



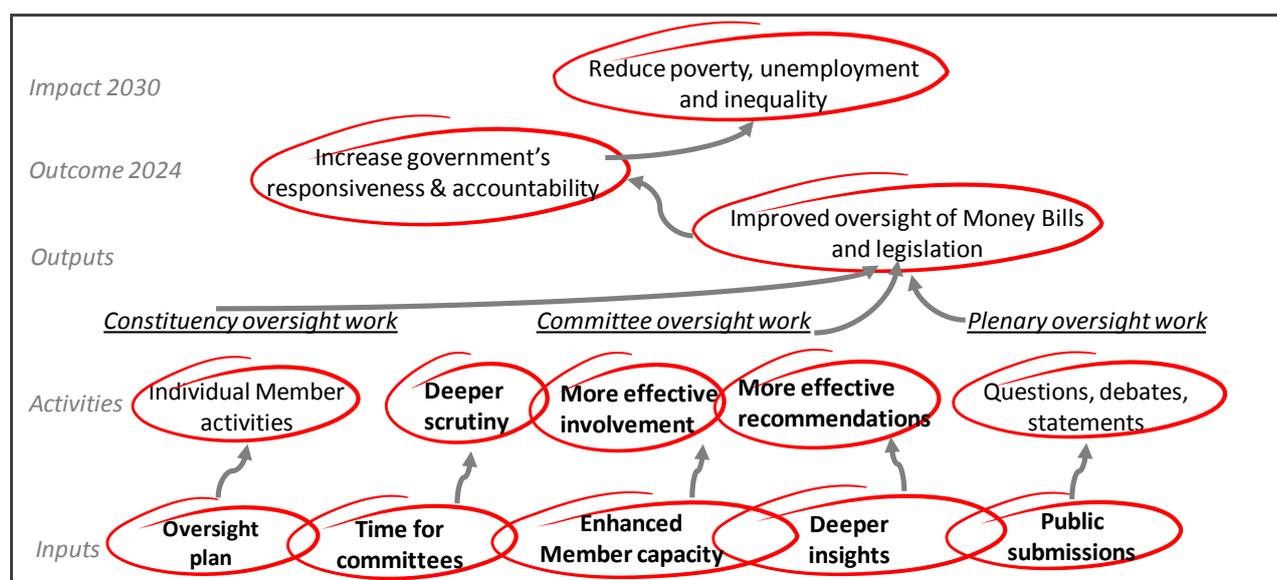
**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Policy Priorities for the  
6th democratic Parliament**  
2019-2024

27 February 2020

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## POLICY PRIORITIES FOR THE 6<sup>th</sup> PARLIAMENT 2019-2024

### 1. Planning for policy priorities

Following the general elections in May 2019, the Executive Authority of Parliament initiated a planning process by which Members of Parliament could direct and deliberate on the policy priority focus areas of the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament. The National Council of Provinces held a planning session on 20 and 21 August 2019, whereas the planning session for the National Assembly took place on 12 September 2019.

Many participants alluded to the need for the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament, mindful of resource limitations, to choose one or two policy priorities. A strategic analysis highlighted the poor economic performance and the subsequent low growth forecast for South Africa. Such a forecast impact directly on Parliament where continued fiscal consolidation limits budget increases. Parliament will have fewer resources to support the work of the legislature and its committees. Choosing fewer priorities could enhance the likelihood of success, whilst more priorities could lead to weak implementation.

The deliberations in the planning sessions were dominated by the key priorities of **stronger oversight** and **enhanced public involvement**. Following these two main themes, certain activities also dominated the discussions, including:

- **improving committee oversight work;** in relation to the budget cycle, the need for more time allocated to committee oversight activities, and the possibility of holding joint briefings and meetings.

- **improving the effectiveness of public hearings;** in relation to public participation, public education and information; using effective broadcasting, technology and social media; increasing the use of languages; and exploring joint public hearings.

