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**PROCEEDINGS OF HYBRID NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

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The Council met at 14:01.

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

The Deputy Chairperson announced that the hybrid sitting constituted a Sitting of the National Council of Provinces.

**RULES OF HYBRID SITTING**

**NO NOTICES OF MOTION OR MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

(Announcements)

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON (Mr P Govender): Hon members, before we observe a moment of silent prayer, I just want to bring to the attention of the House that one of our members, the hon Radebe, House Chairperson, is unwell and he has been booked

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off sick until 5 August. Therefore, let us keep him in our prayers as we bow our heads for a moment of silence.

Hon delegates, I would like to remind delegates of the rules relating to virtual and hybrid meetings and sittings, in particular subrules 21, 22 and 23 of Rule 103 which provides as follows: That the hybrid sitting constitutes a sitting of the National Council of Provinces; that delegates in the hybrid sitting enjoy the same powers and privileges that apply in a sitting of the National Council of Provinces; that for purposes of the quorum all delegates who are logged on to the virtual platform shall be considered present; that all delegates must switch on their videos if they want to speak; that delegates should ensure that the microphones on their electronic devices are muted and must always remain muted unless they are permitted to speak; that all delegates in the Chamber must use the floor microphones; and that all delegates may participate in the discussions through the chat functionality.

Hon delegates, I would like request delegates who experience connectivity issues to use a ... [Inaudible.] ... photograph for identification on the virtual platform. In addition, that delegates on the virtual platform log on with one device only

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as logging on with two or more devices further lowers the bandwidth. Furthermore, kindly note that the interpretation facility is active. Permanent delegates, special delegates, members of the executive, MEC, and SA Local Government Association, Salga, representatives on the virtual platform are requested to ensure that the interpretation facilities on their electronic devices are properly activated to facilitate access to the interpretation services. Permanent delegates, special delegates, members of the executive, and Salga representatives in the Chamber should use the interpretation instruments on their desks to access the interpretation facilities.

Hon delegates, before we proceed, I would like to welcome all permanent and special delegates to the sitting and acknowledge the attendance of the MEC for provincial Treasury in Limpopo, the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and the Chief Whip of Limpopo Provincial Legislature on the virtual platform

Hon delegates, I've been informed that there'll be no notices of motion or motions without notice. Hon delegates, we will now proceed to the Order of the day, Policy debate on Budget Vote 2, Parliament, Appropriation Bill, B5 - 2024, National Assembly section 77. I now have the honour and privilege to

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call upon the hon Mtshweni-Tsipane, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces to open the debate. This is my first time to call upon my Chairperson to come and speak. Hon Chairperson, you have 25 minutes.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

(Policy debate)

Vote No 2 - Parliament:

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Deputy Chairperson, greetings to your good self. Greetings to the hon House Chairpersons, our hon Chief Whip of the Council, hon permanent and special delegates that have joined in on a virtual platform as well, the representatives of the SA Local Government Association, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I wish to begin my address by asserting the importance of maintaining critical pathways of cohesion and consensus building amongst us, not only for today's debate, but also for the countless robust deliberations that are to follow in this House. As we do so, may we be guided by the spirit of our icon Nelson Mandela whose birthday month we are celebrating.

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It is my sincere wish that we will collectively advance the electoral mandate of this seventh administration with integrity, ethics and respect of our oath of office. May these wise words give credence to what we have been called to accomplish. The things that will destroy us are as follows: Politics without principle, pleasure without conscience, wealth without work, knowledge without character, business without morality, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice. May these values and principles guide us as we move forward in unity to advance South Africa's national interest. May these remain as the defining precepts for the current conjuncture of our constitutional democracy.

It is almost two months since South Africans participated in the 2024, provincial and national elections, ushering in the seventh administration, as part of the democratic order established in 1994. As you are all aware, no single political party received majority support at national level. As such, a Government of National Unity, GNU, has been formed through a statement of intent that seeks to promote co-operation in both the executive and Parliament under the stewardship of His Excellency the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa.

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Many would agree that South Africa finds itself in uncharted territory as we now familiarise ourselves with the spirit, purport and alignment of the GNU. With each passing day, we find ourselves at the centre of a steep learning curve about the impact and importance of a construct such as the GNU. Indeed, the advance to govern in the context of the GNU construct of governance is undoubtedly a complex process. However, we now have the opportunity to formulate the most appropriate regulatory frameworks and legislative instruments to advance our national and developmental interests.

Hon delegates, as we celebrate 30 years of our constitutional democracy, we recall today that our Constitution has laid the foundation for a democratic and open society, in which government is based on the will of the people. As we advance in unity to achieve the ideals of our forebearers and as postulated by the electoral mandate of the seventh dispensation, this season requires visionary and pragmatic leadership. New and robust ways must be constructed to enhance public sector reforms, build state capacity, to improve public-private partnerships and build a corruption free governance system.

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The work of Parliament is influenced by several developing trends within the global, continental, regional and national contexts. These include the effects of evolving democracies, geopolitical tensions, uneven global economic growth, increased expectations and demands, climate change, and societal risks such as pandemics.

So far as the African economic context is concerned, according to the African Outlook 2024, despite strong economic performance and remarkable resilience, structural transformation in Africa has been slow and uneven. Addressing this will require the activation of bold reforms of the global financial architecture, to meet Africa's development financing needs without the nefarious intentions of imposing debt at the expense of sustainable economic growth.

The sluggish performance is said to reflect the ongoing slow economic growth in South Africa, which is the Southern African Development Community, SADC, region's largest economy. Growth in the SADC region is projected to increase marginally by 1,1% in 2024, and 1,6% in 2025. Whereas in South African economic context it is clear that due to slow economic growth over an extended period of time in South Africa, which accounts for 60% of the SADC region's total output, is as a result of

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ailing physical and social infrastructure, as well as the impact of the past electricity crisis.

These prevailing conditions are also said to have lowered the productive capacity of firms, and constrained domestic demand. This economic situation has also aggravated South Africa's persistently high unemployment rate, high levels of poverty and inequality and prevented us from reaping substantive democratic dividends in the last 30 years of freedom and democracy in South Africa. As we reflect on these stark realities, we must also acknowledge that South Africa does not function or exist in a vacuum.

We must therefore acknowledge that our national development landscape is, indeed, impacted upon by external geopolitical tensions, exogenous economic shocks, which still profoundly continue to shape developmental conditions in South Africa. As we seek the appropriate policy and legislative balance to address the challenges faced by our nation, we must refocus our attention on the imperatives of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, as a critical instrument to advance economic recovery and inclusive economic growth. Within this context, Parliament must play a critical role of overseeing a steady focus on the country's economic policy and

implementation trajectory, to enable a radical shift towards the achievement of our inclusive economic growth priorities.

According to the World Bank report, which was co-authored with Statistics SA, Stats SA, South Africa is said to be the most unequal society in the world, with race playing a key role in the society, where 10% of the population owns more than 80% of the wealth. South Africa also ranks first among 164 countries, which is a clear indication of the developmental pressures the broader state machinery must contend with. When we look at this overarching national context, the role of Parliament must be repositioned as critical during the current conjuncture of our developmental journey to effectively oversee the implementation of our national goals. It is therefore imperative that we strengthen Parliament's accountability mechanisms and systems, to enable this arm of state to assert itself more appropriately, within the confines of the constitutional mandate.

Despite the challenges of lack of adequate working space and the decreasing budget, the NCOP, through its plenaries and committees, continued to adapt business processes with physical and hybrid proceedings. Several key pieces of legislation were processed to address various aspects of

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national governance and public welfare, including: The Division of Revenue, the Appropriation Bill, the Children's Amendment Bill, the Public Service Amendment Bill, the National State Enterprises Bill, the Marriage Bill, the Electoral Commission Amendment Bill and the Constitution Nineteenth Amendment Bill.

Regarding oversight, Parliament continued to enhance measures for greater accountability and oversight over the executive. High rates of reply for both oral and written questions put to the executive in the two Houses highlight the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight in ensuring government responsiveness. The NCOP directed a total of 970 written and oral questions to the executive. In keeping with the provisions of the Constitution in relation to public involvement, about 255 public hearings were held, including collaborative efforts with parliamentary constituency offices and local entities. Several petitions were considered by Parliament.

As delegates are aware, co-operative government and intergovernmental relations are the twin sisters of our system of government. Therefore, collective planning on matters of common interest is crucial to avoid one sphere usurping the powers of another. It is for this reason that the NCOP will

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continue to place greater emphasis on monitoring the effectiveness of interventions. Interventions should be the last resort after all other support measures shall have failed. Therefore, hon delegates, in whatever we do we must ensure that provincial interests are taken into consideration in the national sphere of government. As such, when designing our programmes we must take into consideration the programmes of the provincial legislatures. We must also ensure that there is co-operation, consultation and co-ordination between the two Houses of Parliament, our provincial legislatures as well as organised local government.

Regarding international engagement, in the past financial year Parliament considered nine crucial international agreements, in accordance with section 231 of the Constitution. These agreements encompassed a wide array of topics, including gender equality. We will continue to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy in pursuit of a better Africa and a humane, just, equitable, democratic and free world. This includes through ensuring that the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, SADC-PF, becomes a fully-fledged Parliament, stabilising the Pan-African Parliament and taking our participation at Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, Brics, Parliamentary Forum to a new level.

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This year's budget is set against the backdrop of declining budgets in the state. In addition to the reduced budget, the composition of Vote 2 carries structural challenges, skewing the appearance of resource availability. Whereas the overall budget appears to be significant for 2024-25, the amount available for discretionary allocation is small. The accounting officer has limited control over the following allocations in the budget: Direct charge for members' remuneration, transfers to political parties, Parliamentary and Provincial Medical Aid Scheme, Parmed, payments, facilities for members, benefits for former members, salary adjustments decided by the sector bargaining process and contingent liabilities.

Over time, hon delegates, the composition of the budget should be reviewed to reflect the availability and the use of resources in a more accurate way. Also, a new approach to budgeting and appropriation will be needed to ensure that Parliament is sufficiently funded.

