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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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WEDNESDAY, 1 MARCH 2017

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The House met at 15:03.

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

Question 1:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker and hon members, as we all know, the issue of the national minimum wage was raised by the President in the 2014 state of the nation address when he asked the Deputy President, together with social partners, to try and address this matter and address, really, the issue of income inequality in our economy and our country.

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Following those fairly lengthy deliberations - a number of Members of Parliament kept asking when it would be finalised, and we kept saying that it took the Germans eight years to arrive at a national minimum wage - it took us just over two years and, as we all know, the social partners have agreed to the introduction of a national minimum wage and to peg it at R20 per hour. At the very least, this will be implemented with effect from 1 May 2018.

The agreement was signed by all social partners, except for Cosatu. Cosatu had been a very active participant in the whole process of negotiation but, at the end, they said they have their own reporting processes that they need to abide by, and they requested that we give them an opportunity to go and report. At the same time, they said we should go ahead and sign the agreement. When I asked the president of Cosatu what this was for - whether it was for consultation or merely reporting back - he informed me that it was for reporting back. We do hope and trust that they will, post their central executive committee discussions, be able to give us an indication of where they stand.

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In the end, on a monthly basis, the amount of R20 per hour for a 40-hour week translates to R3 500. For those who work 45 hours per week, on a monthly basis, it comes to R3 900. The introduction of this wage at this level will have, in our view, a significant impact on the lives of roughly 6,6 million South Africans who currently earn below R3 500 per month. When research was done on this, it indicated to us that the majority of our people earn well below R4 000 per month. These are people who are employed. You could then say that we have a working poor. Several measures were agreed to by the social partners to ensure that the introduction of the national minimum wage does not have negative effects on the viability of businesses, as well as on employment.

Businesses unable to afford the payment of this minimum wage will be able to apply for an exemption for up to 12 months at a time. In doing so, they will have to give reasons why they are not able to do so. Any fragile sectors having difficulty in complying with the national minimum wage would be considered for assistance within available means, including through incentives.

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A national minimum wage commission will be established. One of its tasks will be to recommend annual adjustments to the level of the minimum wage. The minimum wage will also be reviewed regularly by this very commission and, in doing so, it will also take into account the impact of the level of the minimum wage on employment, poverty, and inequality, as well as economic conditions at the time. In addition, as it is the practice in the development of new legislation, government will conduct, on an ongoing basis, a socioeconomic impact assessment, firstly ahead of the finalisation of a Bill on the national minimum wage.

The introduction of this minimum wage for people who are experiencing income inequality is quite historic. One of the social partners, a community representative, characterised this as a revolutionary development that sets the stage for a far more concerted national effort to defeat poverty. This came from leaders in the nongovernmental organisation sector who had been involved with us. Clearly, they want to get us on the journey of beginning the process of negotiating a comprehensive social security process.

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Not only will this wage significantly improve the income of nearly 50% of working people, but it establishes a foundation for progress towards the realisation of a living wage for all. Now, a living wage for all, clearly, is going to be the purview of our trade unions. They will continue the struggle for a living wage, but what we have done through introducing a national minimum wage is set a floor below which no South African should ever be paid. We are hoping that, when it is introduced, it will have an impact on income inequality, and it would lift a lot of our people out of income poverty and set us on the right path to have a living wage in the end. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. [Applause.]

Ms F S LOLIWE: Speaker, I would like to thank the Deputy President for the clear response. [Interjections.] The Department of Labour's budget for the employment of inspectors is minimal. What measures will be put in place to complement the department in monitoring the implementation of the national minimum wage? Thank you.

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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, the reason we agreed with the social partners that implementation should only be next year is to give the Department of Labour sufficient time to prepare for the implementation of the minimum wage.

This is so because we would like to see full compliance. This period is going to ensure that we reach out to employers and make as many businesses as possible aware of how the minimum wage is going to function and raise their level of compliance. At the same time, the Department of Labour is setting up a fairly rigorous and robust process within the department to monitor this. Now, the budgetary impact of it all will be outlined, I am sure, by the Minister in the coming year when she outlines her departmental budget.

We believe that we will be able to set up processes and a fairly robust inspectorate to ensure there is compliance throughout the economy. In the end, the national minimum wage will only really be effective if there is maximum compliance. We are talking to businesses to make sure that it should not be so much a matter of being policed; it should be a matter of them participating in

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all this on a compliance-driven basis. The pleasing thing is that they participated fairly actively with us in the negotiation to this. We had the various business organisations, and I am sure that, from now on, they will be talking to their members to make sure that, indeed, they do comply with this minimum wage. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr M S MBATHA: Speaker, I will give the question to the deputy president.

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Speaker, the question posed to the deputy president of the ANC was that the minimum wage was going to reduce income poverty. You will agree with me, Deputy President, that the biggest form of poverty characterising the majority of South Africans - the black majority, in particular - is the poverty of landlessness.

Yesterday, the ANC voted against expropriation without compensation. They voted against your President's suggestion that there should be appropriation of land without compensation. As part of that ANC-led Presidency, you say that there must

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expropriation without compensation. Parliament says that it must not happen. What is your view in terms of the expropriation of land without compensation? Should we pursue that as an agenda, as a means to dealing decisively with the landlessness and the poverty of our people, as it is being dealt with here?

I am asking you this question now because it is urgent, and you are only going to come back after three months.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. Don't motivate the question. Your one minute has expired. Hon Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Speaker, a number of factors drive poverty in our country. One of them is unemployment. Indeed, one of them is asset poverty - asset poverty that also involves the lack of property or landownership and other assets as well.

Now, when it comes to the issue of expropriation without compensation, the matter was actively canvassed in this House yesterday. I am not going to bore this House by going through the debate that was entertained here yesterday. I think the

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matter was well canvassed; it was mostly robustly debated. As much as I wasn't here because I couldn't be here, I looked at the television reports, and I saw how the EFF argued the case and how a number of other parties argued the case.

What should be said is that, indeed, the issue of land is still very central in the minds of many of our people. There is land hunger in our country. From the ANC's point of view, this is a matter that is being addressed robustly. The various programmes we have in place are addressing this matter, including policies that we have been implementing ever since 1994. We are a political party that subscribes to the rule of law. Right now, we have a Constitution that prescribes that land should be dealt with in a particular way.

The ANC is pursuing to implement what is set out in our Constitution because we subscribe to the rule of law. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Madam Speaker, through you to the Deputy President: What is very clear is that the R3 500 minimum wage

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that we are introducing will certainly not be enough to address the inequality in our society. For hundreds of years, some of our employees, including farm workers who have been exploited, have been earning a minimum wage.

This being the first step in the direction of trying to address inequality, would you also consider at some stage very soon to introduce beneficiation, particularly for farm workers so that that they enjoy housing, they enjoy pension funds, and they enjoy medical aid by these employers who have exploited them for such a very long period of time?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, I agree that the R3 500 is a type of wage that is not going to wipe out poverty in our country. In fact, in arriving at this figure, we had to have a very good balance. The issue that faced us and that faced the panel that advised us was whether to peg it so high - maybe R8 000 or R12 000 - and they knew, and we also knew that if we pegged it high, many people would lose jobs. However, at the same time, we knew that if we pegged it far lower than the R3 500 or R20 per hour, it would not have an impact.