The planning sessions also reflected on key enablers or inputs. These included:

- **enhanced research and legal support;** in relation to oversight - moving towards greater analysis and deeper insights,

- **improving Member capacity;** in relation to capacity-building programmes for Members; ensuring empowered Members for effective and efficient functioning of Parliament,

- **improving monitoring, tracking and evaluation;** this applies both to the work of Parliament itself, as well as that of the Executive for more effective oversight and accountability,

- **using modern technology;** in relation to social media; tools-of-trade; workflows and automation; and ensuring openness and accessibility,

- **cutting costs;** in relation to fewer priorities and operational sustainability.

The inputs received during planning sessions culminated in a strategic analysis, highlighting the key issues facing the institution at this time. It paved the way for the development of a strategy map, charting Parliament's action for the next 5 years.

## 2. Logical framework for Parliament

Applying the construct of the logical framework to Parliament, it is possible to define the inputs, activities, outputs, medium-term outcomes and long term impacts for Parliament (see table below).

*Inputs* relate to Members' capacity, advisory and information services, and related facilities and support used in activities.

*Activities* include the passing of legislation, overseeing and scrutinising executive action, the facilitation of public involvement, and functions around co-operative government and international participation. These activities are mainly constituted as plenaries, committee meetings and the work performed in constituencies and on international platforms.

The ensuing *outputs* of these processes include Bills, budget recommendations, appointment recommendations, approved international agreements and government interventions, and other resolutions of Parliament.

The *outcomes* of Parliament are orientated to ensure open, responsive and accountable government, as well as public involvement in the processes of Parliament.

By arranging the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact of Parliament in this way, the strategy of the institution emerges as a set of priorities requiring intervention.

Parliament	Result	
Impact	<i>Improve quality of life:</i>	Eliminate income poverty Reduce unemployment Reduce inequality
Outcome	<i>Long-term:</i> <i>Intermediate:</i> <i>Immediate:</i>	Deepened democracy Accountable government Strengthened oversight and accountability Enhanced public involvement Deepened engagement in international fora Strengthened co-operative government Strengthened legislative capacity
Outputs	<i>House resolutions:</i>	Bills, approved international agreements appointment recommendations, approved interventions, resolutions
Activities	<i>Houses:</i> <i>Committees:</i> <i>Constituencies:</i>	Plenaries Committee meetings Constituency office representation
Inputs	<i>House:</i> <i>Committees:</i> <i>Constituencies:</i>	Advisory and information services, Members' support services. Procedural and legal advice, analytical and content advice, research, records, public education, communication, media, meeting room preparation, catering, security. Transfer payments for constituency work

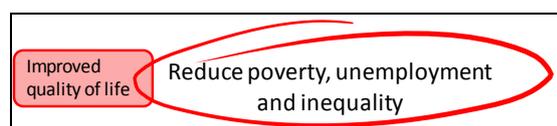
### 3. Strategy map for Parliament

The next step was to map the strategy of the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament. The strategy map was constructed using the results based management approach. The strategy map indicates the specific policy priorities for Parliament in order to effect the desired outcomes and impact. It also specifies the outputs, activities and inputs required to achieve the outcomes and impact.

#### 3.1 Impact 2030 – Improve quality of life

The Constitution envisages **improving the quality of life** of all citizens and freeing the potential of each person. The Bill of Rights, as the cornerstone of our democracy, enshrines socio-economic rights and affirms human dignity.

**Improving quality of life** is the selected impact for Parliament. The strategy map sets this as the ultimate goal and impact for 2030.



In pursuing this societal impact, government developed the National Development Plan (NDP), setting out how quality of life will be improved by 2030. The plan reflects measures and objectives to increase employment, eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. The challenge for Parliament is to ensure that Government delivers on the NDP.

