**Budget Vote 10: Public Enterprises
Hon. Inkosi EM Buthelezi, MP**

Honourable Speaker,

From the words of a wise philosopher (I quote): "God made everything good but it became evil by the hands of man".

This rings true when trying to describe the government of the ANC and its running of State-Owned Entities.

The Department of Public Enterprises’ mandate is to be the primary interface between Government and state-owned companies, and it provides input into the formulation of policy, legislation, and regulation.

However, Speaker, looking at this mandate - and what is currently happening to our SOEs under the leadership of the ANC - is quite the opposite.

Instead of the development of sound legislation to create a conducive environment in which SOEs can function, we find this in total disarray.

Instead of creating jobs in the various sectors, such as energy and transport and defence, all we see is SOEs such as Eskom, Denel and SAA working against the Department’s very own mandate.

Honourable Speaker, government must take a decisive action once and for all and privatise these entities - because we cannot face these very same challenges, year-in and year-out, for decades.

I can refer to a speech from more than 10 years ago on this Department and its mandate, and nothing has changed. We might as well recite the same speech every year.

While the Department itself is doing well in terms of key performance areas, we see that the entities under the Department are worsening. We as the IFP have - and always will - believe that privatisation is the key to unlocking the potential of these SOEs. A public-private partnership would better position state companies to flourish.

Honourable Speaker, it seems the ANC-led government is naive - everything proudly South African does not need to be owned by Government - hand over these state companies to private South Africans and see SOEs bloom.

Lastly, honourable Members, when we look at the issue of Eskom we speak high-level of how many businesses are affected by blackouts - but have we turned our attention to the poor South Africans living in rural areas?

Ordinary South Africans are suffering more, with the little food that is in their fridges in their homes going rotten. They have no insurance and they cannot make claims in order to recover what they have lost.

What we should be focussed on is quantifying the effects of Eskom's mess on people's lives and livelihoods.

Some can afford generators, but most cannot, therefore we believe that government should be defending the poor. Investors and big busines are important but we should remember that there is no buffer for the poor.

The ANC government has neglected our rural people, they do not focus on the poor and, to be frank, they are only recycling words to glorify being the oldest liberation party in Africa. Sadly, they are not living up to their standards and their own message.

Speaker, in conclusion - we can speak profound English about multiple strategies to fix SOEs, yet none of the strategies are helpful.

If the real problem is to be solved, the ANC should stop debating in this House, for the sake of empty debates with big words that mean nothing. The only way forward - if they wish to make meaningful change in the lives of all South Africans - is if they consider us, as the opposition, to be their mirror.

Upon response of the Minister, and commitments thereof, the IFP is still contemplating rejecting or supporting the Budget Vote.

I thank you.