitution envisaged. We do not yet have this South Africa because many in the positions that we hold have decided not to honour their duty to South Africans, their duty to demand accountability, transparency and to ensure that this government works for the people.

As you all know, I was elected as the chairperson of the impeachment committee this week. That will conduct an enquiry in terms of section 89 of this very same Constitution. Our committee is the first of its kind in South Africa, and its very formation is a victory for this Constitution. All of us have dedicated our lives to upholding the principles of the Constitution.

The Constitution is not mere words on paper. It is a promise of a better South Africa and a commitment by every public representative to make it so. The South Africa that we dreamed of in 1994 and captured by the Constitution of 1996 is still within reach.

Xitsonga:

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Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: Hon Speaker, members and, most importantly, fellow South Africans, good morning. On 12 September 1989, my grandfather received a call. It was a call to tell him that his only son, Anton Lubowski, was brutally murdered. Like so many freedom fighters, my uncle's life was cut short by a callous state that saw themselves as judge, jury and executioner.

As a human rights lawyer, he defended the Upington 26, which further placed him in the crosshairs of the cold-hearted National Party. His assassination was a culmination of years for fighting for the rule of law, being the voice of the vulnerable, and fearlessly defending equality regardless of the characteristics of birth.

Like so many brave activists shaped by the injustices of the time, he was imprisoned and killed without any consideration of human rights or the rule of law. Anton Lebowski, like so many, did not die so that we can simply possess a Constitution. He died so that we could live by it. He died and his sacrifice was to live for the words printed on paper. He

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sacrificed his life for what those words promised, human dignity, equality before the law, accountability, justice and freedom.

Yet today, as we celebrate 30 years of a document forged in sacrifice, we need to remember that the Constitution is not a monument to our struggle. It is the unfinished work of our struggle. The struggle against apartheid was never simply about changing a government. It was about ending the abuse of power. It was about ensuring that no South African would ever again be denied dignity, justice or equality before the law. These promises were written into our Constitution 30 years ago, but every unresolved Truth and Reconciliation Commission case, every delayed prosecution and every family still waiting for answers remind us that constitutional democracy is not self-executing. When families wait 40 years for justice, this is not merely a failure of prosecution. It is a failure of constitutional governance.

Section 9 promises equality before the law. Section 10 guarantees human dignity. Section 34 guarantees access to courts. Section 179 requires prosecuting authorities to act without fear, favour or prejudice. When these promises remain

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unfulfilled for victims of apartheid crimes, we must ask ourselves whether we have even started our journey to constitutional democracy.

Successive governments led by the ANC failed to pursue hundreds of cases referred to state prosecutors by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC. Families of Ahmed Timol and Anton Lubowski still face stalled prosecutions and ongoing legal battles against alleged political interference.

More than 40 years later the families of the Cradock Four are still desperately fighting for justice against whispers of political games. The families of Matthew Goniwe, Fort Calata and Sparrow Mkhonto are still pursuing justice more than 40 years later, frustrated by missing dockets and decades of delayed decisions. There are thousands more names.

We often hear from our people that the Constitution doesn't work for them. We hear calls for the Constitution to be amended. But the fact is that the Constitution is a well-crafted document. But like so many South African laws, the problem does not lie with the document, but in the implementation.

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If the ANC government had spent the last 30 years properly implementing the laws and plans that have been crafted in the democratic South Africa, we would be in a far better place as a country. As we celebrate 30 years of this exceptional document we must commit to better implementation of its details and principles under the government of the national unity and beyond.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon member! Hon Reddy, don't run a commentary while the speaker is on the podium. You don't do that. Hon Reddy, don't do that. Thank you.

Ms N S DU PLESSIS: The generation of Lubowski, Timol, Goniwe, Calata, Mokoto and so many more fought and died for this document. It is therefore our responsibility to keep fighting for their legacy to be enacted in the implementation of the Constitution of South Africa so that we can truly break free of the legacy of apartheid and exemplify constitutional democracy. Let their deaths not be in vain. Let us celebrate, let us implement this document forged in sacrifice. I thank you.

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The SPEAKER: Hon V Gericke, I just want to remind you that we do have a seat provided for us to wait before we speak, not on the stairs. Thank you. You can go ahead.

Mr V GERICKE: Speaker, it's just that I got late notice that I'm the next speaker. I stand on the protocol already established. Today we stand in solidarity with the nation, as we commemorate the historic 30th anniversary of the South African Constitution. It is of utmost importance to note that this Constitution is a result of a bitter struggle against apartheid, oppression and human rights abuses to bring about freedom, equality and dignity to all who live in South Africa.

Yet, as we mark three decades of this transformative text, we must also confront the failures of the DA-led Government of the National Unity, GNU, in meeting the requirements of this Constitution. Our Constitution is celebrated globally for its progressive Bill of Rights. However, in practice, it suffers a critical failure and inability to bridge the gap between lofty and legal promises, and the reality of municipal service delivery. In this regard, I will touch on some examples of how the state frequently fails to deliver basic municipal services.

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This operational breakdown is clearly evident in service-delivery failures, more specifically the management of the housing crisis. Section 26 of the Constitution explicitly guarantees everyone the right to have access to adequate housing. It legally obligates the state to adopt reasonable legislative and development measures within its available resources to ensure the progressive realisation of this right. Needless to say, the implementation mechanism has failed to keep pace with these legal requirements, as there are hundreds of thousands of vulnerable families that remain on municipal housing waiting lists, who are forced to live in informal settlements without formal infrastructure.