Despite progressive initiatives and outcomes since 1994, the main challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment persist:

- *Unemployment* in South Africa remains high at 29%, with youth unemployment at 55%.
- Although the proportion of the population living in poverty declined between 2006 and 2011, *poverty levels rose in 2015* with the poverty headcount increasing to 55.5%. This translated into over 30,4 million South Africans living in poverty in 2015.
- The Gini coefficient of 0.68 (2015) remains high, and indicates the extreme levels of *inequality* in society.

The Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) is Government's strategic plan for the 2019-2024 electoral term. It stipulates the outcomes to be achieved, which includes high-level development indicators for each outcome.

These development indicators enable Parliament, Provincial Legislatures and the public to monitor the overall impact on society. Parliament's constitutional role of holding the Executive to account must be pronounced by the manner in which those development indicators are scrutinised and the Executive is required to account.

### **3.2 Outcome 2024 – Increase government’s responsiveness and accountability**

The Constitution requires that Parliament maintains oversight over the Executive to ensure that government is open, responsive and accountable.

The discussion by Members of Parliament, in both the planning sessions of the National Council of Provinces and the National Assembly, were dominated by the key policy themes of stronger oversight and more public involvement. The centrality of these two themes are affirmed by the:

- National Development Plan requiring stronger oversight and the mainstreaming of citizen participation (NDP 2012),
- The international parliamentary trend of people demanding greater involvement, more accountability and faster service delivery (IPU 2012 and 2017),
- The inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal 16 on governance, with sub-indicators 16.6 and 16.7 focussing on accountability and participation (SDGs 2015),
- the Human Science Research Council’s survey indicating that overall trust in Parliament is low (HSRC 2018), and
- the Ibrahim Index for African Governance index showing how accountability in South Africa is diminishing, (IIAG 2017).

The functions of Parliament are set out in the Constitution, including the passing of legislation, scrutiny and oversight of executive action, facilitating public participation in the processes of

Parliament, approving international agreements and government interventions, and performing obligations to ensure co-operative government.

When effectively executed, these functions culminate in the realisation of the constitutional outcomes of a) ensuring open, responsive and accountable government, and b) ensuring public involvement in policy making.

Recent information indicates that accountability in South Africa is diminishing. This should be of concern, as the main purpose of Parliament and other organs of state are to ensure open, responsive and accountable government. The imperative to strengthen oversight and accountability, in the state as a whole, will require more openness, transparency, collaboration, and more rigorous scrutiny and investigation.

Against this backdrop, Parliament determined its 2024 outcome goal: **to increase government’s responsiveness and accountability.**



To do this, Parliament will need to strengthen its oversight over the Executive. In turn, stronger oversight will require deeper insights and scrutiny, and more effective involvement. Should Parliament be able to respond to this opportunity, it will effectively fulfill its constitutional mandate, improve government’s responsiveness and accountability, cause faster service delivery, and gain the trust of the people.

### 3.3 Key Strategic Output: Approving and Overseeing the Annual Budget

The outputs of Parliament include Bills, budget recommendations, appointment recommendations, approved government interventions and international agreements, and other resolutions.

In the context of the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament strategy, the most important output surrounds the **approval of the annual budget**, as presented in the form of money bills (mainly the Division of Revenue Bill and Appropriation Bill).

Parliament is assigned with constitutional and legislative powers to approve the annual budget, and to oversee the implementation thereof in realising the impact of a better quality of life for all.

The national budget, annually tabled in Parliament in the form of legislation, is government's statement of financial and political intent. It sets out proposals on how government plans to raise and spend money. It focusses on spending priorities, and sets out detail on how government intend to meet the demands of the public.

In conjunction with other legislation, the budget is the most powerful instrument by which government can implement its priorities and effect change in order to eliminate poverty, and to reduce unemployment and inequality.

If Parliament then wants to effect more responsive and accountable government, it must improve the quality of its budget oversight and recommendations. The key focus here would be on **how Parliament can improve the quality of its scrutiny of money bills and budgetary recommendations**.