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So, R20 per hour was the balance that could be achieved and found at this point in time. I repeat: R3 500 or R20 per hour is not a living wage, but everyone has recognised it as a very good start towards addressing the issue of income inequality in our country. Admittedly, a number of people, as I said, in our country are earning way below that right now. You will not believe that our research told us that even workers involved in logistics in urban areas are earning as little as R6 per hour. There are still many people whose income right now is still way, way below where this R20 per hour is. So, the R20 per hour is beginning to resonate with a number of people. Even those people who dismissed it are beginning to see that it is a start, and it builds a foundation upon which we can finally end up with a highly paid working population in our country.

Coming to the issue of beneficiation, particularly for farm workers, as you call it, clearly we want to get to the point where farm workers earn a decent wage. In fact, they should earn a living wage. They should be able to have medical aid. They should be able to have all the benefits that working people in other sectors enjoy.

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Coming to farm workers, you will, of course, be aware of some of the programmes and pilot programmes that Minister Gugile Nkwinti has embarked upon. He has reached agreement with a number of farmers to convert workers from just being mere farm workers to being partners in a number of farming operations.

[Interjections.] When it started, a number of people opposed this. More and more farmers are now embracing this, and this is spreading. It will soon spread like a wildfire. What it will end up with is that we will have workers who work on the farms being treated with dignity, who, even if they have lost their jobs, will not be railroaded off the farms, something that currently still happens, where they will be paid decent wages, and where their conditions of employment will be a lot better than what they are now.

With the national minimum wage, hon member, we are on a roll - we are on a roll to improving the conditions of employment, as well as income of many workers in the South African economy. We need to embrace this and make sure that it happens and is fully implemented. Thank you very much.

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Mr I M OLLIS: Speaker, through you to the Deputy President: We are all concerned when we see the plight of poor people sitting on the road, people who are struggling. However, twice during the December question session here in the House, you stated that there will be job losses as a result of the imposition of the national minimum wage, and you undertook to engage with Nedlac on practical measures to limit those job losses, other than the farming sector and the domestic work sector, which we already know about. Subsequently, Nedlac has accepted the national minimum wage proposals.

This leads me to ask you the following: Could you tell us what practical measures you have agreed at Nedlac to limit or significantly reduce the job losses when the national minimum wage is implemented?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Speaker, the panel that advised the social partners, the committee of principals, has been engaged to look more closely at this matter.

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Initially, they did say to us there may well be job losses, but the information at hand is not definitive. They had looked at a number of international studies as well. The World Bank and a number of others did say that yes, sometimes, the issue of job losses is exaggerated, and sometimes it does not eventuate, as it has been supposed. We have asked them to look at this matter very closely and come back to us to tell us what the eventualities could well be.

In our discussions, we have also looked at a number of proposals on what can be done to mitigate job losses. Of course, one of those is exactly what I said earlier - that businesses can come forward and apply for exemption. If a business is not able to pay the minimum wage, they will be allowed to come forward and say that they are not able to pay the amount, and they will be granted an exemption. [Interjections.] However, they will have to outline precisely what their difficulties are, so that is the first one. We are also going to look at vulnerable sectors of the economy where incentives could well be paid as well.

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We are also going to look at whether there can be tax breaks for some of those types of employers. We are also going to look at a number of other measures and interventions. Let me just assure members that we are not flying into this blind. [Interjections.] We are not flying into this blind; we are taking fairly calculated positions to make sure that we do mitigate the possibility of job losses.

Here is the real issue - the real issue that faced us was whether we continue to countenance income inequality or whether we do something that is quite revolutionary. We opted for a revolutionary stance but, at the same time, we said that to the extent that there will be job losses, we are going to put in place a number of measures. One of the important ones would be getting an exemption, an exemption that will last for a year and, if after a year your business still cannot afford it, you are allowed and entitled to come back and say this is how my business is operating. So, vulnerable businesses, and businesses that are in difficulty, will be able to come forward.

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In the end, what we want to prevent is mass job losses. With this agreement amongst the parties, we are certain that we are going to mitigate massive job losses. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Question 2:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Speaker, the deployment of the SA National Defence Force is solely within the purview of the President of the Republic of South Africa, in his capacity as the head of the executive and also in his capacity as the Commander in Chief of the SANDF. [Applause.] Now, section 4 of the Powers and Privileges Act sets out when security forces may be deployed.

In that regard, the decisions of this nature are often communicated by one branch of the state to another, and in doing so, they are not communicated through the Leader of Government Business, nor is there any requirement in law or in the rules of Parliament that they should be so communicated. This year, as in previous years, the issue of the deployment of the SANDF personnel, was transmitted by letter from the President to the

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presiding Officers. As a result, the Leader of Government Business does not get involved in such matters.

The letters, historically, includes the reason for their deployment; the numbers of officers that are deployed and the period for which they are deployed. These letters are a matter of a public record. They are out there in the public. Thank you very much.

Ms D KOHLER: [Interjections.] ... that is outrageous!

The SPEAKER: The next speaker is the hon Meshoe. Oh! I'm sorry. You know, we don't normally write the first person. So, I missed out on the Leader of the Opposition, hon Maimane.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker, thank you very much, Deputy President. I think we can all agree as the fellow South Africans that the answer you've just given to say that you have no role in the deployment of the SANDF to the parliamentary precinct on Thursday, 9 February 2017, is actually a key departure from Section 91(4) of the Constitution that enjoins

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you as the Leader of Government Business that you are directly responsible for the interaction between the executive and this particular Parliament.

Furthermore, I think that there is a critical issue of the fact that we have seen the chaos that is been ensuing in the state of the nation addresses that has taken place. We now have the President that has violated the Constitution and we have a Speaker that has violated the Constitution. So, Deputy President, what I would like to know ... [Interjections.] Speaker, I'm sorry, I can't speak!

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Order, hon members! Please allow the hon Leader of the Opposition to finish! Hon members, may I appeal that you allow the hon Leader of the Opposition to finish! Please proceed, hon Maimane!

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Thank you! So, Deputy President, every year we see the increase of the use of police; the security agency and now the army coming to the state of the nation address to intimidate the Members of Parliament, members

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of the media and the ordinary South Africans. So, I would like to ask, but before I ask, I think that you and I can agree that this should remain the people's Parliament and not the executive's Parliament.

In the light of that, Deputy President, in your role as the Leader of Government Business as I've outlined, what steps will you take to ensure that firstly, the executive never again abuses the state security apparatus to intimidate Members of Parliament and the media? Secondly, that Parliament, in fact, returns to its place as a separate and an independent arm of government? Do you, in fact, support the actions of the executive and those of a President? I thank you, Speaker.

[Applause.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, I would like to say that, where I agree with the Leader of the Opposition is that, when he does speak and pose his question, he should be given an opportunity to do so in peace and without much disturbance that I agree with him on. I am sure that he will agree with me that, as the Leader of the Opposition, he will be able to hold back

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his own members. When some of us speak, they haul and shout at the back there! I hope he will be able to do so. [Applause.] Now, I would be easily stand here and champion his case for decorum and for quietness as you have urged members to do.

Coming back to the question you've raised, hon Maimane, as I recall, the issues that you are raising now are a central subject of a case that has been launched against six respondents by the DA, case number 2526 of 2017. In the papers, some of your prayers to the court are that the court should rule and declare that the use of the SANDF is unconstitutional and it must declare that the Constitution was violated.