In informal settlements like Diepsloot, in parts of Johannesburg, thousands of families lived without formal shelter, proper sanitation, or electricity as elsewhere in the country. This reality is mainly due to a lack of implementation, the incompetence of political office bearers and lazy officials. While provinces like the Eastern Cape stand as examples of the state's failure to deliver section 27 rights, specifically access to health care and water. In rural municipalities across the Oliver Tambo and Amathole Districts,

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hospitals and clinics are chronic medicine shortages, dilapidated structures, and a lack of clean, running water.

This is a travesty of the constitutional provisions for people in need of basic necessities. In DA-governed metros and shared GNU spaces across all provinces, service delivery is routinely crippled by bureaucratic red tape, continuous budget cuts, and a failure to upgrade informal settlements. This failure is also evident at the municipal level, where corruption, administrative chaos, and political cadre deployment have stripped local governance of any real capacity. As the Auditor General's report consistently shows, most South African municipalities are financially unstable and incapable of managing public funds.

This reality proves that a progressive Constitution on its own is powerless without competent leadership to execute its laws. When the state lacks an efficient and transparent mechanism to construct housing and develop vital infrastructure, the constitutional right to adequate shelter remains nothing more than a theoretical concept of impoverished citizens. The preamble of the Constitution states that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in all our diversity.

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It is therefore hurting to see how this provision is contradicted by bigots and xenophobes when migrants are given the runaround in our country. The campaign of hatred against people who do not look like these bigots or speak the language of these xenophobes is intensifying, and yet the state is standing arms folded when migrants are chased around, robbed, and assaulted. There is no other way to describe it, but to conclude that this violence is state-sponsored.

Just two days ago, I conducted a prayer service in Mossel Bay, Rev Kenneth Meshoe, I'm on the ground there standing in solidarity with a grieving family whose young son was brutally murdered. This innocent child was stolen from his family by bigots who targeted him simply because he spoke Xitsonga, mistakenly labelling him as a foreigner. This heartbreaking tragedy, fuelled by prejudice, stands in direct and violent defiance of everything our Constitution stands for. The right to safety and security is enshrined in the Constitution.

The work of the police is cut out for them in section 205 of the Constitution. They must prevent, combat and investigate crime, and maintain public order, and they must protect and secure inhabitants of the republic and their property, for

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when a young child is murdered on public streets due to linguistic profiling and perceived nationality, it signals a profound collapse in the state's primary security mechanism. A Constitution is rendered an empty promise when law enforcement repeatedly fails to shield vulnerable people from targeted violence and xenophobic vigilantism.

In closing, this Constitution was designed to be a transformative blueprint, but it cannot override the incompetence of ideological misalignment of the politicians elected to execute its vision. As the retired Deputy Chief Justice, Dick Frank Moseneke once remarked, "The Constitution is permissive of justice and redistribution, but it remains up to the citizens and their elected governments to do the actual work of governance".

Therefore, while the Constitution promises a life of dignity, the continued failure in service delivery represents a failure of the state, as the EFF, we will continue to demand the active enforcement of the rule of law and radical proposals for constitutional revision. I thank you.

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THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINERAL AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES (Ms P S Mgcina): Hon Chairperson, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, hon members and fellow South Africans, the anniversary of the Constitution of South Africa marks a pivotal moment in the history of our nation. It presents us with an opportunity to reflect honestly on the journey we have travelled since the dismantling of apartheid and the birth of our democratic order. I must say, this has not been an easy journey. It has been marked by both significant progress and undeniable setbacks. Yet despite the many challenges that we continue to confront we will remain deeply appreciative of democratic gains we have achieved together as people of South Africa. Most importantly, we remain firmly committed to fully realising the vision embedded in our Constitution. A nation founded on a human dignity, equality freedom and justice for all.

Hon members, for the past 30 years, this democratic government has worked tirelessly to advance and protect the fundamental human rights and freedoms enshrined in our Constitution. This includes freedom of expression, association and religion. The rights of every citizen to participate freely in the democratic processes of our country.

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In keeping with the clarion call of the Freedom Charter that says and I quote, "The people shall govern." South African have since the first democratic elections in 1994 consistently participated in free and fair elections, exercising their constitutional guaranteed democratic right to elect a government of their choice. Yet again on 4 November this year 2026 South Africans will return to the poles during the local government elections. Therefore, allow me to use this opportunity to call upon all South Africans who have not yet registered vote to do so. Registering to vote is not a merely administrative process, it is an affirmation of our democracy and important expression of active citizenry.

Another defining feature of our Constitution is the affirmation of the rights of every person to live free from violence, discrimination, intimidation and fear. Our Constitution affirms the equal worth and dignity of people of women, children, persons with disabilities and all vulnerable groups in our society. Yet despite these constitutional guarantees far too many South Africans continue to confront the harsh realities of violent crime on a daily basis. Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, GBVF, continues to rob women and children of their dignity, safety and freedom.

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These realities remind us that the struggle for social justice remains far from complete, hence we support the declaration of GBVF as a national disaster and the commitment of resources to tackle these crises.

Yes, the Constitution give us rights, but it also imposes responsibilities upon all of us. Government, business, labour, civil society and communities to work together to build a South Africa envisaged by our democratic founders, prosperous democratic, nonracial and nonsexist society.

Hon Chairperson, at times there are those who seeks to undermine our constitutional institution. There are those who question the value of constitutional democracy when confronted by frustration, inequalities and hardships experienced by many of our people. We must be clear that answers to our challenges is not less constitutionalism nor less democracy the answer lies in the full implementation of the Constitution. It lies in the strengthening ethical accountable and developmental governance. It lies in building capable institutions that serves our people efficiently, honestly and with integrity.