Hon members, the total budget for Parliament for the 2024-25 financial year is R4,436 billion. The total allocation received from the National Treasury amounts to R3,263 billion, and includes R500 million for the restoration and

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refurbishment of the parliamentary buildings because of the fire damage. The shortfall will be funded by institutional retained earnings of R101,8 million, retained earnings for rebuilding of Parliament of R998 million, donor funding of R22,5 million and own revenue of R50 million.

The National Treasury allocation for compensation of employees amounts to R939 million, whilst the projected expenditure is R1,356 billion. The allocation by National Treasury for the contribution to medical aid of former Members of Parliament and provincial legislatures amounts to R68 million, whilst the projected expenditure is R80 million. Baseline budget reductions of the medium-term are causing significant strain on the budget of Parliament. In addition, inflation is expected to remain higher, driving up the cost of Parliament's goods and services.

Therefore, the budget of Parliament has been allocated as such: For Programme 1, which is administration, an allocation of R2,284 billion has been made; for Programme 2, there's an allocation of about R867 million that has been appropriated; and as well as Programme 3, an allocation of R791 million has been allocated.

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The 2024-25 Vote for Parliament was prepared during the term of the Sixth Parliament. The Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act requires that Parliament develops a new strategic plan within six months from the national elections. The strategic planning process, which will commence shortly, will result in us deciding on priorities and outcomes for the Seventh Parliament, and the realignment of resources.

As we begin to crystallise our focus and approach as the NCOP, the following key priorities must inform our institutional agenda, as we commence the seventh dispensation. We must as matter of urgency, prioritise the workings of the intergovernmental and co-operative governance systems to deliver services, with the intention of not only focussing on interventions after service delivery systems have completely collapsed at the provincial and local spheres of government. We will institutionalise three sphere planning processes in the NCOP and effectively utilise the three sphere developmental data provided, to strategically shape the NCOP's oversight agenda. We will also have to infused together with the three sphere planning mechanism, we must deliberately accentuate the planning imperatives of the District

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Development Model as a springboard to advance the planning and implementation of key development priorities.

We must ensure that sector Parliament continues to play the dynamic and developmental role, with better oversight, tracking and impact assessment mechanisms to advance South Africa's transformation agenda. We must institutionalise the policy and legislative review processes in order to consistently test the impact and efficacy of the policies and legislation passed by Parliament. We must also build dynamic public participation processes and systems to give better effect to the values and principles of public participation. We must further create the appropriate systems to enable online petitions and where online access is not possible in rural areas, we must create the appropriate systems for rural communities to submit their petitions.

The recommendations of the Chapter 9 institutions must be standard items for the executive to report on progress made in implementing these recommendations and Parliament must meticulously track and oversee this process. To support the NCOP more effectively, parliamentary researchers must be involved in communities or find other sources of research data and rely less on reports from government. We must review the

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programme structure of Parliament to allow for more time for plenaries, committees, and work performed in constituencies. Whilst the restoration of the parliamentary buildings remains one of the focus areas for the Seventh Parliament.

As I conclude, while being mindful of the strain on the budget of Parliament, which is a consequence of declining resources in the state, we need to set our priorities in a manner that will enhance Parliament's effectiveness and responsiveness. I, therefore, hereby table the budget for the 2024-25 financial year for approval by this august House. I thank you.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP: Deputy Chairperson, greetings to yourself and my fellow members of this House, our special delegates that are on the virtual platform, and special greetings also to ...

*Setswana:*

... baagi ba naga ya rona ka kakaretso, ke re dumelang.

*English:*

Hon Deputy Chair, House Chair, hon Ryder, special delegates, representatives of Salga, ...

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*Setswana:*

... baagi ba rona, ...

*English:*

... hon members, allow me to join the national Chairperson in her presentation of the budget to this House in rallying my support on behalf of the ANC to what the Chair has tabled. This is quite critical given the fact that we are discussing this budget during the Mandela month, and it is only correct that I also wish our former President a happy birthday in heaven by quoting a very important message from a book that was published in his tribute, *Dare Not Linger*:

I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended.

This is quite critical given the commitment we have made to our people and the debate of this budget illustrate that even

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critical institution like Parliament is not immune from transparency, accountability and public scrutiny. This so because the Chair in her address made a commitment that Parliament has to have sound financial management and it has to account.

As hon members may be aware, it's important to note that this budget takes place after three interrelated milestones. One, the inauguration of the seventh democratic Parliament, election of our presiding officers, debate on the President's opening address, the election of our Chairs of the committees and also the House Chairs and the Chair.

Therefore, the message from *Dare Not Linger*, also captures the fact that in our quest to celebrate the 30th anniversary of our constitutional democracy and its institution, it's important to remind ourselves that we occupy a particular space in the quest to promote our constitutional democracy. This is important because as this House, we have to reflect on the work that we have done since 1997.

Of course, it is important also to appreciate the fact that this debate takes place as we celebrate 70 years of the adoption of the Women's Charter in 1954. This places the

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importance of the Charter at the centre of a transmission agenda. Therefore, the expectation in the clarion call is that we need to ensure that the work that we do is infused with the gender mainstreaming as one of the key critical strategies that has to be pursued in our quest to promote gender equality. This is so because throughout our programmes such as oversight agenda setting mechanism, the provincial Women's Charter report back session created quite an exciting platform to reflect on the progress that we have made. But more than that, it placed the council at the centre of a very strategic and fundamental role in the integration of gender perspective in the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the government policies. And that our government integrates regulatory measures and spending programmes with a view to promote equality between women and men and combating discrimination. This context is quite important also to reflect on the work that we have been doing across the globe as part and parcel of this key critical instrument that this House is also promoting.

What is critical is that while we concede that ...

[Inaudible.] ... democratic project ... [Inaudible.] ... that is unfolding within the evolving global context of new liberal democracy and also which in itself create a bit of

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unprecedented crisis, it's important that we affirm the centrality of Parliament as a key centre of democracy. In order to illustrate that point, allow me to also quote the 2006 Guide to Good Practise from the Inter-Parliamentary Union:

The paradox of our times is that we hail the victory of democracy while lamenting the fact that in many countries Parliament - the central institution of democracy - is facing a crisis of legitimacy. The executive branch dominates the agenda, international co-operation and globalisation have led to decision making that lacks democratic control, and people question whether current political processes are really able to produce parliaments that can represent their interests in all their diversity.

So it's important that this context is fully understood. What is also critical is the fact that within this context, the President has articulated three strategic objectives which the government will be focusing on. I don't have to remind hon members, you were part and parcel, but key is to ensure that we have an inclusive growth and job creation, reduction of poverty and also a build a capable and ethical state.

Therefore, it is important that we reposition ourselves as

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Parliament and the NCOP in a particular way. We must be steadfast in playing a robust developmental oversight role by keeping these priorities at the centre for our oversight work.

In relation to the Government of National Unity, GNU, which correctly has to be characterised as the change in continuity, the national Chairperson has correctly articulated the context within which the GNU was arrived at and therefore critical to us is how do we position the National Council of Provinces to ensure that in our parliamentary oversight there is a consolidation of consensus seeking and there is also a manufactured political management of co-operation and of conflict - the ultimate test of which should be the overriding interests of our people united in our diversity.

It is also important that in appreciating the importance of GNU, key to it - the support - is the following which is quite important because we capture GNU as a reflection to break ranks with the centuries of apartheid, colonial rule, defined by race, class and gender. But more so, we commit ourselves through elected representatives having adopted our Constitution as a ... [Inaudible.] ... of our country, there is a sense that through the work that we do, we will be able to breach the sins of the past. What is critical is also a

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rhetoical question, how do we reposition the NCOP as a critical band guard of the interest of provinces and the whole of the people in the provinces?

The political context that was outlined earlier on indicated that there is a need to appreciate that there is a declining capacity of a democratic state. Especially the local government in South Africa which make a compelling case for any democratic institution to pause and reflect on the work that we do. It is important to affirm our belief that the response that we need to give to two questions amongst them, how do we reposition NCOP as a critical vanguard and also the whole of the people in the provinces? It is important that we do that by ensuring that the relevance of the mission of the existence of this august House, as captured by the architects of our Constitution, and the extent to which it has succeeded to fulfil this mission, is put under scrutiny.

We do so by virtue of the fact that while the decision by the Constitutional Assembly to establish the former senate which was established in the terms of interim Constitution of 1993 and replace it with the National Council of Provinces was reached by consensus. It was however not arrived at easily. This was especially so in relation to its specific mandate.

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That is important because if you look at the resolution of the ruling party of the sixth National General Council. It says:

In celebrating its twenty-year anniversary, the NCOP must reposition its role to ensure that it is at the cutting edge of the integrated co-operative governance.

This is important because as we reposition the work that we do, there has to be clarity as to whether are we committed to the three strategic flagship programmes that we have put on the agenda to infuse and strengthen the work that we do as the National Council of Provinces? But also, it is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that the National Council of Provinces, as the champion of the integrated developmental co-operative governance and the custodian of intergovernmental relations in our constitutional democracy, cannot be underestimated. We therefore have to do whatever, to make sure that at the centre of the work that it does, we are able to strengthen its institutional support and the capacity to fulfil its mandate. It's important that as we review and reposition its flagship programmes, we do so in pursuance of its strategic mandate of deepening the integrated co-operative governance.

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It's important that as we continue to appreciate the work that we do, at the centre also is the need to ensure that members support cannot be left unarticulated. Among the key point that we need to do is to ensure that the support to the provincial whips is fast tracked so that we are able to ensure that they are able to do their work with distinction because the provincial whips and senior whips play a critical role in the political management of this House and its alliance with legislatures and other critical stakeholders in order to ensure that that integration that we talked about is not left to the sideline.

The other point in terms of members' support is the issue of the importance of Parmed Medical Aid Scheme which is quite important because Parmed covers a wide range of medical expenses for every kind of medical need. This includes in-hospital coverage and prescribes minimum benefits which allows its members access to the required health services.

Parmed medical aid scheme was established in 1975 by the Parliament of South Africa to ensure that its members and its leaders, which include the Presidency, Ministries, legislatures and members, are able to be taking good care of. There was a case to try in 2014 that took Parmed to court, but

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because this law remains in place, that matter was withdrawn. What is quite critical is how do we position Parmed within the context of the envisaged national health province? What is more important is to ensure that our members are taken on board in terms of what support is there. In addition, as the ANC, we reaffirm our support to Budget Vote No 2. Thank you, Chair. [Time expired.]