The process by which Parliament oversee, scrutinises and approves the annual budget is set out in the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, Act 9 of 2009. The Act sets out the process by which Parliament assesses government performance, make recommendations on the budget, and where required, amend the budget.

### **3.4 More effective committee oversight as a key activity of the strategy**

Activities in Parliament include the passing of legislation, overseeing and scrutinising executive action, the facilitation of public involvement, functions around co-operative government and international participation. These activities are mainly constituted as **plenaries**, **committee meetings**, the work performed in **constituencies** and the work undertaken on international platforms.

Improving committee scrutiny and oversight is seen as the key activity for the 6th Parliament. In this regard, committee oversight activities will need to produce deeper scrutiny of executive action, ensure more effective involvement and public engagement, and deliver more effective recommendations.



To enable deeper scrutiny, more effective involvement and ultimately more effective recommendations, committees will need to address the following main issues:

- Improve the structure and capability of committees,
- increase time allocated for committee oversight activities,
- improve involvement in committee processes.

#### **3.4.1 Structure and capability of Committees**

Parliament needs to build more capability and adaptability to meet today's challenges. It must strengthen its oversight capabilities and cement its

processes in public involvement. It must become far more agile and responsive to the issues and needs of people. A review of its current workways should be a first step. Such a review should consider, amongst others, the structure and composition of committees and the time available for committees and plenaries to conclude their work.

Moving forward, Parliament should also foster greater levels of Member specialisation. Parliament may also structure the work of committees differently. Instead of following departmental portfolios and using a generic committee model, specialised committees may develop greater and deeper skillsets, ensuring scrutiny and oversight over increasingly complex issues.

#### **3.4.2 Increase time for committee oversight activities**

The majority of Parliament's current workload centres around overseeing the executive programme of action, as presented in the annual budget process. This includes the annual State of the Nation Address, the tabling of the budget, the approval of the Appropriation and Division of Revenue Bills, and the related oversight activities performed by committees in terms of the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, Act 9 of 2009. The annual programme is therefore informed by the requirements of this process.

In order to ensure deeper scrutiny by committees, more time will need to be allocated for committee oversight activities.

By changing the programme to include dedicated weeks for constituency, committee and plenary work, Parliament can optimise available time. As these weeks now focus on specific work, sitting times could also be adjusted. In this instance the time for committee activities can be significantly increased.

### *3.4.3 More effective public participation and involvement*

In general, Parliament can improve its oversight work by forging partnerships with the public and other institutions.

Public participation provides legitimacy and power to Parliament's oversight work, whilst other institutions may provide better reach, additional resources, and information required for oversight work.

In recent years, public awareness and access to participate in the processes of Parliament have improved. However, the planning sessions pointed to the issue of inadequate public involvement in the law-making process. Whilst the volume of bills has seen a decrease since the first Parliament, a number of court challenges have led to certain laws being found to be unconstitutional and Parliament being compelled to rectify such defects.

The main shortcoming found in this regard was the inadequacy of public involvement during the law-making process. Parliament must therefore seek to enhance its public participation.

The main issues for consideration include:

- using joint public hearings where possible;
- technology and social media to mobilise participation;

- providing more public education and information;
- effective use of radio and broadcasting;
- encouraging the public to make submissions, representations and petitions;
- using constituency offices more effectively;
- partnering between the NCOP and provincial legislatures;
- the use of technology in facilitating the law making process; and
- improving relationships between relevant stakeholders.

Greater access to participate in Parliament will require more joint public hearings, e-hearings, online petitions/submissions, and greater use of constituency offices.

### *3.4.4 More effective budget recommendations*

The Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, provides for the process by which Parliament assesses government performance, make recommendations on the budget, and where required, amends the budget. This process uses the committee mechanism as the activity driver. Committee reports carry key budget and other recommendations which are then debated and adopted in plenary.

Once budget recommendations are adopted, these are communicated to the Executive. The Act also requires the Executive (and specifically the Minister of Finance) to respond to these budget review and recommendation reports.