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As public representatives, we carry a responsibility to ensure that the promises contained in our Constitution translate into lived realities of our people. This requires ethical leadership, effective service delivery, economic transformation and the creation of sustainable jobs particularly for young people and women who continue to bear the greatest burden of our unemployment and inequality.

Hon members the Constitution requires us to advance substantively equality, recognises that equality cannot merely exist in law while millions remain excluded for meaningful economic participation. We must confront the deep social and economic injustices inherited from our painful past. The transformation from our economy and the meaningful participation of historical disadvantaged South Africans in the mainstream of our economy can no longer be delayed. It is within this context that government continues to advance inclusive economic participation through programmes such as artisanal and small-scale mining fund, Junior Mining Exploration Fund and the Social and Labour Plan programmes. These interventions are aimed at ensuring that benefits of our country's mineral wealth are shared. The mining communities

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themselves become meaningful beneficiaries of the economic development.

As we move forward, we must ensure that young people of South Africa continues to see democracy as a vehicle for dignity and progress. This is important because the ultimate success of our constitutional democracy will not be measured by the strength of our laws or the resilience of our institution. It will also be measured by whether every South African experience dignity, safety, equality and opportunity in their daily lives.

As we commemorate 30 years of the Constitution let us recommit our selves to values upon which our democracy was founded. Let us continue working together to build a united, nonracial and nonsexist democratic and prosperous South Africa. Let us defend and uphold the Constitution not only through words but through our unwavering commitment to serve the people of South Africa with integrity, humility and dedication. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Minister. Hon members, we were supposed to take a comfort

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break. However, due to a minimum number of speakers, I am not going to allow that. We are going to proceed with the debate.

I am now inviting the hon Ismail-Moosa to take the podium.

Mr I ISMAIL-MOOSA: Hon Chairperson, hon members, and fellow beloved family of South Africans, in the name of the almighty the most gracious and the most merciful I greet our beautiful nation with the warmest greetings of prayer, peace, love and good wealth. Our Constitution is a covenant between the people and the vision and future we seek to build together. Our Constitution stands as a beacon and moral compass of hope, justice, equality, human dignity and respect for all religions, cultures emerging from a painful political history of division, injustice and oppression. Every human deserves a right to dignity, respect and equal worth regardless of social status. As beloved citizens, leaders and public representatives, we are called upon to uphold constitutional values, promote social cohesion, respect diversity and protect the democratic institution that serves our people.

The Constitution also teaches us the important of dialogue and respect for differing views. The Constitution encourages us to

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resolve our differences through democratic engagement rather than division and conflict.

As South Africans, we should take pride in having one of the world's most respected Constitution in the world. It stands as a beacon of hope demonstrating how a nation can overcome the past and build a future founded on justice, truth, reconciliation and human dignity. The values of our Constitution dictate equality before the law, human dignity, respect, freedom of justice and unity in diversity. Let us serve take on our responsibilities seriously with courage, pride and common vision of unity, respecting and protecting the safety of human life. I thank you.

Malibongwe! [Parise!]

Mr E NZIMANDE: Chair, I'm standing on established protocol on behalf of the MK Party, ...

IsiZulu:

... umzabalazo wethu owokuyisa izwe nokuthatha umnotho, ...

English:

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... not to manage the country on behalf of those that usurped our country and economy.

IsiZulu:

Lokho kuyobe kuwukudayisa amakhosi ohlanga oCetshwayo, o-Sekhukune, oBhambatha noMzlikazi no-Galeshewe. Siyakusho nanamhlanje, sithi, siyavumelana nomama engasekho u-Madikizela-Mandela ukuthi loMthethosisekelo ekwaxoxiswanwa ngawo uMongameli walaba ...

English:

... was overnegotiated and protected the rights of those thieves that stole the country and are owning the resources of our country. This constitutional betrayal of the workers and betrayal of justice for our people, including ... [Inaudible.] ... the people of KwaMakhutha, Boipatong, and Sharpeville, all maimed to derail all freedoms by the apartheid regime.

IsiZulu:

Icala labo nje kwakuwukuthi ...

English:

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... their identity, their basic human rights, the right to exist in their own land, and the right to own land and resources. Today we are compelled to ask a painful question, was it necessary for the ANC to think that it was the rightful party to be a leader of the revolution of the oppressed while it knowingly, at this juncture, and at this crucial stage of our revolution, they would turn back and sleep in same bed with the FF Plus, DA and AfriForum, parties representing the symbol of the oppressors who maimed defenceless women and children in their sleep and in the trains?

IsiZulu:

Hhayi, ayigcinanga lapho, ...

English:

... it gave them a place to build a university to preserve the language of the oppressors in Pretoria and here in the Western Cape.

IsiZulu:

Kodwa umuntu onsundu umangabe uthi uzama ukuvikela isithunzi sakhe ngokuzakhela umuzi uma esuke ebone indawanyana engathi

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ingconywana yokuthi angakha Hheyi, bavele benze isihluku, badilize imizi yabo ngendlela ebuhlungu. Hamba uye e-Thornville, uzoyibona leyo nto.