Mr D R RYDER: Deputy Chair, Madam Chair, colleagues, fellow South Africans. This is Parliament. Today we gather to discuss the budget that the executive has given us to do our work. That is with a profound sense of responsibility and determination that I'll take on the role of House Chairperson of Committees.

In this critical role, I am committed to ensuring that the work of the National Council of Provinces is not only effective but transformative, serving the true interests of the people of our great nation.

Today, I want to address the pivotal importance of the National Council of Provinces within our parliamentary system. To delineate its specific differences from the National Assembly and to emphasise the indispensable role of

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politicians, particularly office bearers, in steering the National Council of Provinces' direction and focus.

The National Council of Provinces holds a unique and essential place in our parliamentary framework. Unlike the National Assembly, which represents the people directly, the National Council of Provinces is designed to represent the provinces, ensuring that regional interests and concerns are given a voice at the national level.

This bicameral structure is not just a formality, it is a fundamental aspect of our democracy, ensuring that our governance is balanced, inclusive and representative of our diverse nation.

However, it is evident that the National Council of Provinces has not always lived up to its full potential. Too often, the administration has been left to dictate the pace and direction of our work. This is a grave misstep. It is not the bureaucracy, but the elected representatives who must lead.

As politicians and office bearers, we have been entrusted with the mandate to guide, to decide, and to act in the best interests of the public. It is our duty to take the reins to

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shape the agenda and to drive the work of the National Council of Provinces with purpose and conviction.

As we begin the oversight work of the committees, let us be the proverbial new broom ready to sweep, clean and invigorate our processes. Our committees are the lifeblood of the National Council of Provinces, where the real work happens, where legislation is scrutinised, where public input is integrated, and where accountability is enforced.

It is within these committees that we must focus our efforts to bring about meaningful change. As we start the work of this House and its new composition, we are faced with a particular challenge as the institutional memory amongst members has been substantially diluted with only four among us returning to the National Council of Provinces after having gained experience in the Sixth Parliament.

I am certainly not undermining the experience of those who served in the National Assembly, who served in the provincial legislatures or the metropolitan and local councillors across the three spheres of government. Your history and experience will serve us well as you bring your understandings of the other parts of government together with your lived

perspectives into our discourse and enrich the debates and conclusions with your wisdom.

It is, however, extremely important to note the distinct role of the National Council of Provinces. We do not operate like the National Assembly. We cannot be a better National Assembly than the National Assembly. They have their role to play, and we should not deem ourselves to be a second check on their work. And we certainly should not be a mere rubber stamp, a formality to meet the requirements of the Constitution merely as an act of compliance.

The principles that underpin the writing of the Constitution sought to give us a dual mandate, that of representing the provinces as detailed in section 42 of the Constitution, as well as the senatorial role described in section 44. This must be what informs the work of the committees.

While the budget informs the work of government, and our committee should play a constructive role in processing the budget, it is the role of the National Assembly committees to monitor and have oversight over the implementation. While they do that, we should be engaging with our provinces to better

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understand the negative impacts, the unforeseen deficiencies of legislation that Parliament has passed.

An example of this would be for the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act. The Act that was passed many years ago with noble intentions and designed to protect the dignity of South Africans. But sadly, in its execution it has become a tool used by criminal syndicates to achieve the exact opposite of those high admissions that it once had, and it has placed an unfunded mandate on provincial and local governments.

It emerged during the provincial week last year that some provinces found that the implementation of the Act had negatively impacted the balancing of people's rights but had also introduced a massive financial burden on municipalities and provinces who must find alternative housing solutions for evictees.

Municipalities particularly are already struggling financially. The introduction of this additional mandate has not come with any additional funding. The result is that municipalities are often not able to enforce legally obtained

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court orders, resulting in unplanned urban sprawl and unserviced human settlements.

The situation needs so sober minds and deep thought to bring about solutions that protect all South Africans. This is a matter that can be addressed in a committee of the National Council of Provinces with insights and inputs from the various role players, with the intention of making a better law.

Now I can already predict the House from the land grabbers and the opportunities that sit among us. My response to them is to ask if they are happy to abandon the many South African landless people to live in unserviced places in haphazardly developed neighbourhoods. Surely, we should be focusing our resources on well-planned living spaces rather than squalid shanty towns with sewage running in the streets.

A committee Bill would be the obvious outcome, or even better, a Bill that's discussed and negotiated with the executive and ultimately driven using the relevant department with their support and a common goal in mind for the benefit of all South Africans. But to get to this point, hon members, we must ensure that our committees are not just functional but exemplary in their operations.

This means rigorous oversight, thorough deliberation, and an unwavering commitment to transparency. Each committee must be proactive, not reactive, in addressing the issues that affect our various provinces. We must anticipate challenges, engage with stakeholders early and ensure that our legislative work is both timely and relevant.

Furthermore, we must prioritise the public interest above all else. The legislation that we pass and the decisions that we make must directly benefit the law-abiding citizens of South Africa. Our people are our ultimate stakeholders, and it is their welfare that should guide our every action.

To achieve this, we need to enhance public participation in our processes. This can be done through more accessible public hearings, greater use of technology to gather input and more frequent interactions with the communities that we serve. By doing this, we can ensure that our work reflects the real needs and aspirations of our people.

Our work with the provinces as one of our key responsibilities. The provinces must see us as their champions in Parliament. The relationships with both the executives of provinces as well as the oversight structures in the nine

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legislatures is a key driver of the success of any provincial delegation. If you do not make yourself relevant to them, you are robbing your province of important opportunities to realise their best potential through strong interaction with the national sphere of government.

In addition, we must strengthen the relationship between the National Council of Provinces and the National Assembly. While our roles are distinct, our goals are aligned. Effective communication and collaboration between the two Houses are essential for coherent and comprehensive policy making. By working together, we can ensure that provincial interests are integrated into national legislation, and that the laws that we enact are both fair and effective.

Now let me introduce a crucial point. The responsibility of office bearers. As leaders, we cannot afford to delegate our responsibilities to the administration. We must lead from the front. Setting the agenda, making the tough decisions, and ensuring that our committees and other structures are aligned with our strategic goals.

This requires courage, vision, and an unwavering commitment to public service. It is our duty to provide direction, to

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inspire our colleagues and to hold ourselves and each other accountable. To this end, I propose the following solutions to enhance the effectiveness of the National Council of Provinces and its committees.

The first being enhanced training and development for members. We must invest in the continuous development of our members. This includes training on legislative processes, public engagement, and effective oversight. By equipping our members with the necessary skills and knowledge, we can enhance the quality of our work.

The second intervention is improved coordination and communication. I've touched on this already, but we need to establish better channels of communication between the National Council of Provinces, the National Assembly and provincial legislatures. This will ensure that our efforts are coordinated and that we are working towards the common goals I've mentioned.

The third one is strengthened oversight mechanisms. Our committees must be empowered to conduct thorough and independent oversight of government activities. This includes

the ability to summon officials, request documents, and conduct site visits where relevant.

By enhancing our oversight capabilities, we can ensure that the government is held accountable and that public resources are used effectively and in the interests of our people. The days of virtual meetings must also end.

The next item on the list is increased public engagement. We must continue to create opportunities for the public to participate in our processes. By involving the members of the public, we can ensure that our work is grounded in the realities of those that we serve and not the issues that we think exist.

The next is a focus on implementation. It's not enough to just pass good laws. We must also ensure that those laws are effectively implemented, and this requires close collaboration with government departments, regular monitoring of progress and prompt action to address any issues that arise. That's an important aspect of our local government week and the provincial week to review the impact of legislation on local government and provinces.

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The final area I wanted to focus on is the promotion of interprovincial collaboration. The National Council of Provinces must serve as a platform for fostering collaboration between the nine provinces by sharing best practices, sharing resources where possible, and by sharing expertise. Through that, we can address common challenges more effectively and ensure more equitable development across the country.

Colleagues, the time for complacency is over. We must embrace our roles with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment. The people of South Africa are looking to us to lead, to act and to deliver. They are tired of empty promises and ineffective government. They want real, tangible results that will improve their lives and build a better future for all.

As House Chairperson, I pledge to work tirelessly to ensure that the National Council of Provinces fulfils its mandate, and I will hold myself and my colleagues to the highest standards of integrity, diligence and accountability. Now, when looking at the actual budget that we have faced with today, we note that the budget of Parliament has, over the years, been systematically reduced because of the country's overall poor economic performance and the many pressing needs of government.

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In fact, this is a self-inflicted injury which requires local medicine to manage. The local medicine will come in the form of this Parliament, tightening the screws on all ministries and entities to ensure clean governance that will inspire investor confidence.

In the past week, my office has also been inundated with calls from the chairpersons of committees decrying the fact that the poor roll out of tools of trade militates against their ability to hit the ground running. It is a matter that I'm seized with and will be thoroughly ventilated in our maiden meeting of the committee of chairpersons which sits tomorrow.

In closing, Deputy Chair, let us remember why we are here, we are here to serve. We are here to represent. We are here to make a difference. Election as a Member of Parliament is not an end goal, it's a platform from which to pursue your goals.

Let us seize this opportunity to build a stronger, more inclusive, and more prosperous South Africa. The work ahead will not be easy, but with determination, with unity and a steadfast focus on the public good, we can achieve great things.

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*Sesotho:*

Re tswela pele kaofela.

*English:*

Thank you very much.

Mr J P SWART: Hon House Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, members and fellow South Africans, good afternoon. I stand before you today as a proud member of the National Council of Provinces, NCOP, deeply honoured to contribute to this critical debate on the Appropriations Bill 2024. Having attended the President's opening address, the debate and the response, I am both inspired and deeply concerned. After 30 years of democracy, it is troubling for me as a new member, to see that we still face significant challenges and obstacles on our path to true prosperity. This is the era of hope as the President have said, era of renewed hope, for our country.

