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ANALYSIS OF THE 2013 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS AS IT PERTAINS TO WOMEN, CHILDREN AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

1. INTRODUCTION

President Jacob Zuma delivered his annual State of the Nation Address (hereafter SONA) on 14 February 2013, in a joint sitting by both houses of Parliament. The SONA covered various topics and set out the various plans that the State has in mind for 2013, as priority areas to focus on.

This analysis will assess how the address affects women, children and persons with disabilities in South Africa. It will do this by way of using the following four headings, as a method of assessing how the priorities of the Government would affect these three groups of people.

- Direct mention of either women, children or persons with disabilities;
- Indirect implications on plans that the SONA might have covered;
- Measuring any matters in relation to the 2012 SONA; and
- Implications for monitoring and evaluation and oversight

2. SONA 2013 – IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

In terms of implications for women, this paper will firstly highlight instances where the President made direct mention of women or gendered considerations in his address and secondly will provide an overview of the gendered implications of strategic priorities. It will highlight implications for monitoring and oversight in relation to women and will present an overview of progress made from the 2012 State of the Nation Address.

2.1 DIRECT MENTION

“Improving the status of women remains a critical priority for this Government.” This statement made by the President in his address reflects an acknowledgement that women are critical to the sustainable growth and development of South Africa. However, despite this acknowledgement it is disheartening that not more mention of specific interventions and programmes for women has been made throughout the speech. Explicit mention of women

was only made in relation to legislation and issues of violence. Although these are pertinent issues for women in South Africa, a holistic approach to gender equality is needed to ensure change in all aspects of women's lives, i.e. gendered considerations must be noted in all of the strategic priorities.

In terms of legislation, the President highlighted the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill which has been approved by Cabinet for public comment. The Bill seeks to legislate the equal representation of women in decision-making positions and criminalises practices that discriminate against women and girls. However, there is no call for the acceleration of this Bill or for its expeditious implementation upon promulgation. In addition, there are no resource commitments towards implementation. Other legislation mentioned in relation to women is the Protection from Harassment Bill – this is presented as a new mechanism to protect women, however this bill was enacted in 2011. The President also makes mention of the Domestic Violence Act as another measure providing protection to women, in particular those in domestic relationships. The last piece of legislation mentioned is the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill which is lauded as a measure to assist women and children who are victims of trafficking. Although the mention of these legislative measures for women's protection is commendable, it is with the implementation and lack of dedicated resources that the challenges in relation to these measures lie. Specific commitments in this regard are needed.

Insofar as combating violence against women is concerned, the President highlights that "violence against women is unacceptable" and needs to be eradicated. To this end he notes the establishment of the National Council on Gender-based Violence as a coordinating structure to advocate for the combating of violence. In addition, the President indicates that he has directed law enforcement agencies to prioritise cases of violence against women and children. Also an increase in personnel at Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units is mentioned. Again, as much as the mention of these mechanisms is important, this needs to be translated into practice with appropriate resource allocations. There is also no indication of an over-arching Government plan or framework to address the increasing violence against women. From the President's statements it would appear that the responsibility for addressing matters related to violence lies primarily with the Department for Women, Children and People with Disabilities (the department with the smallest budgetary allocation).

2.2. GENDERED IMPLICATIONS: OPPORTUNITIES MISSED OUT ON

As previously indicated the President highlighted that Government is still committed to the strategic priorities as outlined in his 2009 State of the Nation Address. However, how these strategic priorities will impact on or benefit women is absent from the 2013 address. Although it can certainly be inferred that proposed plans and programmes to increase growth and development in the country will also benefit women, it is imperative that specific commitments are made in this regard.

The following section will highlight key areas in the President's address where there are/were opportunities to draw attention to the gendered implications of the outlined strategic priorities.

Job creation and Economic Empowerment

The 2013 SONA makes explicit reference to the youth unemployment crisis and sets out measures that will be employed to address this. However, women are disproportionately affected by unemployment and no mechanisms to address the gendered implications of unemployment have been introduced. Mention is made of a clothing support scheme that will save factories and jobs in the textile and footwear industry. Given that women dominate this sector it is presumed that this development will impact positively on them, however little else is indicated insofar as women's access to the labour market and economic empowerment opportunities are concerned. The President also highlights that the revised Broad-Based Economic Empowerment Act and codes are being finalised, prioritising the development of black-owned enterprises and black industrialists – whether and how women will be considered and/or prioritised in these processes is unclear.