English:

The great betrayal of 1994: our people were told freedom has arrived, dignity has been restored, and victory is certain. But what has changed for the black majority? The land is still not ours. The minerals are still not ours. The banks are still not ours. The economy is still not ours. Millions remain unemployed. Millions remain landless and are tenants in the land of their ancestors. Millions remain trapped in poverty. What we have been told today is a constitutional democracy without economic justice. That is not freedom. That is managed inequality. The rights enshrined in the Constitution without land are empty words. The central question of South Africa has always been the land question. Colonialism and apartheid were not simply systems of racism; they were systems of economic theft: land was stolen, mineral wealth was stolen, and labour was and still is exploited. And yet today, 30 years after democracy, the descendants of the dispossessed are told to be patient. But the MK Party says, enough is enough. That is why the MK Party stands for expropriation of land without

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compensation, state custodianship of land, agrarian transformation, and restoration of African ownership of the economy.

Because land is not just property, land is freedom. Land is dignity. Land is justice. Economic liberation is the new front line. Our revolution was not about voting every five years. It meant the right to work, the right to economic emancipation, the right to share in the wealth of the country, and the right to own the land and mineral resources. Still in the presence of this Constitution, today, South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world. A small minority controls the world. The majority survives on the margins. [Time expired.]

Mr B J FARMER: Hon Chairperson, hon members and fellow South Africans, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Today we gather to reflect on a document that forms the bedrock of our democracy, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Often praised as one of the most progressive in the world, it champions human dignity, equality, and freedom. Its preamble declares that South Africa belongs to all who live in it. Yet, for our country's true

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First Nations, the Khoi and San and the Nama people, the reality remains profoundly different.

Beneath the celebrated text lies a painful legacy of constitutional neglect and the continued exclusion of indigenous identity consider the fundamental right to be recognised. While our Constitution officially recognises 11 languages, it notably omits the Khoi and San languages from this list. When the founding fathers sat down to negotiate the new South Africa, the dialogue centred primarily on redressing the conflicts between the major racial groups: Africans, Whites, Indians and Coloureds. In doing so, the state institutionalised broad racial categories that lumped indigenous First Nations into the legacy of apartheid labels. By not granting indigenous languages official status or systematically acknowledging their ancestral sovereignty, the Constitution risks erasing a deeply rooted cultural heritage. The most tangible and devastating impact of this exclusion lies in land rights. Our Constitution is bound by the property clause, section 25, which protects existing property rights while attempting to facilitate land restitution. Let us honour the whole of our history, not just the past that came after colonial contact.

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It is time we align our supreme law with our highest moral values, ensuring that South Africa truly belongs to all who live in it, especially those who lived in it first. A Constitution is not a static monument; it is a living document. For South Africa to fully embody the inclusive nation it claims to be, we must confront these gaps. True reconciliation and justice will only be achieved when our foundational law fully embraces, restores, and protects the dignity and heritage of our First People.

Afrikaans:

Agb lede, moenie baiza nie. Salut.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF NCOP: The hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, hon members, today, as we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, we must remember that we are entrusted with a covenant between the people of South Africa founded on human dignity, equality, freedom, accountability, and democratic governance. As we reflect on this important milestone, we must also honour those who helped shape our Constitution and our democracy and ensure that we have a

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Constitution that reflects the aspirations of all South Africans.

Amongst those who played a significant and constructive role were the visionary leaders of the IFP. The IFP entered the constitutional negotiations not as a spectator, but as an active participant in crafting South Africa's democratic future. Through the leadership of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi and distinguished leaders such as Dr Frank Mdlalose, Dr Ben Ngubane, Dr Lionel Mtshali and many others, the party advanced proposals that strengthened constitutional democracy, promoted national unity and enriched the final constitution settlement. History records that the IFP was amongst the strongest advocates for a system of provincial government, co-operative governance, and constitutional recognition of traditional leadership. These were not narrow political objectives; they were nation-building interventions that sought to balance unity with diversity and ensure that governance remains responsive to the community itself. One of the most important outcomes of our constitutional architecture was the establishment of the National Council of Provinces.

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The NCOP was created to ensure that provincial interests are represented in the national sphere of government, and that co-operative governance becomes a lived reality rather than a constitutional aspiration. Since its establishment in 1997, the NCOP has served as a vital bridge between national, provincial and local government. It is, therefore, fitting that we remember those important leaders who played a visionary role to ensure that we have the Constitution that we can be so proud of today. Thirty years later, the constitutional vision of integrated governance remains as relevant as ever. South Africans do not experience the government in three separate spheres. They experience the government as one. When water does not flow, when roads deteriorate, when electricity fails, they expect the government to respond. And, therefore, today, let us remember those who crafted this democratic Constitution that we are so proud of. I thank you.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu M M PETER: Sihlalo, mandibulele eli thuba ndilifumanayo ndimele iqela iUDM. Lo Mgaqosiseko sithetha ngawo namhlanje, ngubani na kule Ndlu onakho ukungawuhloniphi? Phambi kokuba kufike lo Mgaqosiseko babephi abanye abantu abalapha kule Ndlu

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namhlanje? Babulewe abantu phambi kokuba kubekho lo Mgaqosiseko ityala ilibala lakhe umntu. Umntu ebebulawelwa ibala eli lakhe, ngoko asikwazi ukungawuhloniphi lo Mgaqosiseko.

Asikwazi nokuwubhiyozela lo Mgaqosiseko kuba amaziko afanele ukuwusebenzisa ajikelwa ngasemva ekubeni uMgaqosiseko siwuhlonipha wona. Asikwazi nokuwubhiyozela kuba noxa siwuhlonipha nje abantu bethu bayimiqodi bebethwa linxele likaKhetsekile. Abantu balambile ngoko baza kubhiyoza njani uMgaqosiseko ujikelwa ngurhulumente lo ulawulayo? Lo Mgaqosiseko uxhasa aba banamandla hayi aba basokolayo.