The court must also declare that the Powers, Privileges and Immunities Act was also violated, and it must also declare that the various parties that are cited, which is the President, the Speaker, the Chairperson of the National Council of the Provinces, the Minister of Police and the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, did all these deeds as the members of the executive.

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Now, please allow me not to enter this space which you've now taken to an independent tribunal in our country. Let the tribunal address these issues, because once that tribunal has ruled on these matters, I will then be able to answer the question you have raised. The tribunal that you have gone to, will be able to give us definitive answers. So, I want to leave it there. I think that you've gone to the best tribunal; to the High Court in order to give you a ruling on this matter.

I therefore think that we should allow the ruling to happen, and I'm sure the High Court will be ruling on this matter fairly soon and I'm sure that you'll be excited if you win this case. That's where I want to leave it. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Rev K R J MESHOE: Speaker, the Leader of Government Business was the member of this House during the first democratic Parliament. He knows very well that security measures during the state of the nation addresses back then did not include thousands of the SA Police Services, SAPS, officers and hundreds of armed soldiers on and around these precincts. If indeed he was not

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informed about the presence of hundreds of armed soldiers who were deployed during the state of the nation address, what was his first reaction, when he saw them, because during the apartheid they were not seen on the premises? [Interjections.]

Secondly, is there somebody who is suffering from paranoia, and if that is the case, we want to know who is fearful and whose life is being threatened? According to your knowledge, Deputy President, the President's life is not threatened, and if indeed he is threatened, I would like to know, what is it that he has done that would cause the people of South Africa to go after him? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Since 1994, yes, indeed, I have observed the presence of the SAPS members and I have also observed the presence of the SANDF members lining up the streets in various streets of Cape Town. Yes, a number of them have been armed with guns, which is a normal thing for a soldier to go around armed. However, I never thought that they were threatening. I've always seen them as aligning the streets at Parliament on the state of the nation address day.

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The soldiers align the streets just as the Members of Parliament also struts along the streets, the carpets, the world clothes and all that, looking really absolutely lovely. I saw you this year, hon Meshoe, also looking really outstanding. I have always observed all these. Quite honestly, I never thought that the members of the SANDF and the police are threatening.

Yes, they are often here in numbers, and I've often seen many of them, but they are always on ceremonial type of guard. They are just guarding by being there, and by really showing a clear demonstration of the state in their uniforms and in a ceremonial fashion. So, I never thought that they were there to protect anyone, to guard anyone and to harm anyone. That, I have never observed. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Prof N M KHUBISA: Madam Speaker, hon Deputy President, in light of the fact that this matter has come up with a lot of concerns, a bit of tensions and also, in light of the fact that this matter is also linked with the protection services that enter the House to eject the members, of course, the issue of the

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protection services and the Serjeant-at-arms is covered under Rule 70, 71, 72 and 73 of our Rule's book.

Would you, as the Leader of Government Business, deem it fit that the meetings that were held, led by yourself, the presiding officers and the party representatives, be resuscitated in order to ensure that such concerns are dealt with, once and for all? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes, I think that we once held really good meetings which we thought would help in addressing quite a number of challenges that we faced. It was a sad pity that in the course of those meetings, some good faith was broken and that led to the breakdown of that whole process. It is a process which I on one hand as the Leader of Government Business was going to follow-up with the Speaker, the Chair of the National Council of the Provinces and the leaders of the political parties to become part of that process.

When we initially met, I thought that we were onto something that was really good, which would have served this Parliament extremely well. But, no sooner than we had started that the good

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faith that we thought we were establishing and cementing, was broken. That led to the complete breakdown of that whole process. If what you are saying is that we should reconsider this matter, I know that the Speaker and the Chair of the National Council of the Provinces often hold meetings with political parties, we can look into that and see whether it does become an avenue or an option that we can work on.

What I do know is that the Speaker, currently, meets with the leaders of political parties and that to what I've been informed is going very well. I am glad that you have raised that point because it is taking me back down memory lane. It is also taking me down to a rather painful moment when good faith was broken and the whole process just collapsed. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Mr M S MABIKA: Speaker, the question to the Deputy President is, if the number of soldiers that was deployed in Parliament can be deployed to protect one individual that should be well protected, I mean the President, what then stops the government from sending the troops to go to the borders of Mozambique and

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South Africa to stop the vehicles that are stolen from unprotected and innocent people from around Jozini and uMkhanyakude that is happening every day?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Speaker, the member is raising law and order matter which has to do with criminal investigation and the matter also has to do with how we secure our borders are. This is a matter which the various line Ministers deal with on an ongoing basis. Let me say this upfront that the presence of the SANDF in Parliament is not to protect any individual. They were here to conduct their own ceremonial duties on the opening of Parliament. Now ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order, hon members!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, I'm waiting for that magical moment which I advocated for when the Leader of the Opposition spoke. Now that I have that magical moment, let me say that, we may differ on this issue and it is not wrong to differ, but the good thing is that the DA has taken this matter to court. Let us therefore allow the courts of our country to

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make a determination on this matter, so that we stop differing on every point.

I am outlining precisely what I believe the SANDF was deployed here for. The opposition parties have got a different view that they were here to protect one person. Of course, we differ with that! Now that we differ, let us allow the courts to make a determination on this matter. Once the courts have made a determination, we will know what the truth is. Thank you very much.

Question 3:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, on the Question of whether I as a Leader of Government Business received a submission from the said individual on the Financial Intelligence Centre Amendment, Fica, Bill. The answer is, no. I did not receive such a submission. I would, however, like to make use of this opportunity to commend all parties in this House for the unanimous adoption of the amended Bill yesterday. I thought we did a really good job - to amend the Bill. [Applause.]

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The legislation that we voted on yesterday will significantly strengthen our ability to tackle money laundering and the financing of terrorism and bring South Africa in line with international standards. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Speaker, I don't know what the Table staff did with this question because the way it appears on this; it is not what we have asked. The question we had asked is that during the submissions to the Standing Committee on Finance, a member of the public came to say that if this Bill is passed and signed into law, the ANC is going to be broke, basically intimating that the ANC benefits from the lack of legislation that seeks to combat money laundering and financing of terrorist activities. No member of the ANC in that committee objected to that. He said that if this Bill goes on, the ANC is going to be broke. He identified himself as a professional who represent the ANC - his name is Jimmy Manyi. He argued strongly that the ANC is going to be broke if this Bill is passed. We are asking you as you are a Leader of Government Business and a Deputy President of the ANC. Is that the case that the ANC is linked to money laundering and financing of terrorist activities to finance its programmes?

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That is what was intimated by "mkhovu" of the Guptas called Jimmy Manyi.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, we did not get the Question as couched in that way, hon Shivambu. If the Question had been couched in that way to us, clearly we would have said that the ANC does not rely on laundered money. The ANC for its finances does not rely on money that is filtered into the country through money laundering or the financing of terrorist activities.

We abhor money laundering. We are totally against money laundering and money that is meant to finance terrorism. It is for that reason that we support this Bill and we also applaud everyone who voted in favour of this. Now if what you are saying is true that this was said by Mr Jimmy Manyi, I don't know what he is talking about, and clearly he is not talking for the ANC that I lead and that I know. [Applause.]