Infrastructure Development

The President outlines a number of infrastructure development projects throughout the country. Although these projects will certainly benefit women in the various communities where infrastructure development will take place, it is important that women be consulted in the planning process, as well as be provided opportunities for employment in these developments.

Education

The President makes mention of the fact that the adult education programme "Kha Ri Gude" and indicates that it has reached more than 2.2 million people. However it is not clear how many women have had access to and benefited from this programme, particularly those in rural areas who are disproportionately affected by education constraints. In addition, it must also be asked what opportunities exist for persons after completing the programme, either by way of further educational programmes or empowerment opportunities.

Health

The President highlights the increase in life expectancy and the decrease in infant and child mortality as key health achievements. However, there is no mention of maternal mortality and measures to reduce the high numbers in this regard. South Africa's 2011 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) report indicates that the country had a maternal mortality ratio of 625 per 100 000 of the population, which is an alarmingly high rate. It would therefore have been expected that the President would acknowledge and introduce measures to address the

incidence of maternal mortality. South Africa recently launched the Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA). Speaking at a high level meeting of the CARMMA in January 2013, President Zuma stated that Government had developed a national dashboard to monitor progress in the implementation of the strategy. The SONA provided a platform to express Government's commitment in this regard. This initiative was however not elaborated on in the SONA.

Land reform, women on farms

The SONA highlights land reform as an important development mechanism and acknowledges that there is a need to speed up and increase the number of restitution claims. It is not indicated how many claims have been finalised thus far, and it would be important to ascertain what the number of female beneficiaries in this regard have been, particularly in rural areas.

The President also makes mention of the need for peace and stability in the agricultural sector and notes that the living and working conditions of farm-workers should be improved urgently. Given that despite legislation, women's job security and tenure on farms is often dependent on the employment of their husbands, this is an important area to be addressed and requires targeted intervention.

2.3 PROGRESS FROM SONA 2012

In terms of the Jobs Fund that was introduced it is not clear to what extent women/ women-owned enterprises have benefited from the fund. The Jobs Fund has to date approved funding for 54 initiatives and these initiatives will create over 65 000 new permanent jobs in South Africa by 2015. In addition, these initiatives will also place 42 000 unemployed people in existing vacancies.¹ The Job Fund has therefore taken off since its introduction in 2011, but women's share in its benefits is unclear.

In the 2012 SONA the President announced that there had been a reduction in the number of serious crimes, when in fact crimes against women and children had increased. The incidents of violence against women and children has continued to increase in 2013 signalling that measures to protect women and children are not effective and require urgent intervention.

2.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT

The following areas/issues remain of concern for women and require intensive oversight by parliamentary committees:

¹ Statement on the launch of the third call for proposals by the Jobs Fund, 03 December 2012

Implementation of legislation and monitoring and evaluation of targeted policies and strategies

- There is no effective monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes, projects, etc. targeted at women, resulting in an inability to gauge their gendered impact. Implementation of legislation that impacts on the lives of women remains problematic and is often under-resourced.

Gender-based violence

- High levels of sexual and gender-based violence persist, suggesting that measures which have been put into place to combat this scourge are not effective.
- There is a lack of disaggregated data to gauge whether targeted programmes have impacted on the lives of women and how many women have benefitted from these.
- An important consideration for the Fourth Parliament is to effect a systematic process of monitoring of the implementation of the Sexual Offences courts and to what extent the increase in capacity has led to an increase in the amount of successful prosecutions.

Disaggregated data, gender-budgeting and programming

- It is important for Departments to release disaggregated data in order to ensure that programmes speak to the needs of women and that service delivery does not get compromised through ineffective inter-departmental co-operation or the lack of data. In addition dedicated funding and the consideration of gender in budget design and allocation is of paramount importance.