Sihlalo, singakwazi njani ukuwubhiyozela lo Mgaqosiseko babe abantu beyimiqodi ukuya emangcwabeni bengenelwa ezindlwini, bebulawa, bengakhuselekanga? Siza kuwunika intlonipho lo Mgaqosiseko kuba siyakholelwa ukuba nguwo osisiseko seli lizwe. Asikwazi kodwa ukuwubhiyozela abantu ezibhedlele bebulawa belele eziwadini kuba izibhedlele azikhuselekanga. Siza kuwukhusela siwubhiyozele njani lo Mgaqosiseko?

Ezikolweni, ootitshala bayabulawa. Siza kuwubhiyozela njani lo Mgaqosiseko? Ootitshala bafundisa abantwana bethu besoyika

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ekubeni uMgaqosiseko ukhona uliphepha nje. Baphi abantu abamele ukukhusela loMgaqosiseko? Lo Mgaqosiseko siyawuhlonipha sileli lizwe kodwa siyiUDM sithi, asikwazi ukuwubhiyozela singenakutya esiswini, kungekho misebenzi, abantu belambile, abantu bebulawa, abantu befunwa iimali ngokungekho mthethweni. Urhulumente usonge izandla kodwa uMgaqosiseko ukhona wona.

Uphi lo Mgaqosiseko xa ootitshala ezikolweni bengenakho ukukhuseleka? Phambili makwedini eli lizwe. Yitsaleleni ngasebuhlanti ningxame ukuyibinza ukuze amaxhego abhomboloze ukubiza izinyanya abike kwizihlwele. Umthetho kwanorhulumente boyisiwe. Sihlalo, ngaloo mazwi mayirhuge iye emanzini, yona yophusile. Enkosi.

English:

Ms T BREEDT: Chairperson, the ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all. These are the words of John F Kennedy. One voter, just one voter, can make the difference between constitutional rights that are protected and rights that are ignored. One voter can be the difference between accountability and failure. One voter can be the difference between decline and renewal.

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Afrikaans:

In 2021, in Frankfort, in die Mafube-munisipaliteit in die Vrystaat, was dit een stem wat gemaak het dat wat 'n VF Plus-dorp kon wees nog 'n vyf jaar onder ANC beheer is – een stem wat bepaal het hoe daardie dorp vir die volgende vyf jaar bestuur sou word. Vandag staan daardie gemeenskap weer voor 'n keuse: Aanvaar ons die verval, of kies ons verandering?

English:

That is why, as we celebrate 30 years of the Constitution, we must remember that a Constitution is not merely a document; it is a promise. As Minister Kubayi said during the launch of the anniversary, the Constitution is a testament to South Africans from different backgrounds that came together to build a nation that belongs to all who live in it, but a promise on paper, if it is not honoured in practice, means nothing. The real question, 30 years on, is whether South Africans truly experience the rights guaranteed in the Constitution. Do they experience dignity? Do they experience safety? Do they receive basic services, and do they have confidence in their elected officials?

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It is our time. It is our time to insist on constitutional rights that are lived realities.

Afrikaans:

Dit is ons tyd om te besluit wat met ons dorpe en ons stede gebeur. Dit is ons tyd om verval te stop en verantwoordbaarheid te eis. Dit is ons tyd om die mense te kies wat werklik ons gemeenskappe eerste sal stel. Ons is vyf maande weg van die geleentheid waar Suid-Afrikaners weer vir ons hul toestemming kan gee of dit kan terugtrek. Dit gaan bepaal hoe ons dorpe bestuur word en hoe ons belastinggeld bestuur word.

Ek sluit af. Dit is ons tyd. Dit is ons tyd om te kies. Dit is ons tyd om te verander, en dit is ons tyd om Suid-Afrika se Grondwet nie net te vier nie, maar om dit te laat werk vir elke burger. Ek dank u.

Mr O J MOKAE: Hon House Chairperson, hon Speaker of the National Assembly, hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, hon members from both Houses, and fellow South Africans, good morning.

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When our Constitution was adopted by the Constitutional Assembly 30 years ago, there was much hope for South Africa – hope that the dignity of every citizen will be upheld, that the protection of human rights will prevail, that the painful past of our country will never be repeated, and that blood will not spill on the ground again. However, we know that that sense of hope has certainly eroded over the years, that those very rights that should be protected are so easily violated, and that systemic discrimination, harassment, physical attacks, and murder continue to make our country unsafe.

The vulnerable groups in our society – the women, the children, the elderly, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex, LGBTQI+, community – continue to live in fear: fear of when they will be attacked, raped, and killed; fear that, when they report crime at their local police stations, they will face second-hand trauma and victimisation; and fear that their cases will be struck off the roll due to a lack of evidence because no rape kits were available and that the justice that is guaranteed in this very Constitution will never be served.

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These are the lived realities of many citizens in our country. These fears are real. They are felt every day. All must be equal before the law, and all must be equally protected by the law. As we celebrate 30 years of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, let us reflect on these lived realities, in line with the key themes of this commemoration of reflect, renew, and recommit.

Let us indeed reflect on the fears of the women in Alexandra, in Galeshewe, in Khayelitsha, and in Umlazi. Let us reflect on the vulnerabilities of the gays and lesbians of Thokoza, Mamelodi, Tumahole, and Kuruman. These vulnerable citizens continue to question the effectiveness of this Constitution in upholding their dignity and protecting their rights.