Mr D J MAYNIER: Deputy President, while we are on the question of Jimmy Manyi, as my colleague pointed out ... [Interjections.] ... strongly oppose this Bill. Do you think is right given the

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fact that it is now being revealed that Mr Jimmy Manyi received R840 000 from parastatals, including R440 000 paid by the now, and I've used this hesitantly, hon Brian Molefe, who at the time was the chief executive officer of Eskom to the Progressive Professionals Forum? Do you think that is right?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, with the greatest respect, I have no knowledge of all this. [Interjections.] If I did have any knowledge possibly, I would be able to prefer a view, but I have no knowledge of that - I have no knowledge of the doings of Mr Jimmy Manyi being funded by whoever. So, I am afraid, I am unable to assist you. Much as I would really like to assist you, and give you maximum assistance on anything you would ask - on this one you will have to forgive me - I have no knowledge - I'm sorry about that. [Interjections.]

Ms D KOHLER: Read the papers!

The SPEAKER: Order!

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Mr M HLENGWA: Hon Speaker, hon Deputy President, the Bill, of course, had to come back because the President cited a very interesting but baseless concern, which even the legal experts who have been consulted said that it was a waste of time for the Bill to come back. What is evident is that there is a lack of political will in the Presidency to sign this Bill into law. So, whilst you have congratulated the House and all of us for voting for it yesterday, are you prepared - in this House now, to give us a surety that the Bill will be signed as a matter of urgency, given the fact that corruption is one of the greatest threats to our democracy and that this Bill seeks to safeguard us from that corruption. Are you prepared to ensure, to push and champion the signing of this Bill on the basis of your congratulatory message? On its own, it is baseless.

IsiZulu:

Sifuna isayindiwe ngoba sikhathele ubugebengu.

USEKELA MONGAMELI: Nami ngima nawe lapho ngifuna ukuthi

isayindwe kodwa-ke ngumsebenzi kaMongameli lowo. [Ubuwelewele.]

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English:

Only the President can assent to Bills in terms of one of his constitutional duties. Indeed, being urged by you and many other people to sign the Bill will be some of the considerations that he keeps in mind that the Bill must be signed. He will be getting advice from a number of people. So, let us leave it to the President, as our executive leader - that he should apply his mind to this Bill now that it is going to come back to him. All of us hope that he is going to be able to sign the Bill, as he has to sign a number of other Bills that are often brought before him. Thank you very much.

Mr S N BUTHELEZI: Thank you, hon Speaker, hon Deputy President, now that you are done with conspiracy theories, can we then come back to the thing that we did yesterday. Now that we have passed the Fica Bill, do you think, hon President, that this will enhance business confidence in our economy, which is critical for fixed investments by the private sector, economic growth and of course, employment creation. Can you please tell us why would you think so, if you agree with me? Thank you.

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Mr N F SHIVAMBU: Hon Speaker, on a point of order, just quickly I think Parliament must note that the hon speaker, who spoke now recite to the Deputy President as hon President, ...

[Interjections.] ... is that ... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Shivambu, please take your seat.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker, my answer to hon Junior Buthelezi or Buthelezi Junior is that the signing of the Bill is going to enhance our stature and the international investment community. They will see that we are deadly serious against corruption and money laundering. As we all know, we operate in a globalised community. By and large on many things that we do, we've got to be able to do what is reasonable and proper that other countries do. This happens to be one of those. We don't necessarily willy nilly have to do everything that other countries do, but this is one of those because it is against money laundering and also supporting terrorists financially.

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Now what will this do in terms of enhancing our position when it comes to investment? Investors will look at our country and see that we are equal comparators with many other countries that they invest in. It is going to be one of those things where they mark us correctly and say South Africa having signed this Bill means that it is serious about corruption and it is open for business and investment. I think it will enhance our chances because answering your question directly hon Buthelezi investors want to invest in countries that subscribe to certain values. They want to invest in countries that they know have a moral compass. By doing so, we will be demonstrating to the world that, indeed, as South Africans we do have a moral compass. We are people of integrity and we abhor corruption. We are totally against things like money laundering and supporting terrorists' activities - and that in itself is going to make us a blue-chip investment destination. I am sure that those who are serious about investments will be able to bring their investments our way. Thank you very much.

Question 4:

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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: South Africa was well represented the World Economic Forum, WEF, meeting in Davos. It was represented by government, business, labour, people from NGOs sector as well as the media from our country.

Working together as what we call Team South Africa, this group was extremely effective in communicating a coherent message, particularly around the progress that we are making as a country in a number of areas. These includes how we are implementing economic transformation and our own reform agenda on how we are making progress towards inclusive growth as well as finding ways in which we can increase employment, and on how we are restoring investor confidence in our economy and how we are achieving a more supportive business environment.

We also were able to outline to them the measures that we are taking in as far as refining government spending and how we seek to make our spending efficient.

In each of these cases, Team South Africa was able to provide practical examples of where progress has been achieved and to

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highlight where further work needs to be done. I must tell you that it was quiet heart-warming to see how South Africans from all huse of life were able to sing from one hymn sheet and communicate a single message about our country. We were united in purpose; united in delivering a clear message to the world. This message was well received by many people with whom we interfaced collectively and individually.

There is a great deal of goodwill towards our country and a genuine desire from both government and business leaders to see the country succeeding, particularly in overcoming some of the challenges that we face both economically as well as at social level.

Madam Speaker, among the issues that dominated this year's deliberations is the problem of the increasing polarisation between rich and poor, which is exacerbated by the slowing down of the growth of the middle class as the mainstay of economic activity and prosperity.

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There was broad agreement among the various global economic leaders at the WEF that there needs to be a concerted global effort to promote inclusive growth, which brings the millions of poor and unemployed into the productive and beneficial economic activity.

Amongst many other things that we addressed were the issue of the industrial revolution and the impact that the industrial revolution is going to have on a number of economies and particularly working people in our countries. Leaders also discussed the need to strength systems for global collaboration. In this regard, it was a joy to listen to President Xi Jinping of China addressing the world leaders on the issue of globalisation and on how countries can benefit from globalisation and how weak nations and people who are in poverty need to be assisted to deal with the issues of globalisation. So, South Africa's participation was a great. We came out of there having made good friends, but also having position our country well as an investment destination.

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May I add as I end, Madam Speaker, that I know that a number of people did signed some deals, they met a number of investors and business partners, and so, all in all, those few days that were spent in Davos, were good days much as it was called a "did come back". Team South Africa came back having delivered a really good message about our country. We can be proud of those people who went there. Thank you very much.

Ms J L FUBBS: Yes, thank you hon Speaker and hon Deputy President for your comprehensive response, which acknowledges the increasing polarisation between the rich and the poor and also the profound impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which it is likely to have on our country's workplace, employment and skills development profiles. Recognising that innovation and technology upgrading of fundamental to industrial development, especially in South Africa, were most enterprises innovate by importing capital equipment rather than conducting research or buying from local institutions, therefore, please, Deputy President, can you share with this House how in this highly competitive global environment new technologies are playing and can continue to play a crucial role in maintaining

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and even improving South Africa's competitiveness, especially in sectors such as manufacturing and mining value chains, which can absorb larger numbers of skilled, unskilled or semi-skilled workers? I thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker and hon Fubbs, I had the honour and the privilege to participate in a sectional discussion at the WEF on science and technology. I also had the opportunity to share with leaders in Africa and globally about the work that our country is doing in the space of science and technology. I was able to inform them on the various things we are doing in research and development with a very limited budget that the Minister of Science and Technology has, but I was overjoyed to know that all those people that I met there knew our Minister of Science and Technology and articulated great respect for her and her participation in various forums in the world that deal with science and technology. [Applause.]