In terms of specific oversight areas it is therefore important that the Portfolio and Select Committees on Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities undertake to:

- Monitor progress and the implementation of legislation (such as the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill)
- Monitor departmental budgets to ensure gendered consideration and targeted expenditure in relation to women's empowerment
- Scrutinise government programmes, projects and policies to gauge whether they are mainstreaming issues of gender
- Request disaggregated data in relation to departmental strategies and targets

3. DIRECT MENTION OF EITHER CHILDREN OR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

3.1 CHILDREN

As a first, and very important, point in relation to the inclusivity of the SONA, the President mentioned that he consulted with grade 12 learners on what should be contained in his speech. Even though he found their views "very informative and enriching", the principles behind child participation should not be ignored in this instance. In terms of article 12(1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and article 4(2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (South Africa has ratified both these treaties); child participation is formed as a right and such participation should be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the children concerned. Similarly, section 10 of the Children's Act² contains a similar provision with regards to child participation. It is presumed that children who find themselves in their final year of basic education, is sufficiently matured and therefore the views that are solicited from them should be given a strong voice within the SONA. The President did not specifically state which parts of the SONA were solicited from children; however, one should acknowledge the value that the President sought from children in this regard.

The President noted that basic education was declared an apex priority of the Government in 2009 and a significant part of his address dealt with education for 2013. He also spoke to the powerful tool that the Annual National Assessments brought about to assess the health of our education system. As a result of this, it was found that subjects such as maths, science and technology can be improved upon. The plan for the Government for 2013 would be to establish a national task team to strengthen the implementation of these subjects. The establishment of such a task team should only but be a first point of call if we wish to see any improvement in the grades for subjects such as maths, science and technology. The Department of Basic Education should, at a minimum, budget more for resources necessary to improve the quality of materials available to ensure that maths, science and technology results are higher than what it currently stands at.

² Act 38 of 2005.

An important factor in relation to the improvement of quality basic education is the remuneration of teachers. The President stipulated that a "Presidential Remuneration Commission" will be established. The President highlighted that the mandate of this Commission will not only be to investigate whether the remuneration of teachers are sufficient, but will also base such findings on the appropriateness of the conditions of service within which teachers work. This development is welcomed, especially as it reinforces the Government's priority to improve the quality of basic education. The fact that it is a Presidential Commission lends a serious amount of weight and priority around the issue.

In relation to early childhood development services, the President only acknowledged the growth with regards to the rolling-out of these programmes. There remains a need to mention specific developments in this regard.

In the context of measuring the increased life expectancy in South Africa, the President mentioned that the family structure is increasingly becoming more stable, as parents live longer and are able to care for their children. Whether we should give credit to a stable family structure as a sole reason for increased life expectancy in South Africa is questionable.

The President also mentioned the achievements produced by the re-establishment of the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) Units of the South African Police Service. These units are vital, as they provide a specialised service for children who find themselves within the justice system as victims and in need of protection. The President mentioned that the FCS units secured a 70% conviction rate for crimes against children. This is indeed remarkable.

The Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill also received some attention from the President in his SONA. In this regard he stipulated the progress made with the enactment of the Bill. He also mentioned the protection this would provide to women and children.

Opportunities missed out on:

- The quality of basic education is important. However, it is also estimated that a large number of children are not accessing schools due to various barriers that exist that would obstruct them from accessing education. The Department of Basic Education estimated that 480 036 children that should be in school, are not accessing education services.³ There is a need therefore to ascertain why no appropriate measures has been put in place to address this.

³ See Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities country report* (2013) – final draft – paragraph 201. Combrinck and Wakefield estimate that between 6% and 15% of children live with a disability and that it is this group of children who face the most barriers to accessing education. Please see: <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-12-02-pupils-with-disabilities-ignored> (Accessed 18 February 2013).

- No plans were mentioned as to how the Government, in the form of the Departments of Social Development; Basic Education; and Health, will put measures in place to progressively implement and deliver ECD services to children who are currently not accessing it.
- In the context of the family structure, an opportune moment arose to address the situation of children in which the parental and family structure is not strong enough to care for these children. Multiple children enter the child protection system every day, and many of these children are placed in alternative care situations. Taking the current capacity that alternative care can provide into account, the plans in relation to strengthening the implementation of the alternative care situation in South Africa could have been addressed.
- Plans for strengthening or increasing capacity for FCS Units, as a key role-player in the investigation of matters related to the protection of children were not mentioned.
- No mention was made of how the implementation of the Combating of the Trafficking in Persons Bill will be any different or add new forms of practice in relation to the protection currently given to trafficking in persons in the Children's Act⁴ and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act.⁵ Progress made in the implementation of the relevant sections of these pieces of legislation, together with plans to improve practice, is required.