Indeed, South Africa is celebrated for our progressive and transformative democracy that was installed by this Constitution and aptly founded on human dignity, the achievement of equality, and the advancement of human rights. However, for many, it becomes toothless when their daily lived experiences scream of fear, marginalisation, and discrimination.

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This debate today is held under the theme and in the month of June, which coincides with International Pride Month. Pride Month stems from the Stonewall Riots of June 1969 in the United States. As a proud member of this community, I carry the responsibility of championing our cause in Parliament, of which I am a member. We must use this commemoration to recommit ourselves to the fact that this Constitution will effectively uphold their dignity and protect their rights; that this Constitution is not only a ceremonial and toothless document but a serious pledge for all of us to always uphold the rule of law and fight discrimination and marginalisation head on; and that we strengthen accountability and build capable institutions that safeguard the freedoms of all South Africans, especially the women, the children, the elderly, and the members of the LGBTQI+ community.

I thank you.

Setswana:

Ke a leboga.

Afrikaans:

Baie dankie. [Applous.]

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Mr P A PHALA: Chair of the session, hon members of both Houses, and the people of South Africa ...

Sesotho:

... dumelang.

English:

Chair and hon members, allow me to start my debate in this august House by referring to the words written by Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi in his book, *The Land is Ours*. In its introduction he says:

"South Africa's Constitution stands as a monument in the world. For Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States of America, it is not a Constitution of the United States of America that is a model of the world, but the South African Constitution. The magnitude of its vision and ambition is unprecedented."

Coming after centuries of settler violence, economic exploitation, and apartheid racism, redistribution is not at its animating theme. South Africa belongs to all it ...

[Inaudible.] The state must facilitate economic justice, the

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Constitution mandates. The judiciary must protect the Bill of Rights, enforce its promises, and monitor government's conduct.

Yet, despite the admiration of the world, many of the promises contained in the Constitution remain a hollow hope. The advocate's hollow hope narrative resonates with a poetic description by a prominent South African poet, Mr Wallace Rote, when he said:

"Hope is stranded and despair is taking stride."

Hon members, despite the pitfalls on transformation path due to either failure to implement the constitutional provision adequately nor malfeasance in the system, this Constitution of the Republic reigns supreme.

Section 25(6) (5) (7) (8) (9) requires Parliament to act decisively on behalf of those who suffered and continue to suffer the hardest misery so far of apartheid dispossession.

Hon members, while commemorating the 30th anniversary of this rich monumental document, which in all respect embraces efforts to build a sense of common nationhood and shared

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destiny, in the 30 years of transformation through the implementation of this Constitution, there were numerous policy developments which are consistent with the founders of this freedom's innate constitutionalism and respect of rights for all.

Hon members, celebrating the supreme law of the land is a noble honour. It is an honour to serve the nation and to recognise men and women who provided honest, principled and dedicated leadership in pursuit of national unity and reconciliation.

The Constitution embraces principles of integrity, democratic functioning, objectivity, respect for people's rights, which will encourage the nation never to lose its central thrust, which is to create a society in which the fruits of freedom will truly be made available to all, as championed under the goal of a better life for all.

Thus, the determination to ... [Inaudible.] ... the transformation through the vision of this Constitution remains resilient and inspiring. In this regard, the former President of our country, President Thabo Mbeki, in 2008 said:

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"We have sought to advance the vision precisely because we understood that we would fail in the struggle to achieve the nation's social cohesion that our country needs, as well as in the national unity we require to enable us to act together to address the major challenges we face. The vision remains the centre of a very future that envisages South Africa as a home of well-grounded democratic values, namely human rights, equality, peace, stability and shared prosperity."

Hon members, the Constitution preamble says we, the people of South Africa, believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity. What does this mean, hon members?

The historical context of the principle should not be misunderstood. This principle emanates from the Freedom Charter, which was adopted in 1955 in Kliptown, where our forebears were addressing a challenge of what was termed and still termed colonialism of special type, that the colonisers and the colonised are people who in their birthrights share South Africa as their home. Meaning people who were born from generation after generation in this country cannot proclaim any other country as their home except South Africa.

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Hon members, the critical subject of property rights and the redistribution of land have been a challenge in the 30 years since the constitution was adopted.

Justice Albie Sachs said in his book:

"The Constitution is not self-executing; it does not itself provide equality, build houses, deliver education and health services, or offer protection against violence. What it does is to establish a clear political, social, moral, institutional framework within which these issues should be tackled."

Hon members, the land reform process operates on three pillars, and the people of this country have a serious concern about the slow pace and its complexities in three fundamental areas, namely, land restitution, land distribution and land tenure.

However, we must all agree and be interested that all these three aspects require the country's attention. The call to rally around a new patriotic for us to make a commitment to confront these constitutional challenges facing our

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communities around land restitution, land redistribution and security tenure.

The government's land reform programme strategic efforts to deal with over three decades of land theft, has made a significant land restitution. In terms of the government data, over 5 million hectares of land have been redistributed to more than 300 000 beneficiaries, while over 80 000 hectares of restitution claims have been settled, benefiting 2,1 million beneficiaries.

On land tenure, legislative frameworks have been established to ensure that communal residence and farm workers have been legally recognised in terms of the Bill of Rights.

Furthermore, the recent Legal Landscape Development of Expropriation Act provides a legislative way forward to restore the dignity of our people.

Hon members, section 25 of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, requires that land reform be expedited, that the process be within the legislated laws, the willing seller and the willing buyer obligation be adhered to, and the criterion for ensuring compensation is just and equitable.