They were able to give hip praise on us, on the advances that we are making, on the square kilometre array, SKA, development - were they said, you are not only leading South Africa in this

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regard, you are leading Africa into the world on a scientific and technological basis. [Applause.]

Now that to me was a real joy. If there ever was a moment when one could have felt so proud of our country, that was the time when a developing economy that we are was recognised for being really up there with more developed economies when it comes to science and technology.

We were able to tell them that we are utilising that science and technology on a number of fields, not only in manufacturing, but also in health and in a number of other areas such as mining and farming as well.

So, one was able, Madam Speaker, to share with people from all over the world, precisely the work that we are doing here in South Africa. We were able to also outline to them how our young people are excelling in a number of fields and how they are also winning awards. So, that day, was a great day for South Africa when we regaled the world about the achievements that we have amassed and clearly there is much more that still needs to be

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done. People, who love science and technology, like me and the Minister, would like to see her budget growing more so that we can excel when it comes to science and technology because we are using our science and technological prowess for good effect, manufacturing, health, mining and a number of other related areas.

So, we are great when it comes to science and technology and I would like all of us to recognise how great we are and how much greater we can be as a country. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr D W MACPHERSON: Deputy President, on Monday night, your alliance partner, the SACP, through its deputy general secretary, described your government's plan of radical economic transformation as nothing but hot air. Your Minister, Blade Nzimande said it was focused on advancing narrow black elite accumulation and that radical is only a rhetorical statement. By your own admission, Deputy President, your government is at war with itself. As a presidential contender and leader of the ANC and government civil war against the President, your President,

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how credible is your claim of cohesiveness in Team SA's message Davos really?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I don't know, maybe I should say it in Tshivenḁa because if I say it in Tshivenḁa maybe you will understand a little bit more, but the only disadvantage is that I might have to put you through some classes of Tshivenḁa so that you can fully understand, precisely what I was saying.

What I was saying to you is that the message that we articulated in Davos, as Team South Africa, wearing our colourful scarves, clearly distinguishing ourselves from any other group and you should really see this. When we go to Davos, we all wear our colourful scarves and there is no other country that has claimed that space like we have.

You know what? One year, I would like to go with you so that you can join us and wear that scarf and realise that wearing that scarf on itself just begins to make your message cohesive. It just begins enable you to articulate a clear positive message about South Africa. Now that's what we had gone to do. We had

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not gone to Davos to articulate any other message. What we were selling was your South Africa, our South Africa, our country, our people. [Applause.] That's what we were selling. We were not selling a narrow vision of a particular party. We were selling a vision of all of us. [Applause.] That's what we were doing in Davos. I would like you to respect that ...

Tshivenda:

MUFARISA MUPHURESIDENNDE: ... ngauri hezwi ro ya Davos, ri ya Davos u rengisa shango hashu uri vhatu vha zwi pfesese zwavhudi uri rihe vhatu vha Afrika Tshipembe ro farana hani, ri khou shumisana hani nahone ri khou ya phanda nga ndila ifhio.

A ri khou ita hezwi zwa vhudabababa zwi no fana na hezwi zwine na khou amba ngazwo. [U fhululedza.] Ri khou ita zwithu zwi bveledzelaho shango hashu phanda.

English:

... Now I have said it in Tshivenda. I am sure you understand it better. Thank you. [Applause.]

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The SPEAKER: Hon members, I must report that the names that followed ... I just happen to remember hon Macpherson has been wiped off. So, there is somebody missing who came before the one that I am going ... hon Esterhuizen. [Interjections.] Yes.

IsiXhosa:

Hayi, ndiyayazi ukuba igama lakho likhona Matiase kodwa lisezantsi. Umntu oza kulandela emva kwesi sithethi ndiza kusibiza ngohloniphekileyo, uDudley.

Mr J A ESTERHUIZEN: Hon Deputy President, you said that in your presentation in Davos that South Africa is open for business and emphasised our foreign policy as the same. You just spoke about moral standards in this country with socioeconomic and political stability playing a major role and deciding factor to where foreign investment is directed. Don't you agree then that the country's foreign policy should reflect its own domestic policy? My question sir, how can you sell South Africa as an open and a credible leader in Africa when we can't even guarantee the physical safety of foreigners and their property, given the perennial widespread violent incidents of xenophobia within our

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borders, you might say that this is law and order as well, but this still reflects the image of government towards the foreign nationals to the world. Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, I think we can all agree that the events and the incidents of the past few days are rather sad and these are incidents that we should not gloat about. But what is clear is that South Africans are not xenophobic. We are a people who are not xenophobic. We don't hate foreigners, in fact; we have opened our arms forever and in a day to people from other countries just like they opened their arms to us when we were pushed into exile. So, we have opened our arms to them and where there has been criminal activity, we are saying that the police must investigate that and it's not saying that foreigners are criminals and they get involved in all manner of criminal activity.

So, we will continue as government to protect the lives, property and the interest of people from other nations, just as we expect them - foreign governments to protect the lives,

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property and the interest of South Africans, who are in other countries.

So, what they expect of us, will also be done to their own nationals. The South African government has been very clear on this matter from the beginning. We as a government have been in the forefront of preaching an antixenophobic message. We have been in the forefront of advocating the protection of foreign nationals.

Those foreign nationals who are involved in criminal activities should be dealt with in accordance with our laws. We call upon our people not to take the law into their own hands and attack people from other countries. They must allow our police services, our security forces to deal with the matter. We have robust laws that are able to deal with people who get involved in criminal activities. South Africa is a home for all who live in it.

So, it was declared in our Freedom Charter. This government lives up to what has been set out in our Freedom Charter because

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it anticipated that. Yes, we should become a home for all people who live here, be they from other nations or be they South African born. This is our home as much as it is their home as well. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mrs C DUDLEY: Deputy President, the WEF's future of jobs study notes the Fourth Industrial Revolution now underway characterised by fast pace technological progress combined with other socioeconomic and demographic changes could mean a net loss of over five million jobs in 15 major developed and emerging economies, including South Africa.

Is government prioritising work needed to identify under depth skills and education training to ensure that people who are becoming redundant in their jobs due to technology takeover will find themselves suitably prepared in new roles partnering with the robotic workforce of the not too distance future? Are our youth being adequately prepared for the reality of the works space that they will enter pretty soon? Thank you.

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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, it was quiet refreshing for me to sit in a meeting in Davos with government and business leaders and to listen to a leader of a global business talking about the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution when he said that, what concerns him more than being a keen participator in the Fourth Industrial Revolution was the impact it is going to have on jobs and on ordinary people. He was advocating that as we push ahead with this Fourth Industrial Revolution, we should at the same time put in place measures that are going to protect people who are going to lose their jobs, to lose their livelihood as a result of implementing the Fourth Industrial Revolution. He was quiet passionate about it. He started suggesting a number of measures such as re-education of people, reskilling and making sure that they are familiarised with the new era that is going to be given rise to by this new revolution that is coming.