3.2 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Two important areas of concern for the rights of persons with disabilities appeared in the form of the five priorities for Government mentioned by the President. These are:

- Health
- Creating decent work⁶

However, within both these areas, no mention was made as to how developments and plans in these sectors would specifically address the affirmative action measures needed to ensure that persons with disabilities⁷ would benefit.

In relation to direct mention of the services for persons with disabilities in the SONA, mention was made of the National Summit on Social Cohesion. The President mentioned that this Summit focused on building a socially inclusive and caring nation. As the way forward the implementation of the programme of work in ensuring a national socially inclusive society, will be done in collaboration with the Social Cohesion Advocates, which consists of various

⁴ Act 38 of 2005. See chapter 18 in this regard.

⁵ Act 32 of 2007. See section 71 in this regard.

⁶ A further priority, in the form of education, can also be added, but we already dealt with this in the section on children above.

⁷ As a group for which health care services are essential and in which substantive equality need to be given practical meaning when it comes to the provision of jobs.

eminent persons in various sectors of society. At this stage it is still unclear as to what the mandate of the Social Cohesion Advocates would be and how they plan on including persons with disabilities more constructively within the broader South African society. There is no official website for this group of persons and the information contained on the Department of Arts and Culture's website is not sufficient to draw their mandate from. Therefore it is difficult to assess what the future plans and projections of the Social Cohesion Advocates would be, in light of the fact that very limited information is available in this regard.

3.3 INDIRECT IMPLICATIONS ON PLANS THAT THE SONA MIGHT HAVE COVERED

The following section focuses on the indirect implications of the SONA on both children and persons with disabilities.

3.3.1 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The President mentioned that three billion rand has been approved for the Job Fund, which will be used to create more jobs. In the 2010 SONA, the President introduced the Job Fund to address the scourge of youth unemployment.⁸ That said, the President also mentioned the importance of identifying measures to reduce inequalities in the job market.

Opportunities missed out on:

- In relation to the Job Fund and addressing inequalities, the President did not mention any concrete plans on how this Fund will be used and how the inequalities in the job market will be addressed. Even though this Fund was created to address youth unemployment, a similar Fund should have been created to address the unemployment of persons with disabilities or this same Fund could have been used for this purpose. Considering that the State, as a public employer, has not met its 2% target of employing persons with disabilities,⁹ strategies to address this need to be made clear. Youth unemployment is a major challenge grappling South Africa. However, so is the unemployment and un-employability of persons with disabilities.

3.4 CROSS-CUTTING MATTERS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

⁸ See Jacob Zuma *State of the Nation Address* (2010). Accessible on:

<http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2010/10021119051001.htm>. (Accessed on 20 February 2013).

⁹ The Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report for 2011/ 2012 stipulates that 0.8% of the entire workforce consist of employment for persons with disabilities. This is less than the required 2% target set by the State which was to be achieved by 2010. See Commission for Employment Equity *Annual Report 2011/2012* page 30. The report can be downloaded here:

<http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=174047> (Accessed on 25 February 2013).

The first cross-cutting matter that the President highlighted in his SONA was the impact of the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP is a key Government initiative to address the development of South Africa as a whole. A large part of the SONA was spent on addressing this plan. There are multiple development goals within the NDP that would see a level of growth and development in the disability and children's rights sector. As the President mentioned in his speech:

"The NDP contains proposals for tackling the problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It is a roadmap to a South Africa where all will have water, electricity, sanitation, jobs, housing, public transport, adequate nutrition, education, social protection, quality healthcare, recreation and a clean environment."¹⁰

The powerful nature of the NDP was emphasised when the President mentioned that "the activities of departments must be aligned with the National Development Plan."¹¹ It would be unreasonable to expect the President to outline how the NDP would improve the lives of children and persons with disabilities, as this was not the platform to engage with the substance of the NDP. However, as a point of reference for Members of Parliament, it certainly set be of value to know how the NDP would promote the livelihood of children and persons with disabilities, taking the development agenda into account.