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This monumental document can be used to expedite the land reform programme to acquire land in private land for public use. There is, however, a need to balance intervention in the interest of facilitating the constitutional imperative of land reform for public use versus the commercial productivity for national food security.

The mix of such potential interventions range from unused lands to great large public, private or state or corporate farms to outright expropriation and mixed forms of land ownership.

Remembering the ground-breaking directive in this regard, the Land Claims Court ruling in 2016 by Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi in which compensation was set below market value. The ruling was celebrated for altering progressively the constitutional land reform efforts.

Hon embers, The narrative from other sectors of society that the ANC was outmanoeuvred during the drafting of the Constitution is incorrect. The ANC championed the fundamental constitutional measures guided by the historical policy

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document, the Freedom Charter, which laid the foundation of the Constitution.

Thank you, Chair.

Mr D D KLOPPER: Hon Chairperson, today, we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of our Constitution. I want us to use this opportunity not only to praise this sacred document, but to honour it as a covenant between the state and the people.

It is a covenant reached after years of pain and suffering that courageously proclaims, "never again". Never again shall the state be allowed to tread on the inherent rights of its people. Never again shall exclusion triumph over unity and never again shall we forget that "I am, because we are".

Our Constitution was born in the wake of a vile past - a deliberate system of violent oppression, racial domination, exclusion and cruelty. Apartheid sought to divide us, and ultimately it failed.

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We, the people of South Africa, defeated Apartheid, and the Constitution is our victory song. May we never stop singing it. May its verses resonate from where the Tugela plunges into the fertile valleys below the uKhahlamba; from where the waves strike rock along our beautiful shores, and from where Hoerikwaggo, the Mountain in the sea watches over the Mother City. We the People are united. We, the People, are the same. And we the People are one.

In honouring this document, we must also reflect honestly on the state of our beautiful country. A Constitution does not defend itself. It does not walk into a police station, it does not sit in a prosecutor's office, it does not preside over a case in court, or neither does it stop a corrupt official from reaching into the public purse. It protects citizens only to the extent that those entrusted with public power respect, obey, and ultimately defend it. This commemoration is about the past we rose from, the future we strive towards, and more importantly where we find ourselves, the present.

Since the adoption of the Constitution, South Africans have been forced to endure corruption, unemployment, failing services, broken promises and the deep wounds left from state

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capture. We have watched public money disappear while schools, clinics, SA Police Service, SAPS, and police stations have to do whole lot more with the whole lot less. Yet every day, we wake up, raise families, build businesses, serve communities, vote, and believe that tomorrow will indeed be better. That resilience deserves applause and more importantly it will deserve a government worthy it.

Our Constitution protects hardworking South Africans against the abuse of power. It protects the poor from being ignored, minorities from being scapegoated, and majority from being manipulated, and every citizen from the arrogance of those who believe that public office is a private bank account. It protects us from the old politics of racial oppression, but it must also protect us from the new school and new politics of racial obsession. We cannot heal the scars left by our past by using the same tools used to inflict them.

Thirty years into democracy, South Africa cannot afford parties that trade in division, resentment and permanent racial mobilisation. We cannot build a united country if every problem is reduced to race, and every citizen is first measured by race before being seen as a human being.

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Non-racialism is not a slogan. It is a founding constitutional value. It is one of the greatest achievements of our democratic dispensation, and it must be defended.

South Africa belongs to all who live in it. It is deeply troubling that some political actors openly flirt with scrapping or weakening the Constitution. Some speak of sovereignty of Parliament as if unchecked political power is freedom and I can tell you, it is not. Unchecked power is exactly what the Constitution was designed to prevent.

A Parliament without constitutional limits can quickly become a place where rights depend on the mood of politicians. South Africa has lived that nightmare before. We dare not dress it up in new slogans and call it a revolution.

The DA stands here with a clear view. We will not chant the xenophobic populism. We say the rule of law must be defended. We will not incite reckless land grabs that destroy investment, food security and jobs. We uphold the right to private property.

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We will not mislead South Africans with empowerment policies that sound noble in speeches but too often enrich the connected few while millions remain excluded.

We celebrate equality. Redress is necessary. Opportunity is necessary. But real empowerment must reach the child in a township school, the unemployed graduate, the small business owner, the farmer and the farmworker, the informal trader and the family surviving through honesty and hard work.

Freedom, fairness and opportunity, as well as diversity are the practical foundation of a constitutional democracy that works for everyone.

A Constitution that protects rights must be matched by a state that actually delivers justice. The SAPS must be able to investigate without political interference. Prosecutors must be able to prosecute without fear or favour or prejudice. And courts must remain independent. Very importantly, Parliament must conduct oversight with a backbone. Government departments must serve the citizens, not the factions. Public money must build South Africa and not buy fancy cars and multimillion rand private mansions.

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So today, let us celebrate the Constitution, but let us also commit to defending it, first. Let us applaud the spirit of the people, who carry the hope of a better tomorrow with all resilience and strength.

Thirty years later, the Constitution remains a shield for the people and a warning to the powerful. It does not belong to politicians, corrupt officials, criminals, disgraced judges and/or parties. It belongs to us, the people of South Africa. And the best way to honour this, is to ensure that every child, every worker, every family, every community can feel its promise in real life.

That is the work before us. That is the responsibility we accept. And that is the South Africa the DA is fighting for. I thank you. [Applause.]

Mr X NQOLA: Chairperson, hon members, 30 years ago, the doors of this institution were thrown open to reflect. For the very first time, the true will and diversity of the South African people. We gather here today, not merely to celebrate the passing of three decades, but to measure how far we have marched on the long road to complete emancipation.