Section 7(4) of the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act prescribes that the Minister of Finance must submit a report to

Parliament at the time of the budget, explaining how the Division of Revenue Bill and the national budget give effect to, or the reasons for not taking into account, the recommendations contained in:

- Budgetary review and recommendation reports submitted by committees of the National Assembly in terms of section 5 of the act.
- Reports on the fiscal framework proposed in the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) submitted by the finance committees in terms of section 6 of the act.
- Reports on the proposed division of revenue and the conditional grant allocations to provinces and local governments set out in the MTBPS submitted by the appropriations committees in terms of section 6 of the act.

Annexure A of the annual budget sets out the Minister's report to Parliament. This report is evidence of how Members of Parliament represent the interest of people in the budget process, and how Parliament is able to influence the budget to ensure responsive government.

Parliament must also improve the tracking and monitoring of implementation.

### *3.4.5 Strengthening oversight work performed in constituencies and plenaries*

In addition to strengthening oversight activities in committees, the work performed in constituencies and plenaries must also be improved.

Oversight work performed in plenary remain a visible form of ensuring accountability. The main instruments of motions, debates, questions and statements provide a platform where the

Executive can be publically held to account. It is here where Parliament can effect its oversight mandate and gain the public's trust.

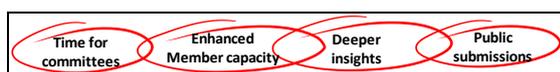
In order to do so, the instruments used in plenary oversight must be deemed useful and effective. Inputs provided by Members in the planning sessions indicated that the effectiveness of these instruments can be improved to ensure greater accountability.

Members alluded to the importance of constituency work. However, the oversight work performed by individual Members in constituencies appear to have weak links with committee and plenary oversight work. Ideally, Members should perform oversight activities in their constituency, and forward submissions or petitions to the committee system, thereby linking matters to the committee oversight process. Such matters could then be included in, or form part of, recommendations which are submitted for adoption in the house.

During the planning sessions Members proposed that the petition system must be improved. In this regard, some provincial legislatures enacted petition laws to strengthen such processes. Providing an effective means for the public to petition Parliament will assist in building a culture of responsiveness and accountability.

### 3.5 Inputs needed to implement the strategy

Key strategic inputs to support the strategy include more time for committee oversight, enhanced Member capacity, improved analysis and deeper insights, and improved public submissions.



#### 3.5.1 More time for committee oversight in the programme of Parliament

One of the key inputs towards the strengthening of committee oversight include adequate time for committees to conduct oversight.

As mentioned above, committees will require more dedicated time in the form of committee weeks.

For this change to occur, Parliament must develop a new programming framework based on the statutory and strategic requirements. Such a new programming framework can be implemented over time, with a gradual shift towards dedicated committee and plenary weeks.

#### 3.5.2 Member capacity-building

The imperative of capacity-building programmes for Members was a central theme in many deliberations during the planning sessions.

Owing to the nature of Parliament, a significant amount of leadership and functional knowledge is lost from the overall body of knowledge during each 5-year cycle. Although Parliament is in possession of a significant collection of

information, the present approach to skills development and knowledge management produces an uneven spread and allocation of skills in the processes of Parliament.

The way in which Parliament creates and maintains the required skills level and the body of knowledge will have to change. A more systematic approach to knowledge management and capacity-building of Members is required, with programmes being co-ordinated and focused on both institutional and sector needs. The establishment of the Parliamentary Knowledge Institute and its collaboration with tertiary institutions could provide a good vehicle for this.

During their tenure Members of Parliament are required to apply a diverse range of skills. If Parliament is to operate more efficiently and effectively, specific and needs-based capacity-building programmes are required to equip parliamentarians with the skills needed to perform their functions.

#### 3.5.3 Deeper insights

Members of Parliament represent the interest of people in government through the processes of legislation, oversight, appointments and international participation. As modern government has evolved to a high degree of complexity, such representation requires the provision of several different streams of information, involving vast quantities of information.