Let me say that this matter is being given attention in government. We are giving this matter close attention through our various training programmes to ensure that as technology spreads, and as technological advancement happens to improve the

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lives of ordinary people, at the same time, we should not allow technological advancement to get people out of their jobs or to get to a point where they will not have other alternative jobs.

So, as we improve, we must make sure that we have some safety net of training nature and a number of others to make sure that they do get on with their lives with new skills; with new experiences and that they must also be able to get new life opportunities. So, that's what we are working on and I am sure that giving attention to all these will yield positive results.

Let me also say as I conclude that, the trade union movement is also actively involved in these types of discussions because they are concerned about their members losing their jobs. So, a combination of business, government and labour in this is going to leads to really good benefits that will make sure that the Fourth Industrial Revolution does not waylay people and leading to job losses. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: We now come to Question Five asked by the hon Hlengwa. Hon Matiase, what's the issue.

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Mr N S MATIASE: Hon Speaker, I pressed the button here.

The SPEAKER: Yes, as I said, your name was lower down than the other names and we have taken four supplementary questions and that is the cut-off.

Mr N S MATIASE: Madam Speaker, my question was about this specific question.

The SPEAKER: No, hon Matiase, please take your seat and can we go on to the question of hon Hlengwa and ask the hon deputy President to answer.

Question 5:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, the Ethics Code requires that where a member of the executive holds any financial or business interests which may give rise to a conflict of interest in the performance of that member's function, the member must either dispose of such interests or place the administration of the interest under the control of an independent or professional person or agency. In order to comply with the Ethics Code in

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November 2014, I disposed off my shareholding in the Shanduka Group, an investment holding which held a number of assets in regulated sectors of our economy.

I advised the secretary of cabinet accordingly and released a media statement outlining actions I took in this regard. With regards to my assumption of the responsibilities that I was given by the President, particularly with respect to the SA Airways, SAA, I did not declare any possible conflict of interest because there was none, there was no conflict of interest to declare. I have no business dealings with SAA or any other state-owned company. I have declared all my assets to the Cabinet secretary and parliament as it is required by law. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr M HLENGWA: Speaker, Deputy President, at the outset let me say that there is nothing I hate more than fake news, particularly fake news that brands against the national interests. The allegations which the question is based on were made by the youth league, so I am putting to you, hon President, are you prepared to call out these lies and these fake news

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which seek to threaten in particular state-owned entities which are very fragile at this point in time, and if such allegations are made about them could very well cause instability in those sectors and could eventually result in job losses.

Secondly, credit ranking agencies have cited political instabilities as a major concern moving forward and such kind of conduct will result in them not giving us favourable ratings. So, I am putting it to you, hon Deputy President, an opportunity to call out the youth league and to condemn this kind of behaviour which seeks to threaten the national interest with such lies to be peddled against yourself in the main but most importantly, the national interest, threat to jobs and the state-owned entities which are being brought into the mud which they do not belong to. Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Hlengwa, I am in the course of engaging the ANC Youth League on this matter. We are in the process of engaging each other on this. I have told them that the matter they raised publicly was a lie, it was a fabrication and as you say, fake news because there is no truth in the fact

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that I am conducting business with SAA or any other company and I have said it very clearly, I did not leave business to come into government service in order to conduct fraudulent business in government. [Applause.] I did not do so. I hold the view that if you want to make money, make money in business. Do not come and make money dealing with government entities. [Applause.] That is the view I hold.

As you know very well I was involved in business and I did not leave because I failed as a businessman. I did not come here to try and loot the state and loot state-owned enterprises. I did not do that and I will never do so. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Mr R A LEES: Hon Speaker, hon Deputy President ...

IsiZulu:

... ngizocela nje into eyodwa kuwe ukuthi ungaphenduli ngesiVenda, usithanda isiZulu ungaphendula ngaso. [Uhleko.]

English:

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The SA Airways has run at a loss of some R17.76 billion since Ms Dudu Myeni was appointed as chairperson of the board. Ms Myeni's intervention over the airbus deal resulted in finance Minister Nene being fired and replaced with the hon "Now you see him, now you don't" Van Rooyen. [Laughter.] Ms Myeni has been found by the Companies and Intellectual Properties Commission, CIPC, to have contravened to sections of the Companies Act. Ms Myeni last Saturday apparently spent the night in the presidential suite at the luxury Oyster Box Hotel at a cost of R50 000.

[Interjections.] Would the Deputy President please tell us if he believes that the reappointment of Ms Dudu Myeni as the SAA's board chair last year was not irrational?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, I thin that we should be looking at ...

IsiZulu:

... ufuna ngiyiphendule ngesiZulu?

English:

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We should be looking at the big picture here and the big picture is that the good development which is part of our state-owned enterprise, SOE, reform programme, is that the SAA board has been reconstructed. We have new board members on that board who are working together with Ms Dudu Myeni and they are trying against very difficult odds to reposition SAA. SAA is a national asset and all we should ever do ... [Interjections.] ... I want you to listen, all we should ever do is to wish that board the greatest of luck because we have outstanding South Africans on that board who are working day and night supporting the management team and they are executing a new strategy to reposition SAA. Admittedly they are working in a very difficult industry. The airline industry is one of the very challenging and very difficult industries where you either make or lose money depending on a whole number of variable factors and some of those being the fuel cost and everything else. Let us spend more time wishing them luck and egging them on and hoping and wishing that they do succeed in everything that they do and if you can say a prayer for SAA, say a prayer ...

IsiZulu:

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... uyithandazele i-SAA ukuthi ikwazi ukuqhubeka kahle iphumelele ngale ndlela esifuna ukuthi iphumelele ngayo. Ngiyabonga.

Mr M L W FILTANE: Hon Speaker, good afternoon Deputy President, now that your name has been cleared by your good self here today and given the fact that SAA has a problem of some of the men who fly airplanes been lured by China and being over R3.2 million per annum as against what they get here in South Africa. What steps are you going to take now that you have been cleared in order to make sure that our pilots remain stable, do not fleece SAA by making exorbitant demands for themselves, their wives as well as their children to fly all over the world, free of charge, That creates a big hole in the fiscus of that national carrier. What steps then are you going to take to make sure that this come to a screeching stop? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Filtane, one of the great things that we are succeeding with in our country is not only to retain a number of really outstanding pilots, if you like, of the older generation, but it is how we are attracting young black South

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Africans into the profession of being pilots. I have had the joy of meeting quite a number of them. I will tell you a very good story, I was in an airplane and I was flown from Kimberly, on a commercial flight, by a young South African girl from New Brighton in Port Elizabeth. Her name is Oyama Matomela and she is 24 years old. It was stormy weather and they invited me to come into the cockpit. Her chief pilot said: I want you to see how this young woman, 24 years old, from a township, she is now able to fly a plane with 300 passengers. [Applause.]

It was the most unbelievable flight because it was stormy and raining and this young woman took that plane off from Kimberly, went through the stormy skies and landed us in Johannesburg in rain and storms. I was in awe to see this young woman doing precisely that. [Applause.] Now, are there many of them? There aren't many of them and what are we seeking to do as government? We are starting a programme to do precisely that.