As a new member of the NCOP, I had hoped that a government of national unity would have been established a decade ago already. The voices of South Africans rang loud and clear on May the 29th, compelling us to unite in one bus towards the promised land and towards a better South Africa. We dare not as leaders, deviate from the roadmap that will lead this beautiful nation

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to the next level. We must change the fuel of the bus by critically reviewing all failed policies and I mention all failed policies, programmes, and projects that hinder our prosperity in South Africa.

All departments must innovatively restore dignity and develop new plans for radical change. This includes uplifting our youth, restoring family values, adequately addressing gender-based violence, empowering upcoming farmers, and supporting local South African businesses.

This budget, presented by the previous administration, tabled today, highlights that we must do more with less. Innovation should be our watchword moving forward.

On the proposed budget figures, I wish to address the following points: Firstly, the increased budget deficit, the growing deficit negatively impacts resources, affecting real service delivery for the people of this beautiful country. We need a sustainable approach to manage our finances effectively. This deficit, if not managed properly, will lead to higher borrowing costs and reduce our capacity to invest in essential services and infrastructure which is our current trajectory if we do not implement drastic change to our fiscal policy.

Secondly, it is the Economic Recovery Plan, we need to review this plan, considering the shortfall in expected revenues due to the weak economic environment. Our recovery strategy needs to be dynamic and responsive to our current challenges facing our country and our people we serve. We need to create a conducive environment for businesses in all nine provinces to thrive, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation to drive economic growth.

With a government of national unity, GNU, installed new departments, new Ministers, new plans, new fresh passion, new commitment, it is time to implement a zero-based budgeting process. We cannot continue with the same ineffective practices of the past years. The bad must fall, the good intention must rise, and must be embraced and we must start afresh with a clean slate. This approach will force each and every every department to justify their expenditures from scratch, ensuring that funds are allocated based on need and efficiency, not historical spending.

The fourth one is sustainable job creation, we need to investigate and develop radical plans to reduce unsustainable grant funding and replace it with sustainable, permanent jobs in each and every home. Our people deserve the dignity of work

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and the stability it provides. This involves not just job creation but also skills development and education to prepare our workforce for the demands of a modern South African economy that can compare with the rest of the world.

The fifth one is the aging infrastructure is a growing nightmare and is a crisis. South Africa must undergo a comprehensive construction era, particularly in upgrading roads and water lines. Investing in infrastructure will not only improve service delivery but also create jobs and stimulate the much needed economic growth. We must ensure that infrastructure projects are completed on time and within budget, with no room for corruption or mismanagement. None more so painful than our once beautiful National Assembly building, that now has been standing as a construction site since January 2022, almost three years and that is unacceptable with work only started at the beginning of this year.

Under the DA leadership, the Western Cape seen remarkable successes. Our province leads in job creation, and health care. We have shown that good governance, accountability, and innovative policies can drive real progress. The Western Cape's approach to fiscal discipline and prudent investment serves as a model for the rest of our beautiful country. Our economic

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policies, focusing on creating an enabling environment for businesses and ensuring efficient public service delivery, have borne fruit and must be scaled nationally.

The DA's economic policies emphasize reducing the regulatory burden on businesses particularly red tape, fighting corruption, and ensuring efficient public service delivery. We believe in a market-driven economy where the government creates an enabling environment for businesses to thrive. Our policies focus on education, innovation, and infrastructure development as key drivers of economic growth. We also advocate for a fair and transparent tax system that encourages investment and economic activity.

As the laet leader Nelson Mandela wisely said and I quote, "It always seems impossible until it's done." Let us leaders take this to heart as the government of national unity embark on the necessary and challenging task of transforming our nation's finances and policies.

In conclusion, fellow South Africans, we as members and our government of national unity, we need fiscal discipline, prudent investments. I thank you. [Time expired.]

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*Sesotho:*

Mof M MAKESINI: E re ke dumedise Motlatsa Modulasetulo, mme ke dumedise le Modulasetulo wa Ntlo.

*English:*

Greetings to the leadership of the EFF, led by the capable Sello Julius Malema. Greetings to the ground forces of the mighty EFF.

*Sesotho:*

Ke dumedise baruti ba rona ba re behand dithapelong ha re le mona.

*English:*

Because we cut their prayers, ...

*Sesotho:*

... nkabe re se mona. Ke dumedise baetapele ba rona ba setso moo re tswang teng. Ho baahi ba Freistata re re taelo ya rona re le NCOP ...

*English:*

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... is to ensure the interests as provinces are taking care also on the national space of government. That is our mandate, ...

*Sesotho:*

Ha re le mona ho emela diprofensi tsa rona. Empa moo re tswang dprofensing tsa rona, re a tseba hore batho ba habo rona ba dula ditshileng, ha ba na metsi.

Dipettleleng tsa rona batho ba robala fatshe. Bomme ba pepela dikoloing kante dikliniking. Ditliniki tsa rona di a kwalwa ka hora ya bohloano. Ditliniki tsa rona di sebetsa ...

*English:*

... seven days of the week.

*Sesotho:*

Re a ipotsa fela hore na re kula ...

*English:*

... only Monday to Friday, from 8am to 4pm.

*Sesotho:*

Ke potso eo re tlamehileng re ipotse yona re le NCOP.

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*English:*

We therefore reject this budget because, this budget ...

*Sesotho:*

... ha e bue le ditabatabelo tsa rona moo re tswang.

*English:*

The role of Parliament is to oversee activities of government and the organs of state, so that we realise a better life for all. The better life for all, ...

*Sesotho:*

... e neng e lwanelwa ke batswadi ba rona ka 1994, ha ba ne ba tswa ba ilo ema meleng ya dikgetho, ba ntse ba re ...

*English:*

... 'freedom is coming'. Little did they know that it is only the freedom

*Sesotho:*

Ya hore ba voute.

*English:*

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There is no economic freedom in their lifetime. There are backlogs in our provinces for housing projects, ...

*Sesotho:*

... le diprojekeng tsa ditsela tsa rona. Bobodu bo teng bomasepaleng ba rona, diprofensing tsa rona, ha se ntho e etsang hore re le maloko a Ntlo ena, re ka kgona ho robala ha monate.

*English:*

Other people, in Qwaqwa specifically, where I come from, in Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality in the Free State, ...

*Sesotho:*

... ha ba na metsi. Batho ba Qwaqwa ha ba na motlakase. Ha o tseba Qwaqwa hore e na le matamo a mararo, empa ...

*English:*

... today, there is no water in Maluti-a-Phofung, specifically in Qwaqwa.

However, this Parliament has been unable to fulfill its primary responsibility of holding the executive into account for many challenges that are faced by our people. This

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Parliament also failed to present a credible and dependable solution to many crises that are faced by our people. It has been an equal to leave their program to develop and implement believable solutions to any of the crises which is faced by our people on a daily basis.

We, therefore, reject this budget, Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP. We, therefore, reject this budget of Parliament, which through the Speaker shields its presence of being an answerable Parliament, as with the case of Phala Phala. Our role is to make sure everyone is accountable to this Parliament.

*Sesotho:*

Ha ho na motho a betere ho feta ba bang.

*English:*

Corruption must not have a face.

*Sesotho:*

Jwalokaha le kgona ho bua ka VBS, ...

*English:*

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... corruption must not have a face. We also rejected the budget of Parliament, which is responsible for billions of rands.

*Sesotho:*

Ho tloha ka Pherekong ya 2021, Palamente e ile ya tjha.

*English:*

To date, we don't have a Parliament. The EFF, in our founding manifesto, once said let us relocate the Parliament to the administration buildings, so that we could costs, instead of having a legislation side in Cape Town and the administration in Tshwane.

*Sesotho:*

Ekebe re le Tshwane, re tseba hore re sebakeng se le seng, re boloka ditjeho ...

*English:*

... and give the money to the people who deserve it. Now, we cannot because you rejected it. Whether it is a separation of powers or not, you rejected it! We also reject this this budget, hon Chair, which also responsible to collapse our our language services. In South Africa, we have 11 languages.

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*Sesotho:*

Kaofela ha rona, ha re bua le batho ba bo rona, re tlameha hore batho ba Freistata ba re utlwe, ...

*English:*

... hon Badenhorst. When you are sitting there, you are not a Chairperson. Can you please call Mr Badenhorst to order?

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): You are protected, hon member. Continue!

Mof M MAKESINI: Thank you. So, we can't support this project because ...

*Sesotho:*

... ha e emele batho ba rona kaofela, hobane re tlile mona re kgethilwe ke batho ba mabatowa a fapaneng. Ha re bua, re tlamehile hore ba re utlwe hore re reng.

*English:*

The interpreters must be appointed, Chair, so that ...

*Sesotho:*

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... batho ba rona ba utlwe motho wa bona. Motho a Malamulele a utlwe batho ba hae ba mo emetseng sethaleng sa NCOP.

*English:*

So, on the issue of the Secretary to Parliament or the entourage on international trips, you cannot ...

*Sesotho:*

... le tsamaye le batho be mashome a mabedi, ...

*English:*

... while you are paying for their accommodation, their transport and their allowance. Unless you are going on a shopping spree. You need to trim down the international travel entourage.

*Sesotho:*

Ha ebe Spikara a tsamaya, ha a tsamaye le batho ba babedi. Ke hobaneng a tlemihile a tsamaye le batho ba leshome kapa ba mashome a mabedi.

*English:*

What are other people doing, because the speaker is the one who represents us in those countries? Chairperson, the EFF is

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also concerned about the House still insisting on having virtual sittings. I agree with you Chair or chairs, we need to minimise the issue of visual sittings. All of us must be here, because we are elected. We are permanent delegates. We are representing our people. Monday to Friday you must be here. Even if you have to work on a Sunday, you must be here, because the virtual platform is not effective, and it is not assisting our people.

The system also lacks transparency, raising concerns about the integrity and accuracy of voting outcomes. As the EFF we demand an end of virtual platform, and committee meetings must be physical. Chairperson, outside the walls of this Parliament, ...

*Sesotho:*

... ho na le batho ba emeng ba le bangata ba batlang mosebetsi, ba felletsweng ke tshepo.

*English:*

The issue of unemployment in this country is something, ...

*Sesotho:*

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... e ne e tlameha hore e etsa Maloko a Palamente a se ke a kgona ho robala.