The planning sessions highlighted the need for enhanced research services - moving towards more analysis and scrutiny with high levels of specialisation.

The information and analysis provided by the Parliamentary Service must provide deeper insights into issues, and empower Members to effect deeper scrutiny.

The matter of sufficient research capacity in Parliament remains a key issue. The 2017 Global Parliamentary Report indicates new trends in this regard. Accordingly, Parliaments are establishing capacity to specialise and provide the following:

- Information for Members,
- Research for committees,
- Procedural research,
- Budget analysis, and
- Gender analysis.

The research in Parliament must access and review data sets and information. It must analyse, evaluate and synthesise evidence and information to address the information needs of Members.

Parliament must also increase its ability to monitor, track and evaluate the implementation of recommendations and resolutions. Parliament can also benefit from tracking its own data, to build an evaluative culture, and to gain insights into legislative impact. The institution can further improve accountability by engaging and interacting with evaluations done by the Executive and other institutions, thereby providing a broader range of information and insight on the effectiveness of government programmes. Providing a real-time country dashboard may help in holding the Executive accountable, and keeping citizens informed on service delivery progress.

#### *3.5.4 Improving partnerships and public submissions*

Public partnerships, participation and submissions by the public are key to ensure participatory democracy and more responsive government.

Today, more and more South Africans can be reached via mobile technology and social media than ever before. With almost 65% of citizens in urban areas, and many accessing the internet through mobile applications, Parliament has the opportunity to reach citizens easier, and to make participation more effective.

Although businesses and people are adopting digital technology fairly swiftly, governments are not. This is also the case for parliaments. The 2018 World e-Parliament Report (IPU) indicates that parliaments do not tend to be early adopters of new technologies. In fact, they are lagging behind in adopting digital tools, social tools and open data. Yet society has changed, and with it, societal expectations. The public today expects ready access to Parliament, just as it has to commercial brands. It wants to receive information, have access to transact, and make real contributions that can influence the outcome of legislation. Parliament will need to innovate and act swiftly in this area.

The convergence of the physical, digital, and biological worlds presents innovative technological opportunities for organisations to change the way we work. As information-driven institutions parliaments are not excluded from this trend. The proliferation of information and knowledge in the 21st century, driven by these technological advancements, are fundamentally changing the manner in which parliaments operate, communicate

and connect with Members of Parliament, staff and citizens.

Increased public participation will require improved information dissemination and greater access for people to participate. In turn, this will require the use of more languages, broadcasting on radio, social media and mobile technology, and the use of external networks to reach communities and people. Greater access to participate in Parliament will require more joint public hearings, e-hearings, online submissions, and better use of constituency offices.

If Parliament aims to be an activist and responsive Parliament that is connected to its citizens, then Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) should be leveraged to achieve a more open, transparent, and citizen-centric delivery of Parliament's constitutional mandate to deepen and entrench democracy.

#### 4. The logic of the strategy

Using the above elements of impact, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs, the following logic of the strategy map can be constructed (see figure on next page):

- Improving quality of life requires faster transformation and service delivery, increasing employment, eradicating poverty and reducing inequality,
- Increasing the pace of service delivery will require a more responsive and accountable government.
- Greater responsiveness and accountability by the Executive will require Parliament to strengthen oversight and involvement in the budget process.
- A more effective budget process will require deeper scrutiny by committees, more effective public hearings, and more effective recommendations and resolutions by the Houses.
- In turn, committees will require more time allocated for oversight activities, enhanced Member capacity to ensure effectiveness, deeper insights into issues at hand, and active involvement by the public in the form of submissions.
- Changing these inputs will require an adjustment in the programme of Parliament; providing more effective programmes aimed at capacity-building; delivering more insightful research and analysis; providing the public with better information and access to participate; and improving the tracking and monitoring of Parliamentary business and executive implementation.



# Strategy map for the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Strengthen oversight and accountability