The other day I was also flown, and I hope I will not embarrass Dr Nzimande by saying this. I was flown by his son in an SAA flight from Johannesburg to Durban. He is a very young man. This

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is the future that beckons us. This is the future that is out there for us on the horizon and these are the young people that we have to nurture, we have to prepare for the future that awaits them. This is how this country is succeeding and reaching out for greatness. Whilst we are doing both things, trying to keep those who are already in the system so that they can pass their skills onto others and that is already happening.

In the air force, the President and myself are often flown by young people, young black people who are now flying these very big planes and they are the pride of our nation. So, there is a future and we are going to make ensure that pilots in our country increase by leaps and bounds because we need good and loyal pilots who will not go off to work in China and a number of other countries. Thank you for raising this because you took me down memory lane, you spoke about something that I find very touching when I see young people being very successful at an intricate and difficult profession like being a pilot. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

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Ms M O MOKAUSE: Speaker, deputy President, despite the fact that your office rejected planes made by one of your own, the ANC Youth League, that you own a certain portion in the Comair. We are not concerned about that, we still believe as the EFF that senior government leaders own shares in most of the institutions. Our concern is the proliferation of business ownership by senior government leaders and that escalates to their families having influence in the South African government, that of Duduzane Zuma who has great influence and the Guptas.

As a leader of government business in this House, have you ever gone as far as engaging your President in those claims? Have you ever went as far as engaging he President about the claims made by the Deputy Minister of Finance regarding the Guptas having afforded him an opportunity to be a Minister of Finance? Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I think that the issue of the ownership of shares has two aspects to it and I think that we do need to understand it. There is the issue of share ownership as part of ones portfolio, say on shares that are traded on the stock

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exchange where you can buy and sell shares on an ongoing basis in various companies because they offer a growth that you may not get if you leave your money in the bank. Nearly all of us here are shareholders in various companies through our pension funds because our pension funds buy and sell shares. We should not then be derogatory against people who may own a listed share here and there which is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange because that is part of their investment management.

Then there is another side of it about owning business, say people in authority owning business and the issue of the Code of Ethics says that you need to declare your areas of conflict and this often comes out when a person in a position of authority, like a minister or myself, if you are going to own shares in a regulated industry or company that operates in a regulated area. That gives rise to conflict and that is why the Code of Ethics says that you should declare it and either you sell it or is managed by somebody else through a blind trust or whatever. Now, all these are matter that we need to be aware of as Members of Parliament and as public representatives and make sure that we

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are not caught up in all these things as we manage our own investments.

I think that what we should not be doing is to be derogatory and insulting without any basis or foundation, without any evidence. [Applause.] We become accustomed to people hurling insults and hurling derogatory statements without having any basis or foundation. I think we should base our statements on facts because facts are what should regulate everything and after analyzing the facts then we should regulate our own reaction and behaviour to particular people.

The question that you raised, as I recall, those matters are also now subject of review processes. They were looked into by the Public Protector which involved the Deputy Minister of Finance and all that and all those matter are in the process of being handled by another institution. I would not want to try and second guess that institution. Let that institution be given the opportunity and the right to examine all that and in the end come up with what the truthful position is. I thank you very much.

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Question 6:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The final report of the health ombud into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of mentally-ill patients in Gauteng concluded that there was prima facie evidence that certain officials, as well as certain nongovernmental organisations, NGOs, and some activities within the project that violated the Constitution and contravened the National Health Act and the Mental Health Care Act. The report describes several instances of negligent and reckless actions that contributed to the deaths of at least 94 mentally-ill patients. The report made several recommendations to hold those responsible to account and to ensure that such a tragedy should never occur again.

With regard to the relative powers and functions of the different spheres of government, the report said that there is an urgent need to review the National Health Act of 2003 and the Mental Health Care Act of 2002 with a view to harmonise and to bring alignment to different spheres of government.

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It also said that the centralisation of certain functions and powers of the Mental Health Care Act must revert back to the national Minister of Health. The full breadth of the ombud's recommendations is under consideration, including a review of the National Health Act as well as the Mental Health Care Act. The Minister of Health has already informed this House that he has selected a review panel for this purpose.

The Constitution is very clear on the responsibilities of the various spheres of government. For instance, it provides that provinces and their executives are subject to the national government's decisions on policy governing health care. The Constitution empowers national government to intervene in provincial governments where necessary. These are some of the elements of our constitutional architecture that will need to be considered during the course of this review by the review panel that the Minister has set up.

We would welcome any suggestions that the hon member, and indeed many other members, may have on this matter to ensure that a tragedy like the Esidimeni one does not happen again. If there

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are suggestions that can be brought to bear with regard to how the functions and the competencies at national and provincial levels can be well delineated so as to be able to take the effect that they should take in order to save lives, we would welcome those. I invite the hon member to come forward and present any such suggestions if he has any.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Thank you, hon Speaker. Mr Deputy President, we have gone through the recommendations by the ombudsman in terms of those patients that may have died in Gauteng. However, it's exactly the point that I'm trying to make, not only in the case of those people that have passed on in Gauteng in the health sphere. If you look at it ... the limited powers vested in Ministers and the national departments ... let me give you another example. If you take Woodstock in Cape Town for example, our people are being forcefully removed to make way for what we call development. Now, the national departments are not able to intervene in this. If you look at the people in Philippi who have just been successful in that court matter, there are already indications that the City of Cape Town will ignore that court decision.

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Now the question is, can we as national government make amendments so that more powers are given to Ministers and national departments in order to protect the interests of our people, especially where certain political parties are in control and will abuse their power? The last example I want to give you ... we talk about the limited powers of the Minister of Co-operative Governance. If you look at the corruption in the Knysna Municipality, which is being protected by either the member of the executive council, MEC, in the area ... I am therefore suggesting, can we make the necessary amendments at some stage to give greater powers so that we can intervene and protect our people? [Applause.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker. I think it will be safe to say that having traversed this constitutional journey over a period of a full 22 years ... 23 years now, we are entitled to sit back and reflect on the efficacy of our constitutional architecture and see where the Constitution hamstrings us from having effective government that is going to benefit our people.

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When we negotiated this constitutional dispensation that we have, many people were concerned and they were fearful that we could end up with a situation where national government becomes so powerful and so overbearing that it will over-ride the interests of people at a provincial, regional and local level.

The truth of the matter is that many of us have seen how national government seeks and tries everything to advance the interests of all our people in all four corners of our country. There is nothing suspicious that national government does to undermine any part of our country, and the experiences that we are having now where the competencies that have been given to provinces prevent ... some of them prevent national government from taking effective action to the benefit of our people on a uniform or universal basis calls for a dialogue that we as South Africans should have. We should sit back and say, does this provision serve us as South Africans well from a constitutional point of view but more importantly from a government efficiency point of view. If it is found that it doesn't serve us as well, then we should be strong enough, and man and woman enough, to amend those provisions.

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When it comes to health, the reason that the Minister of Health has instituted a review panel in this regard is because he has found that it hamstringing him from executing a national mandate of ensuring that all South Africans lead healthy lives. So the reason has come to the fore and we now need to sit back and have robust and intelligent debates that could lead to an amendment of the architecture that we have, and there should be no suspicions that national government is trying to abrogate unto itself all the powers to the disadvantage of provinces or local government. This in the end is what co-operative governance should be about. Co-operative governance should be about how all sectors of government work together to advance the interests of our people.