*English:*

Our children and our brothers don't work while they have qualifications. Crime in this country is very high. Some of us need to make sure to have mechanisms in place so that we can fight crime.

Gender-based violence is an issue, ...

*Sesotho:*

... e sa re robatseng.

*English:*

Last week in Welkom, in Matjhabeng, we lost a young lady,

*Sesotho:*

... a bolailweng ke monna ya meharo. O ile a mmolaya hobane a ikutlwa ekare o na le tokelo ya hore a ka mo pata, ...

*English:*

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... because me do not value us as women. So all of us combined in this House, we need to speak very harsh on the issue of gender-based violence, because ...

*Sesotho:*

... ha ho na motho a nang le tokelo ya ho re bolaya re le batho ba bomme.

*English:*

They also kill our boys.

*Sesotho:*

Le bontate e ba mahlasipa! Kaofela ha rona, ha re bueng, re bue ka tsamaiso ya tlhekefetso ya bong ...

*English:*

... because it is a problem. The numbers of women who are not working is also very high.

*Sesotho:*

Bomme ba nang le mangolo a thuto ke batswadi ba se nang balekane, ba tshwere malapa, empa ha ba sebetse.

*English:*

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So, the people of the Free State, Deputy Chair, ...

*Sesotho:*

... ba kopa lefatshe hore bomme ba kgone ho itshebeletsa.

*English:*

The people of Mpumalanga, ...

*Sesotho:*

... bomme, ba kopa lefatshe hore ba kgone ho itshebeletsa.

*IsiZulu:*

Omama baKwaZulu-Natal eNquthu bacela umhlaba khona bezokwazi ukuzisebenzela.

*English:*

I can call all the provinces, in all the municipalities, ...

*IsiZulu:*

Omama bacela umhlaba khona bezokwazi ukuzisebenzela bondle abantwana babo.

*English:*

They don't want grants.

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*IsiZulu:*

*Uma sibanikeza umhlaba, bangasisbenzela. Izibhedlla ezifana ne- Mofumahadi Manapo Mopeli ...*

*English:*

... Hospital in Qwaqwa, last week, a patient died because there were electricity cutoffs. The generator was not working. This example of Manapo Hospital in Qwaqwa is an example that affects all of us in our hospitals.

*IsiZulu:*

*Omama bahlala ezithulwini e-East London e-Frere Hospital beyoteta baze babelethele eziggikini kodwa sibe sinodokotela, abavele e-Cuba, abahleli emakhaya abangasebenzi.*

*English:*

Why did the government take students to Cuba institutions,

*IsiZulu:*

... abantwana babasa e-Cuba esikoleni babatholisa iziqu, ...

*English:*

... and the next thing they do not place them? Last year, we also raised the issue of the backlog of Bills, ...

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*IsiZulu:*

... uSihlalo akhulume ngazo.

*English:*

There is a huge backlog of Bills in this House, because ...

*IsiZulu:*

... abantu abasebenzayo ...

*English:*

... at the Bills Office, in this Parliament, are only four!  
So, four people cannot cater for all of us, being 400 Members  
of this Parliament. I think they also need to fill those  
vacancies, so that at least ...

*IsiZulu:*

... umsebenzi ukwazi ukwenzeka ngoba sizele ukuzobeka  
imithetho hhayi ukuzoseka isabelomali engakhulumi ngezidingo  
zabantu bakithi ...

*English:*

The infrastructure is a problem in our municipalities. Our  
municipalities are dysfunctional. And, ...

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*IsiZulu:*

... inkinga ekhona noMcwaningi-Mabhuku Omkhulu ukhulumile wathi ...

*English:*

... 73% of the municipalities in the Free State are dysfunctional. They don't submit financial statements. These are the issues that we must raise and ...

*IsiZulu:*

... sikhulume ngazo.

*English:*

Parliament is failing also in its constitutional mandate to hold the executive accountable. They are not our bosses! Members of the executive must come to the committee to be empowered by us, because we are representing our people.

*IsiZulu:*

... masingabayekeli ...

*English:*

When we raise issues, we are not, ...

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*IsiZulu:*

... asibancengi, senza ukuthi sibakhumbuze ngzibopho zabo ...

*English:*

So, they must be capacitated and be supported. [Inaudible.]

... Western Cape is part of South Africa. I never thought that the Western Cape ...

*IsiZulu:*

... inoHulumeni wayo ophila ukudla ne-GNU yethu ngoba bayingxenye ye-GNU.

*English:*

So, the Western Cape is part of South Africa's nine provinces.

So, they cannot say, "Where we govern, we govern better." The GNU is part of the ANC.

*IsiZulu:*

... nihluleke nonke ...

*English:*

... including the DA in the Western Cape, in Khayelitsha. The legacy of this House is in Parliament. We are still struggling

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with the aftermaths of state capture of scatter, and to also to behold the executive accountable.

*IsiZulu:*

Bonke abantu abavelile ekuqhwagweni kwamadla ombuso mabaxoshwe bakwazi ukuthi bavalelwe emajele.

*English:*

Everyone must be arrested.

*IsiZulu:*

... phela umbiko usuphumile. Ngithi ngisho abantu be-VBS ... kunabantu kwi-VBS be-EFF abasejele ... [Akuzwakali.] ... be-ANC ...

*English:*

... including the deputy chairperson of Limpopo, is one of the people ...

*IsiZulu:*

... obehamba ... [Akuzwakali.] ...

*English:*

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They have no one from the EFF! If you have, go to the nearest police station and report the criminal matter to the police.

[Inaudible.] ... 20 years, they did not offer anything to the people of South Africa. It is our responsibility to make that sure we capacitate this Parliament and the seventh administration. We must capacitate SOEs, so that ...

*IsiZulu:*

... uma benza bazi ukuthi ...

*English:*

... what is expected from all of them. We must also make sure that we follow up on wrongdoing that is exposed by Chapter 9 institutions like the Auditor-General. Wrong doings in municipalities, ...

*IsiZulu:*

... mazilandelelwe. Makayeka umuntu ukuthi ubeye e-East London eyokwenza ... CFO ... [Akuzwakali.] ... niyamsusa kusikhundla ... [Akuzwakali.] ... nimbalekisela ...

*English:*

Then, you think we will keep quiet. The people ...

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*IsiZulu:*

... abenze izinto ezingalungile ...

*English:*

... must not be appointed.

*IsiZulu:*

Amasela kufanele alandelelwe, asukelwe.

*English:*

Deputy Chairperson, I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage all structures of EFF to continue to work for the organisation. We invite them all to the 11th anniversary, where EFF will be celebrating the 11th anniversary in AR Abass Sports Ground in Kimberley, on 27 July 2024. As the gallant movement of the economic emancipation, we will be turning 11 years. You are warmly invited. The GNU, you are warmly invited.

*IsiZulu:*

Wozani nizobona uHulumeni wakusasa ukuthi uphethwe kanjani. Ukhulile umbutho wethu. Siyanithanda. Hambani niyosebenza.

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Mr B J FARMER: Hon Chairperson and hon members, good afternoon. When I was sworn in as a member of the NCOP on Saturday, 15 June 2024, I was a cancer patient. However, on the day after the President's inauguration I had an appointment with my oncologist. On arrival at the office, he said that on the day I was diagnosed, 15 April 2023, my blood test had shown my prostate specific antigen, PSA, reading to be 9,6, which was very high and led to me being diagnosed with cancer of the prostate.

However, the blood test that I have done that morning showed my PSA reading to be 0,03. That is, the treatment that they have prescribed that I underwent worked and therefore I am healed. They however want to monitor me every three months. To me that was the hand of God's manifesting in my life. I do not have any issue with hon members and their different belief systems. For names they may call their gods, but my God is called The Great I Am.

Hon Chairperson and hon members, I am convinced that we were put here for a reason. I know for a fact that I am healed for a purpose and therefore the rest of my life I will be on borrowed time. I have no shadow of a doubt that this Seventh Parliament is directly intervened by God. To me the fact that

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we now sit with a government of national unity, GNU, is a clear proof of this intervention. Who of us would ever have imagined the situation where the ANC and the DA govern together? Only God can have such things worked out. Clearly, the Seventh Parliament's term is a special one. It is for us to decide how we would make it work. It was once said that whether our government fail or not, it is determined by the way the vulnerable is treated.

Hon Chairperson and members, please, allow me two examples. The first is of Joshlin Smith. It is a case where it is alleged that her mother sold her for an amount of money. This case is still before the court, and hopefully we will hear the truth at some point. But our prayers remain that she will be found in good health. The term that comes up a lot in this instance is human trafficking. I however would call it human farming where children are conceived to be sold for a profit. Whatever the terminology but it remains an indictment on our previous Parliaments and governments that allowed such evil to happen to our children in our country. For me, that should not be allowed to happen anymore going forward.

The second example is that a couple of days ago I saw a video on *TikTok*, where a black young male is assaulting his

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grandmother. What angered me the most about this incident is that the person taking the video is not intervening. How can it be possible for such an incidence to take place in front of us and nothing is done? Even if one believes that that boy is arrested and brought before court, what is the worse that will happen to him? He will most probably get a fine for common assault. But if I was present and knock some serious sense into him, I would have got a heavier punishment in court. Surely, is that for us to call ourselves hon?

In this Seventh Parliament this can never be business as usual. It should be us striving to change the plate of our people out there. Are we happy to live this lavish lifestyle of hon, and continue the many old ways of the previous terms? Or are we the chosen ones to bring real change to the lives of our people from a single mother who have to leave her kids to go to work because she has no one else to rely on and hope to God that her kids would be safe when she returns, or the men, women or kids that sleep under a card box while temperatures are at their lowest level? [Time expired.]

*Sepedi:*

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Moh R MOLOKOMME: Mohl Motlatšamodulasetulo, e re ke tšee sebaka se ke dumediše Modulasetulo wa Lekgotla la Bosetšhaba la Diprofense ...

*English:*

... the Chief Whip of the Council, hon House Chairpersons of Committees, hon permanent and special delegates of the NCOP, guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am standing here, I am not the House Chairperson responsible for member support and international relations. I am standing for him due to ill health. So, I guess I will represent him well.