The second cross-cutting matter the President highlighted was that of life expectancy. He mentioned that South Africa's life expectancy at birth by 2015 would be the same where it was during 1955. He then emphasised a study published in *The Lancet* journal by the Medical Research Council that showed an increase in life expectancy.¹² In relation to children, it is worthy of noting the significant decreases in infant and under five mortality. This is indeed an achievement worthy of praise. However, studies are to be conducted to investigate why there was a significant decrease in the number of infant and under five mortality and plans should be put in place by the Department of Health to ensure this trend. Certain disabilities might render certain persons more vulnerable to life threatening diseases. This should be viewed as a contributing factor to the current life expectancy at birth rates, together with others such as the scourge of HIV/ AIDS and tuberculosis. Therefore it goes without saying that the provision of health services to ensure prevention of life threatening diseases for persons with disabilities are put in place or strengthened, where it already is in place.

While addressing health related matters, the third cross-cutting topic that the President spoke of, was that of the National Health Insurance (NHI). Access to health care services is vital for both children and persons with disabilities. The President highlighted that the NHI Fund will be created in 2014 and that the Department of Health will accelerate and intensify progress in the pilot districts. In relation to plans for 2013, the President announced that at the start of

¹⁰ See Jacob Zuma *State of the Nation Address* (2013).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

the next financial year, 600 private medical practitioners will be contracted to provide medical services at 533 clinics within villages and townships in the 10 pilot districts.

It goes without saying that children and persons with disabilities will not be discriminated against in the provision of these services. However, it should be noted that in many instances in relation to persons with disabilities, it is also the lack of assistive devices that amounts to a great inconvenience in the daily lives of persons with disabilities. These devices, especially for those in the rural areas and villages, are costly. Therefore the NHI should also be implemented in providing resources and assistive devices, as opposed to just the recruitment of private medical services.

An important fourth cross-cutting matter that the President raised in his speech related to the main generators of crime. In this regard the President stated that: "The operations focussing on illegal firearms, stolen and robbed vehicles, liquor and drugs which are regarded as main generators of crime have assisted in crime reduction."¹³ These generators of crime are cross-cutting and do not discriminate against persons based on whether they are disabled or children. Perpetrators of crime, especially crimes considered to amount to a social ill, use illegal firearms, liquor and drugs to contribute to the commission of offences. No mention was made of any plans on how the main generators of crime will be dealt with to ensure a reduction in crime.

3.5 MEASURING ANY MATTERS IN RELATION TO THE 2012 SONA

At the start of his SONA, the President reported on progress made since the 2012 SONA. As far as the backlog in infrastructure related matters that would have an impact on service delivery for children and persons with disabilities in the North West province, the President noted that huge backlogs in the completion of electricity, schools, clinics, roads and water should be completed within the next two years. This is a key area of potential oversight for Members of Parliament.

The high level of unemployment is a challenge which has faced the Government since 2009. During the 2012 SONA, the President placed a large emphasis on this topic. He mentioned various initiatives that the State would adopt to tackle this crises. In this regard the President:

- Spoke of the Job Fund, where allocations of over one billion rand have been committed;
- Mentioned the R20 billion worth of incentives in terms of the Income Tax Act designed to support new industrial projects and manufacturing;
- The R10 billion to be set aside by the Industrial Development Corporation for job creation; and

¹³ Ibid.

- The fact that R1.5 billion was approved for 60 companies to promote job creation.¹⁴

Despite these initiatives, the unemployment rate has not lowered substantially since 2012. As mentioned above, the Job Fund was created to address the high numbers of youth unemployment, yet no incentives were mentioned to promote employment to persons with disabilities, as a “designated group” defined by the Employment Equity Act.¹⁵ This is somewhat unfortunate, as persons with disabilities are once again marginalised in the process of prioritisation.

