

Speech by Comrade BL Mashile on the occasion of Budget Vote 5: Home Affairs

6 May 2015

Honourable Chairperson;
Honourable Minister Gigaba;
Honourable Deputy Minister Chohan; and
Honourable Members.

The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs met with the department on the 17th of March 2015 and also met with the Electoral Commission and Government Printing Works on the 24th of March 2015, to receive their briefings on their strategic plans over the next five years and relevant Annual Performance Plans for the 2015/16 financial year as well as their related budgets. The total budget for the Department of Home Affairs is R6.45 billion for the 2015/16 financial year inclusive of transfers to the entities.

Chairperson, the committee received briefings from Home Affairs, Police and Small Business Development last week Tuesday, 28th of April 2015 on violence against foreign nationals and related small business. After the presentation on the Government intervention by the National Joint Operational and Intelligent Structure (NATJOINTS), the committee resolved to support the interventions led by the President and condemned the violence in the most strongest terms.

We have noted that some interventions are yielding results in rounding up illegal foreigners, drugs and illegal firearms. I therefore call upon the department and related organs of state to speedily process the illegal immigrants to avoid overcrowding at Lindela Repatriation Centre. Call upon our people to engage on any challenge they come across within the communities. No to violence!

Honourable Members, I should indicate that the Department of Home Affairs is responsible for determining and recording the identity and status of all people living in South Africa and issuing of documents to affirm. This is done under two broad categories i.e. civic services and immigration services.

The Civic Affairs is the custodian of the National Population Register which contains the records of all citizens and permanent residents including changes in status such as marriages and deaths. Services to citizens include issuing enabling documents after their status is confirmed, verification of identity to government institutions, banks and other private sector institutions.

The Immigration Affairs determines the status and identity of foreign nationals, regulate immigration through permitting and movement control systems and provide consular services abroad. The branch also has inspectorate function responsible for enforcing the Immigration Act and its regulations. Added to this function is the processing and determination of status of asylum seekers and refugees. This is done within the prescripts of the AU and UN conventions.

The functions outlined above ensure that the prescripts of the Freedom Charter are enhanced, 'All shall enjoy equal human rights' and 'there shall be peace and friendship'. These enabling documents, enable citizens to access all rights and free movement within and abroad.

All this work, talks to four national outcomes i.e.

All people in South Africa are and feel safe
Decent employment through inclusive economic growth
An efficient, effective and development oriented public service; and

Nation building and social cohesion.

In line with the above, the establishment of the Border Management Agency to secure our borders, the cleaning of the population register, regulation of the immigrants and refugees will ensure access to rights and social cohesion will be enhanced. The registration of births within the first thirty days will ensure clean population register. This speaks to the core mandate of the department i.e. to secure identity and citizenship; to manage immigration securely and deliver services related to these critical functions of the state.

The department has a modernisation programme aimed at replacing outdated systems by paperless, integrated, secure digital platform. This includes life capture and biometrics technology to enhance security. This programme will deal a serious blow to corruption and fraud by reducing human intervention in the processes and systems.

The National Development Plan obliges the department to facilitate the acquisition of critical skills for the economy and also enable efficient, secure and managed movements of people. This is achieved by simplifying the applications for such needed critical skills.

Honourable Members. The Electoral Commission is conducting the Local Government Elections in 2016. We hope to fill the outstanding vacancy in the commission within the next two months. We congratulate the recent appointment of Mr Vuma Glenton Mashinini as a Commissioner. His knowledge on electoral matters will assist the commission to ensure free and fair elections. It is however important that the Municipal Demarcation Board completes its work on delimitation of wards in time for the IEC to complete voting districts determination.

On the other hand, we have a professionally run and secured state printer responsible for the printing of most government documents inclusive of our Smart ID cards. Since the Government Printing Works is mostly self-financing, it is important that it secures business even outside government to ensure sustainability of finances and human resources.

Honourable members, we appreciate the strides that the department has made on civic affairs over years to turn its challenges around. However to attend to some of the issues that creates discomfort in the country the committee has made recommendations to address these. Some are the following:

Department of Home Affairs to ensure that personal information of citizens is safe in the applications of Smart ID cards through the banks and Post Office.

Department of Home Affairs to improve the capacity of the inspectorate to be able to discharge their responsibilities, in respect of the non-compliant foreign nationals.

Department of Home Affairs to secure the vetting of its officials by State Security Agency.

Electoral Commission to work closely with Municipal Demarcation Board to finalise the delimitation of wards in time for the 2016 Local Government Elections.

Electoral Commission to pay attention to the availability of infrastructure for elections and functionality of the future technology particularly on the new barcoded scanner units.

Government Printing Works to remain ahead of criminal syndicates with regard to security of our documents.

Government Printing Works to find innovative ways to retain and sustain staff.

Chairperson, I believe that attention to these recommendations will address some of the weaknesses and enhance improvement in the performance of the department as a whole.

Chairperson, the Freedom Charter enjoins all of us to ensure that South Africans enjoys equal rights. These rights can be enjoyed by citizens who are safe and feel safe. This budget through the Civic Services, Immigration Services, Electoral Commission as well as Government Printing Works is achieving this intent/objective in a big way. Only the ANC-led government has the capacity to bring

better life to South Africans.

Therefore, the African National Congress supports this Budget Vote 5 and move for the adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs on the Annual Performance Plan and Budget Vote 5 of the Department of Home Affairs dated 21 April 2015.

I thank you

- See more at: <http://www.anc.org.za/caucus/show.php?ID=3908#sthash.9gi9MxTl.dpuf>