Hon Chair, the important task of this Parliament is to continue with the powerful legacy that Tata Madiba and Mama Sisulu have entrusted to us of creating a just and fair society for all. Our work as representatives of the people must reflect and stay true to Tata Madiba's legacy, including his unwavering commitment to progressive internationalism, justice, quality and nonracial world.

In 2002, Madiba made one of the most profound statements, I quote: "What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of

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others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

It is in this spirit that Parliament’s participation in international relations continues to consolidate and strengthen our vision of creating a better South Africa in a better Africa and just world.

We will in this House agree that these leaders set the foundation for us to build a new society out of ashes of the past apartheid regime that was isolated by the world and declared a crime against humanity.

As we just ushered to this 7th Parliament, we need to build on this momentum and pursue efforts of previous Parliament of prioritising our aspirations and values as enshrined in the National Development Plan of 2020.

In our efforts to deepen our participation in international relations, we are expected to be guided by the certain core objectives that reflects brought good practices in international affairs. These core objectives include but not limited to the following: Firstly, prioritising Africa advancing multilateralism establishing by lateral

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relationships for strategic reasons ensuring follow up at Parliament-to-Parliament level on the government's international involvement or engagement, particularly in Africa. Promoting and protecting human rights reinforcing democratic values and ideals advocating gender justice and upholding international law and justice.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, I believe that this core objectives have informed Parliament's approach and programs in the area of international relations. As participants in the global arena, we should participate in different platforms that enable us ... The matter is related to the wellbeing of the Pan-African Parliament, PAP, constitutes a strategic responsibility of this Parliament.

We wish to congratulate Members of our Parliament who were recently elected in this House to represent our Parliament at Pan-African Parliament. We are indeed happy that our parliamentary delegation is led by our own Chairperson of the House, hon Mtsweni-Tsipane. We wish you every of the best in your endeavor to deepen international engagement and participate in the PAP.

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On Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which is the CPA, our Parliament together with the provincial legislatures must continue to champion the cause to change the status of the CPA from a charity organization to an international body that will meet its diplomatic responsibilities.

Through the continuous participation of our Parliament in CPA, we will monitor and follow up the development of the transformation of the CPA pertaining to a change of its status.

In international relations, we are proposing the following: Firstly, finalization of the renaming of Parliamentary Group of International Relations commonly known as PGIR. The 6th Parliament took a decision to rename PGIR citing the inappropriateness of the word group. For such an important entity in Parliament, the PGIR is a multiparty strategic structure that is responsible for amongst others, providing policy directions on IR matters, ensuring the implementation of Parliament's agreed international relations policies and to advance the executive authority on international relations issues.

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The new name which was being recommended subject to approval by the Joint Rules Committee of Parliament is International Relations Advocacy Committee from the one that is named Parliamentary Group on International Relations. So, this one is the one that is proposed. This process is ongoing and should be considered and finalized as soon by the Joint Rules Committee. We will advocate for Parliament participation in international forum to find exploration in the policy priorities and strategic plan of the 7th Parliament.

We will establish the focus group on PGIR. The main purpose of the focus group is to ensure action is taken to implement the recommendations and resolutions of all the multilateral bodies Parliament is affiliated to. Each focus group will have a convener.

Composition of the parliamentary delegation, we plan to finalize this process after consulting with the Chief Whip.

On the establishment of friendship groups, the Freedom Charter states, "there shall be peace and freedom". Hon members, when we establish friendship groups, we will be prioritizing the country's that stood in solidarity with us in our struggle for freedom from our colonizers who promoted oppression systems in

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our African countries using plenaries to debate decisions and recommendations emanating from our international engagements. This is in line with the ANC Congress resolution calling for all elected representatives to communicate international engagements with the public. This is also confirmed by the Joint Rule 132(3) of the Joint Rule of Parliament, which enjoys Parliament through PGIR to receive report from Parliament delegations and reschedule a debate of reports in the House.

Under protocol and diplomacy training, through our international relations and protocol divisions, we will organize a training to empower members on parliamentary diplomacy. This will assist members to be well prepared as they engage and connect with the global communities through sharing their experiences to learn from others.

Under members support, most of the issues of members support are addressed through a forum called Members Support Forum, which is commonly known as MSF. The core function of the MSF is to serve as an advisory body to the executive authority of Parliament on matters related to members' facilities. It is through MSF that many of the issues of members' support shall be discussed, debated and resolved by making recommendations

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to consideration by the executive committees for decision making.

The MSF is coached by both House Chairpersons from NA and NCOP responsible for members' support. The forum is yet to be established, however, processes to establish it has already started.

In intensifying the membership support, we undertake to continues with the work started by the 6th Parliament, which is now its legacy work. This work includes, amongst others, the following: Firstly, continuous provision of members training and capacity building after the establishment of the MSF, which is anticipated to be concluded in the next quarter. Members will be represented with various types of programs offered by Parliament and the process to follow. This program will include, amongst others, the following: Formal academic programs, bursary schemes for Members of Parliament, legislative sectors, facilitated programs and others.

There are various activities that will also be included on the scheme, which is the tools of trade and then the wellness program of Members of Parliament will also be included on the program. As the ANC, we support this Budget Vote. Thank you.

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The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon colleagues, before we go on to the next speaker, I would like to welcome to the National Council of Provinces, the delegation from Angola where is led by His Excellency, hon Lourenco Joao. Your Excellency, we welcome you and your delegation. Thank you for being with us this afternoon. Thank you very much.

Ms T BREEDT: Hon Deputy Chairperson, when I was preparing for this debate, I found myself at a bit of a loss for words, because what do I say that we do not already know or are supposed to know. And I turned to my trusty friend, Google, to give me some inspiration. I found a quote that I think we need to heed. It says: "Parliament is more than procedure; it is the custodian of the nation's freedom." I quite like that.

*Afrikaans:*

In 'n politieke bestel soos die van Suid-Afrika speel die Parlement 'n instrumentele rol, om nie net die wette te skeep nie, maar om die belange van elke Suid-Afrikaner te verteenwoordig; om te verseker dat ons 'n ware demokrasie het; om toe te sien dat ons 'n oorsigrol speel en te besef hoe belangrik dit in Suid-Afrika is.

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*English:*

I am glad that you mentioned that we need to strengthen the accountability of the executive and strengthen the oversight of our work. I think that is what we are going to have to do.

*Afrikaans:*

In die Vyfde en Sesde Parlement het ek in die wetgewer en in die Parlement in die ander Huis persoonlik ervaar dat sekere komitees nie toegelaat is om ordentlike oorsig te doen nie en dat sekere LURe en Ministers beskerm word. Dit gaan in hierdie Sewende administrasie, veral in ag genome die Regering van Nasionale Eenheid, wat belooft om meer deursigtig te wees, belangrik wees, om 'n Parlement te wees wat die uitvoerende gesag verantwoordbaar hou teenoor die mense van Suid-Afrika.

Ons gaan nie wegskraam van oorsig nie. Dit gaan ook nodig wees om te verseker dat openbare fondse verantwoordelik bestee word.

*English:*

Martin Schultz said: "I am a man of Parliament, a man of the people. I am not a representative of the executive." And I think that each one of us here should remember that.

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*Afrikaans:*

In die verlede soos ons aan die begin van die jaar gesien het, was hierdie Parlement behoorlik met maratonsessies 'n worsmasjien, waar ons wette goedgekeur het, ...

*English:*

... for the sake of.

*Afrikaans:*

Ons was slegs 'n rubberstempel vir prosesse, en ons kan nie toelaat dat dit weer gebeur nie.

*English:*

My function in life is not to be a politician in Parliament, it is to get something done. And I think here I can agree with hon Ryder and hon Makesini, who said that we need to take away virtual sittings, be more in the House, be more present and more engaging. This is what we need to do.

*Afrikaans:*

Wat ook nodig gaan wees is om toe te sien dat ons orde en dissipline in hierdie Huis handhaaf. Ons gaan nie kan toelaat dat die Parlement 'n onbeheerde sirkus is, soos wat ons in die verlede gesien het nie, want ons is reeds vir die

internasionale gemeenskap 'n laughingstock [grap]. En ek skaam my dood.

*English:*

It is important that the decorum and dignity of the House is always upheld. The image of Parliament in the public mind should be one where proceedings, debates and discussions take place with a view to resolve issues through constructive and co-operative approach.

*Afrikaans:*

En laat my toe om net daar te sê ons kleredrag ook daarvan moet spreek. Sweetpakke dink ek nie val heeltemal in die dekorum van die Huis nie.

Verder gaan dit, in besonder, vir hierdie Huis belangrik wees om vir ons provinsies en ons munisipaliteite aanspreeklik te hou. Dit gaan belangrik wees dat ons die regte vrae vra, die nodige oorsig doen en verseker dat hulle funksioneer en hul mense dien.

Daar waar munisipaliteite onder administrasie is, gaan ons moet seker maak die situasie verbeter en dat die status quo nie gehandhaaf word nie. In die Vrystaat is daar enkele

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munisipaliteite wat beter af is onder administrasie, maar die meerderheid van hulle is nie.

Ons gaan ook moet seker maak dat die departemente nie so in silos werk nie, en dat hulle werklikwaar 'n kollektiewe benadering tot dienslewering volg. Ons taak is groot, maar as ek so deur hierdie vertrek kyk na elkeen van u, dan sien ek mense wat gereed is vir die stryd en mense wat gereed is om hierdie Sewende Parlement aan te pak. Ek dank u.

Ms J M ANDRIAANSE: Madam Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, hon Minister, hon members, and fellow South Africans, good day. We stand at a pivotal juncture in our nation's history. The allocation of our budget, which indicates our priorities, and their judicious distribution hold profound significance for our future, shaping the enduring legacy we leave to future generations.

The issue at hand is that the budget proposes drastic budget cuts, which will have a profound impact, particularly affecting the administrative work of our Parliament, though interestingly, staff costs remain the same. This is not merely a matter of fiscal adjustment, but a poignant challenge that strikes at the very essence of our parliamentary institution.

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The recent decision to curtail the budget allocated to the administration of Parliament resonates not as a mere financial measure, but as a direct assault on the bedrock of our operational framework, and a contravention of the fundamental tenets of democracy and good governance. Our oversight capability is being diluted, when it is needed most.