Dr W G JAMES: Madam Speaker, by any objective measure the Western Cape takes great care with the mentally infirm and its psychiatric patients, including those who are resident at Groote Schuur Estate I may add. I would like to ask the Deputy President to check with Monitoring and Evaluation in his own office.

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My Question to the Deputy President is this. Sir, would you consider replicating the DA model in ANC-governed provinces? I ask this Question because why on earth would any rational person escalate functions to the national Department of Health when it cannot spend its National Health Insurance, NHI, budget; when it was found by the Auditor-General's office to be heading to further rounds of stock-outs; when it is incapable of fixing broken hospitals; where it is incapable of building clinics on scale; and where it tolerates dysfunctional health professional and nursing councils?

Deputy President, to prevent death, your party must clearly fix Gauteng Health as recommended by Dr Makgoba and must fix Health in every ANC province, or believe you me the voters will fix it for you come 2019. I thank you. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon James, I missed your reference to Groote Schuur Estate. I know of no Groote Schuur Estate; I know Rondebosch. Anyway, be that as it may, you and I can have a discussion about that. However, on the more important issue that you raised, I think you will admit that what has been put out

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from a policy point of view with regard to the NHI is one of the most outstanding policy positions that this country has ever seen with regard to health. When the NHI is fully implemented ... and we will admit that it is going to go through its baby steps and there will be hits and misses right now. Over the weekend I went to the Secunda area in Mpumalanga and we opened a brand new clinic. It's an NHI-type clinic which is state of the art and which incorporates the new information system which is going to be implemented right across the country. It is a clinic of the future.

We are going to be replicating that type of clinic of the future throughout the country. When the Minister of Health has an opportunity to answer Questions he will be able to outline to you precisely the steps that his Department of Health is taking.

When this government took over health it took over a fragmented health system; a broken health system; a health system that abused our people right throughout the country; and a health system that was so dangerous to the lives of our people. Now this Minister is repairing precisely the mess that was left to

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this country by the past misrulers of our country and the health process is now underway.

Today this Health Department is saving lives. A total of 3,4 million people are on antiretrovirals, ARVs, and this is being dispensed by this Health Department. Where in the past hundreds of thousands of people were dying every year, this Health Department has made sure that our life expectancy has ticked up to, I think, about 62 years now. It's 62 years, whereas in the past when this government took over it was in the fifties.

Please watch how the improvements are happening in our country and, mark my words, these improvements are happening countrywide. They are not happening in one province. The challenge that this Minister has is a national challenge. It's not a challenge that is limited to one province. The responsibility of making sure that the health of our people is safeguarded is on the shoulders of the national Health Department and it is doing a reasonably good job under very trying circumstances.

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The NHI is in its pilot stage. It is being implemented. Diseases such as tuberculosis, TB, are being focused on like a laser. Soon we are going to have World TB Day and we are going to be announcing precisely what we are going to be doing when it comes to TB. So, NHI is underway, and whether you like it or not it is here to stay and it is going to be implemented. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Ms L L VAN DER MERWE: Thank you very much, Speaker and Deputy President. I think at the very heart of the Esidimeni crisis was a lack of leadership, maladministration and recklessness, and because of these exact same reasons we are now facing another national crisis and that's the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, grant payout crisis. It will not only affect the lives of 700 vulnerable South Africans but it will affect the lives of 17 million vulnerable South Africans.

In 2014 your government was told by the Constitutional Court that the current contract that you have with Cash Paymaster Services, CPS, and Net1 Universal Electronic Payment System Technologies Inc is unlawful. They gave you until 1 April 2017

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to correct this. In full breach of her oath of office, the Minister of Social Development did nothing and now with a month to go we've got no plan ... absolutely no plan to pay grants ... absolutely no plan.

Deputy President, we have seen no leadership on this matter and I think today as leader of government business you must tell us why we have allowed Minister Dlamini to show her complete disregard for the Constitutional Court. She's in fact gone rogue. We don't know where she is. Deputy President, we want to know from you why we are again putting the lives of the most vulnerable citizens at risk and what will you personally do to avoid a national ... [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Your time has expired, hon member. Hon member, your time has expired. Hon Deputy President?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon member, one of the really good things about our democracy is that it allows for us to be able to raise matters of national interest like you are and demonstrate our concern about some of these matters.

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In doing so we should also be willing to listen precisely to the steps that are being taken to try and mitigate the challenges and the problems that we have. The Sassa matter is being addressed. It is being addressed ... [Interjections.] ... and the Armageddon that ...

The SPEAKER: Order! Order.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you for your protection, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Proceed Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Armageddon that you are talking about will be avoided. We will make sure that those 17 million people in our country that rely on these payouts, grants, child grants and old age pensions do get their pay. We are fully aware of the Constitutional Court's requirement of having to go back there and that is underway. That is being addressed. We are going to make sure that the wheels do not come off and that we do indeed address this matter. When we do we will be willing and prepared

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... the Minister will be willing and prepared to come back here to address this matter, and outline the steps that are being taken and that are going to be taken. That much I can tell you will happen and this matter will not be allowed to go to the wall.

Dr S S THEMBEKWAYO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon Deputy President, the health ombudsman's report details that the removal of mental patients from Life Esidimeni to the 27 centres which were not properly registered was comparable to an "auction cattle market", that some of the centres were "like concentration camps" and that the Gauteng Department of Health was unable to distinguish between the highly specialised nonstop professional care requirements and a business opportunity. The deaths of the patients have everything to do with the government's neglect which is seen as normal across the public health system.

What specific actions must be taken to bring those who caused the deaths of the patients to account and what is the Deputy President doing to restructure the public health system to

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ensure that it responds to the health needs of our people – the people of South Africa?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I can say without any equivocation that ever since this incident occurred the Minister of Health has on a day and night basis been working on this matter. If there is anything that is top of mind to him right now it is how our country and our people get over this debacle of Esidimeni; how we ensure that those who are affected are given support and care; how we prevent this matter from ever happening again; but more importantly, how the recommendations of the health ombudsperson are implemented. There is a list of things that Prof Malegapuru Makgoba came up with that are currently being implemented. The Minister is in the process of doing so on a daily basis, and he briefs me and he briefs the President on an ongoing basis about the steps that they are taking.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the care and the scrutiny that the Minister is subjecting this whole problem to is going to lead to something that will finally be positive so that this

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thing never ever happens again. He has his director-general scouring throughout the length and breadth of the country, making sure that it does not happen in other provinces. He has his officials on their toes working on this matter. If there's anything I can assure you about it then it's that the Minister is giving close attention to this matter.

When he does get an opportunity to appear before us here as the National Assembly he will be able to outline further steps and new steps that he is taking. If there are challenges, as there will always be in life ... if there are challenges, new challenges or whatever, he will be open enough to come and disclose them here and also outline to us the steps that he is taking.

So, let us give him support. Let us give him all the help that we can, rather than criticise him and browbeat him to the ground because he is doing a good job under very, very difficult circumstances. [Applause.]

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The SPEAKER: That concludes Questions to the Deputy President. I thank the hon Deputy President.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker?

The SPEAKER: That concludes the business for the day.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: Madam Speaker? Madam Speaker?

[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 17:01.