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As we reflect on this 30-year anniversary of our democratic Parliament, we must ask ourselves a fundamental question. What is the true purpose of this legislature? It is not to serve as a House of endless debate and bureaucratic compliance. It is to serve as the engine room for social justice, transformation and dignity for every single South Africans, the Bill of Rights and the promise to socioeconomic dignity.

Our democracy is anchored by one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. As someone who privileges the daily work of overseeing our justice and our constitutional frameworks, I am continuously reminded that our Bill of Rights is not a passive document. It is an active covenant. Unlike all the democracies that focus solely on civil and political rights, our Constitution made a bold revolutionary promise. It explicitly enshrines socioeconomic rights as justifiable fundamental human rights.

Our founding mothers and fathers knew that political freedom without economic dignity is a hollow shell. They understood that the right to vote means very little if it is exercised on an empty stomach or if a citizen lacks a roof over their head.

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Over the past 30 years, Parliament has passed transformative legislation to give these rights a tooth. However, as we celebrate this milestone, we must frankly admit that the gap between constitutional promises and material reality remains too wide for millions of our people. Our task for the next 30 years is to close that gap with urgency. Chief among these socioeconomic rights is Section 21 of the Constitution.

The right to basic education. Education remains the ultimate equaliser and the most potent weapon we have to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Through our oversight in budgetary allocations, Parliament has consistently prioritised our schools, but quality basic education is a complex ecosystem that requires three non-negotiable pillars.

Empowered and accountable teachers. We must continue to invest in teachers' training, professional development and support systems to ensure our educators are equipped for a changing world.

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Timeless delivery of learning materials. No child can learn in the dark. We must completely eradicate bureaucratic delays so that textbooks, stationery and digital learning tools are on desk on day one of the school calendar.

Safe and dignified infrastructure. Let us be unequivocal, in a democratic South Africa, no child should ever lose their life or dignity to a pit latrine. Parliament must hold implementing departments strictly accountable to ensure safe infrastructure, modern classrooms and secure environments for our children.

Human dignity is also deeply tied to the living conditions of our communities. Section 27 of the Constitution guarantees access to health care services. Sufficient food and clean water. We must accelerate our efforts to build a health care system where quality of care is determined by medical need, not by depth of citizens' pocket. Our oversight over public health care facilities must be relentless, ensuring that clinics have medicines, hospitals have staff and patients are treated with absolute empathy.

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Furthermore, we cannot speak of health without addressing the structural determinants of health. Clean running water and proper sanitation. Local government delivers welfare in a water distribution are a direct threat to cultural rights.

This Parliament must use its teeth to hold local government accountable for failing infrastructure. Coupled with water is the growing crisis of food security. In a country with our cultural potential, no child should go to bed hungry.

We must protect vulnerable households through active agricultural support and economic interventions that keep basic food baskets affordable. Where the economy fails to provide immediate relief, the democratic state must step in as a shield. Our social security system is one of the proudest achievements of our 30-year democratic journey.

It is a vital lifeline that keeps millions of families above the line of absolute destitution. We must guard and strengthen our social assistance programme for our children, to ensure that they receive the nutritional and developmental support needed in their formative years.

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For our older persons, our pioneers who built this country under the harshest conditions deserve to age with comfort, security and utmost respect. For persons with disabilities, we must move beyond more financial grants towards building an inclusive society that removes physical and economic barriers, allowing everyone to participate fully in public life. Our social grants are not charity; they are a cultural right and an investment in human capability.

As I draw to a close, let us remember how this Parliament came to be. It was born out of the power of the vote. Democracy is not a spectator sport. It requires active, continuous participation. We are currently moving towards the upcoming local government elections. This is where the rubber meets the road.

Local government is the sphere of state closest to the people. It is where water pipes are fixed, where streets are lit and where local economies are stimulated. If you want to see socioeconomic rise, I have spoken about today fully realise we need capable, accountable local government. That begins with the ballot. I want to issue a clarion call from this podium to all South Africans, particularly young people. Register to

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vote! Register to vote! Register to vote! Register to vote!
Register to vote! Register to vote! Register to vote! Do not
surrender your power to silence.

Registering to vote is your way of holding us accountable. It
is your way of telling this Parliament what your priorities
are. It is the most powerful tool you possess to shape the
next 30 years of our democratic story.

Let us honour the legacies of those who fought for this
Parliament by keeping our democracy vibrant, active and deeply
rooted in the service of our people. For the first time, hon
Chair, I agree fully with hon Tlape that this Constitution
does give a reward to criminals. That reward is basically a
prison cell. That is why today, hon Groenewald, hon
Ntshalintshali and hon Ramolobeng will attest that our prison
cells are overcrowded. They are overcrowded because the work
of the state is actually decisive on ensuring that anyone and
everyone is brought to book any day of the time.

Hon Mokae, we can, at your nearest available convenience,
provide you with the statistics of gender-based violence, GBV,
perpetrators that are lingering in jail today because the work

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of this government has ensured that gender-based GBV perpetrators belong to jail and they must be brought to jail with a speed. But this does not mean that that work is free of challenges. We do have those challenges that one of them or some of them we have mentioned in this podium. But the work of government in confronting Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, GBVF, is actually in the upward mobility. I thank you, Chairperson. [Applause.]

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: That concludes the speaker's list and the business of the day. Hon members are requested to remain in their chairs whilst their processions leave the House.

Debate concluded.

The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces adjourned the Joint Sitting at 11:41.