A positive achievement mentioned by the President related to the building of new school premises. Here the President highlighted the completion of 98 schools by the end of March 2013, of which 40 will replace so-called “mud schools”. This is certainly a welcomed achievement in the realisation of the right to basic education, as enshrined in the Constitution.

3.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND OVERSIGHT

There are various important points which the President mentioned in his SONA that would be crucial for Members of Parliament to use in oversight exercises during 2013. Below follows a bullet list of plans by the Government, which requires a level of monitoring and evaluation and oversight by Members of Parliament.

DIRECT MENTION OF EITHER CHILDREN OR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- ***The establishment of a national task team to strengthen the implementation of maths, science and technology subjects areas.***

The President highlighted that this task team would be established during 2013. Important information regarding the establishment of this task team would be for the Department of Basic Education to draft a terms of reference that would specify more details regarding this task team. Details such as: (a) the mandate; (b) the term of existence, etc.

- ***The establishment of the presidential remuneration commission***

Similar to the task team on strengthening the implementation of maths, science and technology, the President highlighted the establishment of the remuneration commission for

¹⁴ See Jacob Zuma *State of the Nation Address* (2012).

¹⁵ Act 55 of 1998.

teachers. The President did highlight that the mandate of this commission would be to investigate whether the remuneration of teachers are sufficient, taking into account the appropriateness of conditions of service. This is a presidential commission; therefore the Department of the Presidency would be obligated to deliver the necessary details around the establishment and terms of reference for this commission.

- ***SAPS: Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units***

The President highlighted the achievement of the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit (FCS Units) in his SONA. He did not stipulate any plans to strengthen or increase the capacity of these Units. However, taking the scourge of gender based violence and violence against children into account in South Africa, it would be of necessity to increase the capacity of these units. Therefore the South African Police Service would have to firstly make provision for the strengthening and increase of these Units within their strategic plans for 2013/ 2014 and set clear targets with which Members of Parliament can perform oversight in this regard.

- ***Mandate of the Social Cohesion Advocates***

In his SONA, the President highlighted that the Social Cohesion Advocates consists of various eminent persons of different sectors within society. The inclusivity of persons with disabilities is vital to the function of an inclusive society. Considering that there is no public information on the mandate and functioning of the Social Cohesion Advocates, a duty would be placed on the Department of Arts & Culture to concretise the work of the Social Cohesion Advocates with clear goals and activities that they would undertake.

CROSS-CUTTING MATTERS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- ***The impact of the National Development Plan***

There is an obligation on every Government Department to align their activities and goals with those of the National Development Plan (NDP). Therefore an obligation would be placed on Members of Parliament to know how the NDP affects the Department which they oversee and

always frame their oversight questions on the development of services related to children and persons with disabilities in this regard.

- ***Life expectancy in South Africa***

The President mentioned that infant and under 5 mortality rates decreased significantly. The reasons for this decrease need to be established so as to ensure a trend in the decrease of infant and under 5 years mortality. Similarly, of benefit to persons with disabilities, services are to be put in place and monitored to ensure that life threatening diseases for persons with disabilities are responded to adequately and strengthened, where this is currently in place.

- ***The implementation of the National Health Insurance***

During the new financial year it is expected that 600 private medical practitioners would be contracted to provide medical services at 533 clinics within villages and townships in the 10 pilot districts, as part of the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI). The roll-out of these services would benefit children and persons with disabilities in these rural areas, therefore Members of Parliament should be equipped with the necessary plans on how the Department of Health will implement this first phase of piloting the National Health Insurance scheme.

MEASURING ANY MATTERS IN RELATION TO THE 2012 SONA

- ***Backlogs with regards to the completion of electricity, schools, clinics, roads and water in the North-West province***

In his 2013 SONA the President highlighted that there are still backlogs in the above infrastructural related projects in the North-West province. It goes without saying that the establishment of these services would benefit both children and persons with disabilities in ensuring that basic service delivery takes place. The President highlighted that these backlogs would be addressed within the next two years. It would therefore be the duty of Members of Parliament to firstly request a detailed plan of what has been done, what still needs to be done and timelines by which various outputs in this regard would be completed. Once this is done,

Members of Parliament would be in a better position to exercise oversight in the completion of these backlogs.