The proposed budget cuts threaten to undermine the effectiveness and efficiency of our parliamentary structure. Without a sufficiently staffed and supported workforce, we risk creating bottlenecks in our operations, hindering the legislative process, and eroding public trust in our governance capabilities.

Parliament was shut down over the Covid-19 pandemic, and the subsequent fire to the National Assembly has meant a much lower presence on the precinct, and therefore less reliance on administration. As we return to a semblance of normality, it is therefore counterintuitive that the budget should be now reduced.

Consider the restoration of Parliament, following the devastation of two years ago – a project initially estimated at just over R2 billion, now ballooning to R3 billion. With

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improved project management, rigorous oversight, and diligent scrutiny of progress and expenditures, substantial savings can surely be realised. These savings could then be directed towards preserving our administrative staff - the backbone of our democracy.

I ask members to look to the gallery up on my left. The crumbling ceiling that has resulted in a section of the gallery up there being cordoned off first fell over 18 months ago. The fallen fragments remain where they fell, and as you can see, there is a red strand of chevron tape put in place every so often. We are the people's government, yet the space allocated for our people for our people remains neglected. What better use could there be of our budget?

I implore my fellow Members of Parliament to grasp the gravity of this situation and unite in steadfast support of our staff. We must prioritise their well-being, safeguard the integrity of our parliamentary processes, and reaffirm our commitment to democracy and accountability.

Together, let us confront these challenges with unity and determination, rebuilding our parliamentary structure stronger and more resilient than ever. As we enter a new phase in our

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democracy, where a Government of National Unity is set to take South Africa forward, the oversight role of Parliament has become so much more relevant. This must be encouraged and nurtured and therefore, appropriately funded.

In conclusion, let us fulfil our duty to safeguard and nurture the pillars of our democracy. The time for action is now, and the future of our parliamentary institution and the livelihoods of our staff depend on the decisions we make today. I thank you.

*Setswana:*

Ke a leboga.

Mr J S MAJOLA: Hon Chairperson, hon Deputy Chair, Ministers present, Deputy Ministers, Chief Whip, MECs, Deputy MECs present, traditional leaders and religious groups present here, and members of the NCOP who are present physically and those who are on the hybrid platform due to the various unforeseen circumstances.

Chairperson, I am here to represent MK, which is led by the hon Dr Hlophe. Chairperson, I have had an opportunity before I participate on this debate, listened to several Vote debates

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for the various departments. Chairperson, there is one common factor from what I have gathered from those debates. Amongst others, was an outcry in terms of the increase in allocations.

Chairperson, against that outcry, I am looking in the mirror. The mirror, Chairperson, is the contribution from Parliament organs like the FFC, where they indicated as to what is our status in terms of our finances. Chairperson, looking at the mirror which does not lie, it indicates that our gross domestic product, GDP, growth is significantly below the National Development Plan, NDP, target of 5,4%. Reading from the statement, it indicates that it befits the outcry from the departments to increase their allocations because, as it has been said by previous speakers that our economy is struggling.

When it comes to the budgeting processes, Chairperson, that is the main principle one needs to consider, we must collect to increase the allocation in terms of expenditure. Well, [Inaudible.] ... from this situation, it is clearly that in this democratic Seventh Parliament, things will be the same. We will still have challenges with regards to the funding of some of our critical projects. Just to name a few ... well, the issue of the Social Relief of Distress grant ... due to the demand having been increased from R6,5 million to

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R7,8 million. So, we need more funds in terms of funding the Social Relief of Distress grant. Well, in the situation we are currently in, we will be unable to fulfill that mandate.

Chairperson, it teaches a lesson that speaking outside the Government of National Unity, GNU, that we cannot do the same thing and then expect different outcomes. I wanted to agree with some of the previous speakers when they say we need to relook at our policies and legislation that govern both Houses of Parliament.

Chairperson, we need to look at our mineral resources management as to whether it speaks to the struggling economic growth ... we need to revisit the issue of land management and redistribution for us to be able to respond to the demands that have been echoed in various Vote debates.

Chairperson, there are serious situations that South Africa is facing now. If we do not invest in our youth, therefore the future of this country is dead. Where is our youth today? Our youth today are on the streets. Our youth today are ...

[Inaudible.] ... they are on the streets collecting empty tins like cold drink or whatever to make sure that when the sun sets, they have something that will entertain them under the current circumstances.

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The Chairperson, on the issue of crime arising from the drugs, there are murders every day which have reached an alarming stage. Uncontrolled drugs in South Africa contributes to the high level of crime.

Standing here as a member of MK, we have a position with regards to this budget. We need not take a romantic approach regarding facing the situation that is impacting our economic growth. We need radical change. We need a radical approach in terms of reviewing our legislation and pieces of legislation that are covered in this country. That is our position, Chairperson, and we do not support the proposed and the tabled budget today. Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr J H P BRITZ: Hon Chairperson, hon Deputy Chairperson, the MEC, our esteemed visitors, fellow South Africans ...

*Afrikaans:*

... in sy gedig, *Voor 'n Onbekende Môre*, skryf die bekende Dr Mathews Phosa na afloop van die 1994 verkiesing:

*English:*

Boys and girls are back ...

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*Afrikaans:*

Wees beskeie in julle oorwinning:

dit is julle kans

om te maak of te breek

Kies julle kant

jy kan nie alles wees

vir vis én vark nie.

Groei saam in die gees,

help droom n visie.

Swoeg is die toekomssaad.

En julle wat juisself leiers noem,

maak toe julle monde

en open julle oë en ore

Voorwaarts –

sonder vrees of valsheid!

Hierdie woorde, geskryf deur 'n lid van die eerste Regering van Nasionale Eenheid, vervat gepas die situasie waarin ons, nie net as Sewende Parlement nie, maar ook as Suid-Afrikaners onself weer bevind in die huidige eerste Regering van Nasionale Eenheid. Die eerste Regering van Nasionale Eenheid is nie gebore uit die goedheid of guns van die ANC nie maar as gevolg van die wil van Suid-Afrika se mense. Ons wat onself leiers noem moet ons oë en ore oopmaak en na daardie wil

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luister. Daardie wil is duidelik. Ons sal saamwerk in die beste voordeel van ons land en al haar inwoners.

*English:*

A Latin maxim says, *quot homines tot sententiae*, which means as many men, so many opinions. Over the past weeks, we listened to many political speeches and political populist rhetoric. Political grandstanding is not enough of a contribution to advance the new path of constructive national dialogue and shared government.

I have listened to the hon Makesini from the EFF. I have listened to many inspiring and perfectly wonderful speeches in my life, but today that was not it. You haven't succeeded in pointing out shortcomings, failures, and wrongdoings of the past three years. Again, anyone can point a finger, and anyone can complain. But apparently, we should not hold our breath for you to come to the table with workable and conducive solutions.

In this Seventh Parliament, it can't be business as usual and I agree with the hon Farmer, but as pointed out by the Judge Zondo, state capture and looting of public funds were made possible by the fact that Parliament failed in its oversight

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role over the executive. This situation clearly needs to be addressed in this new term of Parliament.

Again, the NCOP as the upper House of Parliament is called upon to return to its defined constitutional duties and not to act as a mere rubber stamp. Hon Mmoiemang, we are not called upon to rethink this House's function, we are called upon to fulfil our constitutional responsibilities. And I trust you listened to what hon Ryder had to say in this regard.

We saw a lot of pomp and ceremony over the past few weeks. Military parades, blue light motorcades, and glamorous red-carpet events were held against the backdrop of millions of starving poor unemployed citizens. Parliament needs to radically revisit this kind of unnecessary spending of public money which holds no real value for our citizens. This does not aid building. We need to acknowledge the impact the fire has had on the operations of Parliament. The resultant inconvenience to the NCOP in that we are forced to meet on zoom platforms because of a shortage of committee rooms. This, of course, brings unnecessary increased expenses to this institution's daily administration.

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The DA will hold a very close eye on this evolving project, that it does not become a money cyphering pit like the Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance in Hankey, in the Eastern Cape - a project that started in 2014, costed more than R260 million, and is still not completed - much to the anger and disappointment of the residents.

Hon Mtshweni-Tsipane, your call for a radical shift to South African economy development is a breath of fresh air. Only an honest approach to acknowledge our economic situation will contribute to rebuilding the ailing economy. Hon Mmoiemang, I cannot resist, and with all due respect, you compressed the most words in the smallest contribution to Vote 2 that I have listened to today, but we have also listened to highly informative speech by hon Molokomme. That was informative, but not relevant to Vote 2 in Parliament.

Hon Deputy Chair, in conclusion, I want to say the following - the question posed by the DA remains: Do you want to build, or do you want to break? We are on a mission and that mission remains to rescue South Africa ... [Time expired.] ... within the Government of National Unity. I thank you, Sir.

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Ms J S MANANISO: Deputy Chair, let me stand on all protocols that were observed before. Before I start with my speech, one would want to commit that this is a budget for Parliament that wants to work for the people, and I'll be supporting it on those basis. Hon members, fellow South Africans, our visitors, our guests, I want you to note that there are some myths that one wants to clear with regards to today's budget. Firstly, hon Ryder I want to assure you that this Parliament is going to be responsive, and for it to be responsive we will need active citizenry, we cannot do it alone. So, be assured that whatever that has been done in the past in the Sixth Parliament wouldn't repeat itself. Hon Chief Whip, on your statement, you were very clear that no accessibility is unacceptable, and one would want to agree as adopting this budget, that indeed, we will ensure that there's accessibility in all the services that are provided by this government across the provinces.

Hon Swart, I want to assure you as well that additional or expanded ministries, it was not just for compliance, but to actually respond to issues that S Africans have said that we need to address them swiftly. So, just note that this expansion of ministries it's a new thing. It has never been done before. So, be assured that as this government of

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Government of National Unity, GNU, we are ready, we are capable, and we will address the inequalities of Western Cape. We are passing this budget noting that there are serious issues here in Western Cape. While most of you would like to paint a good picture about the Western Cape, we want to say inequalities need to be addressed. Hon members, hon Makesini. I just want to say to you, indeed, some of your part of the speech, you must actually bid the author because it was so irrelevant, it didn't speak to the Budget Vote 2.

On the issue of virtual meetings, hon members, I think as this House, we would need to look on that issue because it's being emphasised and deliberated that it is not for compliance or other issues that are underlying, but it is the fact that there's a challenge in terms of values. However, we would like to implore to the chairpersons that when they deal with their issues, they need to put this issue of virtual meetings or physical meetings at the forefront of their discussions. Hon members, what is critical about today's budget is that we will indeed execute our constitutional obligations in terms of consultations, co-operations and collaborations with all stakeholders, meaning that, we won't leave abafundisi [the pastors] behind, hon member of the EFF, we won't leave those who owns the stokvels, we won't leave all sectors, your youth.

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men, women, persons with disabilities, persons with albinism, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, or allied, LGBTQIA, plus, society, and those that have previously owned some taverns, Baba Peter, you must tell them in Eastern Cape, we would include them as we do our groundwork as these Members of Parliament.

Also, I want to say as well to the EFF, be honest to yourself, tell no lies and claim no easy victory. This GNU is just 30 days, and how you spoke as if it's been there. So, I just want to remind you we are just 30 days, and just go through the statement of intent in terms of what it is that you have actually contracted ourselves in, so that you are very clear in terms of what you want to say. Hon Farmer, I want to wish you well on your journey in beating cancer because I know that if you actually comply and do what it has been prescribed to you, you would really be a survivor, not a victim. So, I want to wish you well, as you will be actually dealing with that illness. However, again, I want to assure you as well and affirm that GNU it is an intervention. Indeed, our people have called for this GNU to say that they need all of us to work. I see hon Nzimande wants to be disruptive, but the GNU it's for our people, by the people, because they are the one who actually made us to be where we are, through their acts. So,

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your issues will be addressed. You were addressed that you bought a wrong ticket, I also want to say in this House that indeed, you bought a wrong ticket.

Hon Britz, your moving speech, indeed, in some elements has actually emphasised on my speech in terms of accountability that the NCOP, if we need to professionalise accountability, we are at the right space to ensure that we just do the just in terms of our oversight and as well our visit and our store target guide because I heard that some of the members say that this study tours are just for luxury, but one would want to say that South Africa is not an island, you need to go and learn, exchange, come back and do benchmarking so that you are able to be the best that you want to be. So, we would want to advocate that there should be increase in. Of this study tour, and there should be more members who are taken abroad, who learn in terms of best models that other countries have. Hon Adriaanse, I want to tell you that concerning these drastically cuts, we have actually committed ourselves to do more with less. So, I saw you pointed that there is this and that. I hope those who are in charge of maintenance, they would address that issue so that next time when we come here, it's not part and parcel of the debate of Vote 2, however, be part of Public Works and other departments. I want to say to

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you, hon members, more especially hon Majola, I hope you have noted how things have changed in this Seventh Parliament. I know you were not there before in the Sixth Parliament, you are a new baby, but you would learn in terms of how we do the things in this House.

However, I want to agree with your sentiments to say that we need to be a robust Parliament. I agree that we need to be a robust Parliament, however, we must not confuse populism and anarchy to being robust. We need to maintain the decorum of the House. House Chairperson, I want to say to hon Britz, working together we can dearly do more, and indeed, we can advance and enhance public participation of our communities, and leaving no one behind. So, we are on course, as this GNU ANC-led Parliament. Hon members, I want to go to my speech with the time that it's left, now it's 6h58, and one would just push swiftly. As I said, hon members, we are adopting this budget, hoping that our people will have job opportunities, and we want to request that when these opportunities are called out, please let ensure that there's minimum requirements, so that we actually make sure that we include our young people who just touch graduated as interpreters or as people who can offer services to our people. The people shall govern is one of the fundamental

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forces for the formation of the ANC. It is For these reasons that those elected to be hon members, should service their constituency and their socioeconomic interest.

During our canvassing campaigns, we lobbied. For people to vote for us, we made commitments to conduct our business better. Indeed, as this NCOP, we will make sure that we conduct our business better. The people are the source of power and the authority and the power we exercise, belongs to them. For Parliament to be a true tribune of the people, the work of Parliament should be organised in a manner that enables public representatives and committees to do more in our communities, within the parameters Parliament. Without adequate contact to the people and different sectors, we run a risk of being alienated from the challenges and impacting. Between. The ANC has always called for an activist Parliament due to its appreciation of the importance of having continuous engagement with the people to ensure that Parliament works with the people to resolve challenges.

Now, in this Seventh Parliament, we are called to be activist and be responsive, and we would be responsive. We call for strengthening of parliamentary constituency work through increased resources and support for offices by Parliament.

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Those who are new, there is a sector that we call a parliamentary constituency offices, actually, they are offices where our constituencies as Members of Parliament must get our services, that has to do with national, provincial and as well local issues. As Members of Parliament, when we are at those offices, we need not interfere, but we intervene at the best interest of our people. In the Seventh Parliament, we expect to improve the support. We must take civic education activities to our communities, and we must leverage digital technologies to create more channels for the public to participate. We must also have a mechanism to enable people in rural areas to be able to raise various matters that require the attention of Parliament. In the Sixth Parliament, we have had different experiences in the public participation processes when processing various Bills. Some of you you've been part of this engagement because you've been leading in other levels of structures.

Previously, we had poorer co-ordination of those meetings, where even relevant people didn't participate, but this time around, we are passing this budget to ensure that everybody is well-catered for and can participate. On the issue of multilingualism, will be promoted, hon Mathapelo, in this Seventh Parliament, to ensure that we don't leave anyone

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behind. We have seen previously that there are some jokes that are happening around about people who cannot speak English well, and we forget that English is not our mother tongue. We hope that in this NCOP, we're going to be teaching people that we all belong, and we are at liberty to speak our languages without any apologies. Hon Peter, we acknowledge that every time you speak, you speak with your mother tongue and at this Parliament, we will promote that. Hon members, we expect Parliament to ensure that adequate support is provided for those who are deaf as well, as you would know that last Parliament has passed sign language as the 12th language. It shows that we are moving swiftly in terms of addressing languages that were marginalised. The issue of being excluded will be the issue of the past if we are working together and ensure that we bring everyone before our businesses.

Hon members, one of the rights we should support to enable all hon members to fully participate in the work of Parliament effectively in assuring that Parliament has the required capacity to provide translation services and resources to meet the language needs of members. It is unfortunate that Members of Parliament can be humiliated due to lack of translation capacity and at a speech writing level in proceedings. Hon members, we are saying to those who have been victims of those

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who think that they can speak English better, that issue is the issue of the past. As this NCOP, we are coming to their rescue in terms of liberating them to use their official languages. Hon Members, we want to ensure that in this budget, the District Development Model, DDM, will fast-track with specific timeframes and realistic plans. We want to say, we can't forever plan in terms of what this DDM is. Where we are, we want to see execution, we want to see all the services cutting across from national, provincial to regional.

We want to say to our public representative, those who've been in holiday, they must know that it is called this NCOP, that we're going to make sure that there is robust oversight and accountability, and we will make sure we make sure that they work for our people as being members of this Parliament. As I conclude, I want to say to you, Deputy Chair, we wish you well, and keep on steering this ship when you are assigned to do so. I also want to say to our Chairperson, the future it's female.

*Setswana:*

Mosadi o tshwara thipa ka fa bogaleng.

*English:*

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We are here to work together to ensure that we better the lives of our people, and we just want to do the just as human rights, and as it's also in the Bill of Rights I thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON (Mr Govener): Thank you very much, hon Mangangiso for your debate and your kind words of support. It now gives me pleasure to call upon the Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Mtshweni-Tsipane, to close this debate.

The CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon members, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you all for participating in this Budget Vote today. I want to assure you all, hon members that I have taken note of all the issues that you have tabled in this House, which will indeed assist us as the NCOP to begin to crystalise our priorities for the seventh dispensation. Today's deliberations clearly illustrate that there are a wide variety of policy areas which are all important to the constituencies we serve. There is no shortage of ideas and proposals, however, the strategies for implementation - particularly in so far as how we give expression to the constitutional mandate of the NCOP - must be arrived at through consensus amongst ourselves.

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The National Council of Provinces stands as a beacon of transparency, collaboration and inclusivity. It is through the active participation and engagements of all permanent delegates that we can work together to achieve our shared goals and objectives. In the Seventh Parliament, we have to strengthen our role in oversight, tracking, monitoring and impact assessment. The people of South Africa have spoken, and their message is very loud and clear. Through their votes, they want us as various political formations to set aside our political differences for a common goal of our nation.

With regard to international relations, we must also ensure that we prioritise the establishment of the Parliamentary Group on International Relations, commonly known as the PGIR. This will enable us to ensure that we process all international forum reports whilst remaining aligned to the national interest. Through this budget, we must ensure that we identify gaps and areas that need strengthening in the capacitation of members. This will ensure that we address the issues relating to the training and capacitation of members of the NCOP.

Thank you for your dedication, commitment and unwavering support as we navigate the complex cities of governance and

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policymaking together. Together of can achieve great things for the benefit of our people. Be rest assured, hon members, each suggestion is duly noted, and will carefully be considered as we work towards crafting, comprehensive outreach programmes for this esteemed House. As we navigate the complexities of government, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to serve the interest of our people with integrity and diligence. Together we have an opportunity to effect positive change and a legacy that reflects the values we hold so dear.

We must also acknowledge that Parliament's budget is not nearly enough to enable us to function more effectively as the arm of state. We must also ensure that consistently engage the Minister, including Treasury, to ensure that Parliament's budget is equivalent to the broad and overarching mandate we are expected to implement. Given the rich and impact of the Parliament's programme sector, it is therefore imperative that we put mechanisms in place to effectively segment the unique contribution made to the work of Parliament through this programme. We must ensure that this programme is properly funded and effectively resourced.

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As I conclude, I want to state that your tools of trade are ready for collection every day including weekends at V8. Members are therefore encouraged to make appointments so that they can go and collect their tools of trade. Once again, I wish to thank all the delegates who participated in the Budget Vote debate, and we look forward to a productive and impactful Seventh Parliament. I thank you so much.

Debate concluded.

The Council arose at 16:29.